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When the government of a neutral Mediterranean country considers the subject of security and stability in this region, the question that springs to mind is whose stability and security. That the Mediterranean Sea has historically always been relevant to the security interests of the leading powers and empires at any time is a well-known fact. Few, if any, Mediterranean countries have had their history so directly dictated by the exigencies of powerful empires concerned with hegemony in the Mediterranean as much as the Maltese islands. Whether as a frontier outpost for the Christian West in its perennial contest with the Muslim East during the period of early modern history—or as the hub of British naval activity in the Mediterranean from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (roughly at the time, 1845, when the building now used as the Malta Maritime Museum was erected as a bakery to supply all the British Mediterranean fleet)—the relevance of Malta to the outside world has been defined by the Mediterranean strategies of others, and the very livelihood of its people accordingly dictated by that fact.

The relevance of the Mediterranean to European security has equally been recognized during the past half-century, for the most part shadowed by the global confrontation between East and West. The sea came to be regarded, perhaps more than ever before in history, as a single geo-strategic region. From here, the two protagonists of world affairs, neither of them a riparian Mediterranean state, pursued their national interests as well as the interests of the blocs they headed.

The unity and coherence of the Mediterranean region—to borrow the term from Braudel—was as obvious to the strategists of the superpowers as it was ill-recognized by even many riparian countries themselves. The East-West contest was not the only outstanding development of world proportions during the last half-century; equally important was the end of the old-world empires, with the developed imperial powers of the North releasing their hold over their colonial territories in the South.

The emergent cleavage between North and South thus coincided with the contemporary East-West division of the world. Nowhere did the two
divides intersect more clearly than in the Mediterranean. The reality of two navies, the US 6th Fleet and the Soviet Fifth Eskadra, chasing each other across the Mediterranean and beneath its surface—showing the flag in the region’s many flash points—represented a balance of forces which, whatever advantages to stability in superpower relations it was imagined to achieve, turned the Mediterranean into a theatre of the Cold War second only to central Europe.

While the Mediterranean Sea and region were thus cast as a function of European security, Malta was among the first to put it to Europe that the indivisibility of the European and the Mediterranean region should be interpreted in a much more comprehensive and less one-sided manner. In the CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) process, the institutional manifestation of détente in Europe, Malta insisted, against heavy odds, that European security through co-operation cannot and should not be striven after to the exclusion, much less at the expense of, the Mediterranean. It was not enough that Europe should regard its Mediterranean neighbourhood as relevant to its own security. Rather, Europe ought to seek to foster its security relationship with the Mediterranean through co-operation in the same manner as it was striving to achieve it between the two halves of itself. That position has been amply vindicated in the years following the end of the Cold War. Nevertheless, as it awoke to the urgency of doing something about stability in the Mediterranean, the West adopted two parallel approaches. One, in which there was little that was novel, was to regroup its defences and channel them towards a new perceived threat coming from the Mediterranean, as opposed to that coming from the Soviet Union through the Mediterranean. As Europe’s security structures hurried to adapt and address themselves to the new security scenarios that presented themselves in eastern Europe after the retreat of the eastern superpower, Western security strategists were quick to identify in the Mediterranean a second so-called ‘arc of crises’. Yet, unlike the central and eastern European crisis zone, the Mediterranean was not, in this perception, an internal European security concern. Both NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the Western European Union (WEU), even as they applied themselves to redefining their roles in European security vis-à-vis each other, signalled their interest in protecting Europe from the potential threat of the South. In particular, longstanding advocates for including ‘out-of-area’ operations in NATO’s brief found their hand strengthened by the new perception of Mediterranean security threats, one such perceived threat being singled out by a former Secretary-General.

The Alliance followed this up by an initiative in 1995 to contribute to security and stability in the Mediterranean as a whole. A similar initiative was launched by the WEU, also in 1995, when the WEU Mediterranean Group (Spain, Portugal, France and Italy) launched land and naval
rapid-reaction forces. While such initiatives have been accompanied by offers of co-operation on security matters with non-European Mediterranean states, the objective remains the time-honoured conception of the defence of Europe’s ‘southern flank’. In the light of the strategists’ protestations of good intentions in this matter, it comes across as all the more surprising that many members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) remain opposed to the extension of membership to non-European Mediterranean states, especially considering the intentions expressed in the Mediterranean Chapter of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Following the 1994 Budapest initiative to grant observer status to five Mediterranean states, little progress has been registered. This seems to suggest that leading OSCE members are far from ready to give up their freedom to act unilaterally in the Mediterranean. In parallel with essentially military strategies—which, however defensible from the Western and European point of view, are prone to suspicion from several non-member Mediterranean countries—there has, nevertheless, emerged a more civilian initiative that promises to deal with the security problems of the Mediterranean by tackling the economic, social and political roots of instability. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative, which began in Barcelona in 1995, a follow-up to which was held in Malta in April 1996, recognizes the essentially North-South nature of the Mediterranean’s problems. It adopts the rationale of the OSCE itself that the best defence from security threats is multilevel co-operation with the whole region.

One could argue that it is too early to judge whether these two approaches are complementary or conflicting. Parallel lines never meet. But should they cease to be parallel and begin to converge, as they must do, it is difficult to imagine that they could complement each other without a manifestly credible readiness in Europe to regard the Mediterranean as an integrated and equal part of the Euro-Mediterranean area. Mediterranean naval history is a fascinating field for academic study. In the past navies and naval contests played a great part in defining the character of this sea. We should know, because in our case here in Malta, great navies have defined our very history and importance to the outside world. When that era of our history ended, we chose the way of positive neutrality. After centuries when our livelihood was so tightly bound up with the capricious economics of war, we achieved prosperity and stability by pursuing good neighbourliness with the rest of our region.

ALFRED SANT
Prime Minister of Malta, 1996–98
Among the most exciting scholarly developments within the discipline of history in recent times has been the return of interest in maritime affairs, in navies and in seapower. One hundred years ago, during the ‘golden age’ of Mahan-ism and European imperialism, such an interest in naval matters would have been axiomatic—indeed, the fate of some governments occasionally hung upon how well or poorly they were judged to be carrying out a national maritime policy. Generations later, during a period in which Western navies (apart from the formidable US Navy) were much reduced in size and no longer possessed overseas bases, with the fate of the world apparently depending upon whether Washington and Moscow might one day decide to use intercontinental ballistic missiles, and with the focus of shipbuilding, merchant fleets and maritime trade having moved to the east, naval affairs—and therefore teaching about the history and present utility of navies—occupied a diminished importance.

Yet even in that era of relative neglect, prescient observers could appreciate that sea power had not declined so much as become transformed. Dependence upon transport at sea never really diminished, although the ‘containerization’ revolution made such goods much less visible to the ordinary citizen. The safe carrying of fuel oils, especially petroleum, remained vital to the economic prospects of the world, and in particular to modern industrialized societies. The Cold War may have focused public attention upon nuclear missiles, but it was also accompanied by a serious naval race and a sustained effort by the Red Navy to challenge the West’s maritime predominance. Control of sea-routes was still deemed critical.

At the same time, and for very different reasons, scholarly writings upon navies and seapower began to enjoy a quiet renaissance. The disposition of fleets was no longer studied as a discrete matter, understood only by admirals and naval strategists, but rather as a part of a larger whole, of the so-called ‘grand strategy’ of a nation in both peacetime and wartime. Navies were important, but it made more sense to see them as functioning in the context of the national economy, national finances, contacts with
the other armed services, alliance relationships and the rest. Early-modern historians in particular were trail-blazing in their reconstruction of past maritime societies, wherein the role of navies was properly connected to society, economics, politics, ideas and geography.¹

The result of these twin developments has been to place the study of naval strategy and power in context, or, perhaps, in contexts, as this present volume well illustrates. No better way of capturing both the scholarly renaissance and the continuing role and significance of maritime matters could be advanced than a multi-part and multi-disciplinary look at the Mediterranean. Since earliest times, this stretch of water has both symbolized and realized the full panoply of maritime and naval activities. A large part of the classic curriculum on ‘the influence of sea power upon history’ is set in this sea. But this is not merely significant historically; many of the trends that affect global politics, international strategy and the relations of states as we enter the twenty-first century are encapsulated in today’s ‘Mediterranean World’, just as they were reflected four centuries ago in that world so beautifully analyzed by Braudel.²

The essays which follow capture both the historical and the contemporary/future-oriented nature of sea power in the ‘Midland Sea’, as the noted historian Julian Corbett used to call it. A full ten essays explore the historical aspects of the employment of maritime force in those water, from the time of the Spanish ascendancy to the tense situations generated by the Cold War. All of these studies highlight aspects of ‘Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean’ that, while not unknown to experts in this field, have rarely if ever been synthesized in such a way. They alone would merit a collection like this one, and be particularly appropriate to the Cass series on Naval Policy and History.

But the special character of Professor Hattendorf’s work is that these ten historical studies are married to a further nine essays upon ‘Contemporary Issues in Mediterranean Policy and Strategy’. To a considerable degree this reflects the fact that these conference papers were presented in Malta and that the two Maltese institutional sponsors of our conference—the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies and the International Maritime Law Institute—have such a focus. But it also reflects the reality that now, as previously, the social movements that pulsate throughout this region have a maritime dimension, and that they in turn are affected by the geographical conditions of the region itself. For better or for worse, the Mediterranean constitutes not only an historic stretch of water but also a critical, socio-technological ‘fault line’ between the fast-growing populations of the Arab world and the slower-growing (and, in some cases, declining) inhabitants of southern Europe.³ This is why issues such as migration, the environment, international law and cultural perceptions are so strongly represented in a collection whose chief
purpose is to situate our understanding of naval policy within a larger framework.

All in all, Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean is a double delight: it testifies to the vibrancy of scholarship in the field of maritime studies and reminds us all, politicians and public alike, of the importance of knowing better about ‘those who go down to the sea’.

PAUL KENNEDY
Yale University, June 1999

NOTES

3 For further reflections upon such ‘fault lines’, see P.Kennedy, Preparing for the Twenty-First Century (New York, 1993), pp. 41–6.
Series Editor’s Preface

In June 1997 Professors Paul M. Kennedy of Yale University and John B. Hattendorf of the US Naval War College convened a conference on the island of Malta to tackle the broad issue of ‘Sea Power in the Mediterranean: Past, Present, and Future’. The purpose of the conference was to look at a traditional subject with new eyes, and to be as inclusive as possible. The participants ranged from internationally renowned naval scholars (Paul Halpern, John Hattendorf, Gerhard Schreiber, Geoffrey Till), to contemporary political leaders (Maltese Prime Minister Alfred Sant, President Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, Foreign Minister George Vella), and finally to eminent historians of ecology (J.R. McNeill), Law of the Sea (David Attard, Dominic Fenech), and migration (Michael S. Teitelbaum). A secondary theme was to test the hypothesis that ecological realities molded geopolitical realities. Throughout the conference, the participants stressed that the Mediterranean was not (and is not) an isolated region, but rather one that was (and remains) tied to global considerations. Professor Hattendorf has edited the papers with great erudition and loving attention; the rich selection of illustrations is especially welcome. A family tragedy prevented Professor Kennedy from taking his destined place as co-editor.

‘Mediterranean—the sea among lands’ is the red thread that runs through this volume. The contributors have worked hard to offer a re-evaluation of the multiple contexts of sea power in a region that is, in the words of Foreign Minister Vella, ‘made up of mixed interests and deep divisions, of points of conversion and points of divergence, of friendships and enmities, common destinies and disparate illusions’. They have effectively demonstrated sea power as applied in the Mediterranean over the past 400 years in a variety of contexts, both past and present as well as future. They have eschewed the more traditional and more narrow approach to sea power associated with naval battles and sea control or denial, and have instead interpreted its history with reference to domestic politics, industrial capacity, financial resources, migration, ecology, ethnicity, and law. And they have sought to identify past constructs such as geographical considerations, political will, and technological
opportunities and limitations as indicators of present and future policy considerations. In short, they have used history as a bridge to future security policy for the region.

Without hubris, I would suggest that this collection of essays deserves to take its place alongside Fernand Braudel’s *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1972–73), as both complement and supplement to that magisterial undertaking.

HOLGER H. HERWIG

*Series Editor*
Acknowledgments

This volume is the result of a conference held on the Mediterranean island of Malta from 18 to 20 June 1997. This conference was jointly sponsored by Professor David J. Attard, Director, the IMO International Maritime Law Institute; Professor Fred Tanner, Director, the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta; Professor Paul M. Kennedy, Director, International Security Studies, Yale University and Professor John B. Hattendorf, US Naval War College. All the participants at the conference acknowledge with great appreciation the co-operative support of the institutions involved. In addition, we thank the government of Malta for their warm welcome to our academic enterprise and for the generous participation of Prime Minister Alfred Sant and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Environment George Vella, contributions from whom are included in this volume. H.E. Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, President of Malta, graciously hosted a special commemorative session in his formal office at the Palace of the President, Valletta, on the ‘Consolato del Mare’ and these contributions on this special topic have been published separately.

In particular, all the participants in the conference and the contributors to this volume warmly acknowledge the leadership of Professor Paul Kennedy in this project. He conceived the idea for the conference while on a Yale Alumni cruise in the Mediterranean with his late wife Cath, and was the catalyst who brought it to fruition. At Yale, Dr Will Hitchcock and Ann Carter-Drier were the co-ordinators of the project, while the Smith Richardson Foundation’s generous support was the key contribution that made it possible.
Abbreviations

AMU Arab Maghreb Union
ASM air-to-surface missile
ASW anti-submarine warfare
BSECZ Black Sea Economic Co-operation Zone
CBM confidence-building measures
CFE conventional forces in Europe
CJTF Combined Joint Task Force
CSCE Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EDC European Defence Communit
EEC European Economic Community
EEZ exclusive economic zone
EFTA European Free Trade Association
EMP Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EUROMARFOR European Maritime Force
FSU Former Soviet Union
GCC Gulf Co-operation Council
ICJ International Court of Justice
IFOR Implementation Force
ILO International Labour Organization
IMF International Monetary Fund
IMO International Maritime Organization
INCSEA Incidents at Sea Agreement
INF intermediate nuclear forces
IRBM intermediate-range ballistic missile
LPD landing platform, dock
LST landing ship, tank
MDAP Mutual Defense Assistance Program
MFO Multilateral Force and Observers
MLF Multilateral Force
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVSOUTH Allied Naval Forces, Southern Europe (NATO)
<table>
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFP</td>
<td>Partnership for Peace</td>
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<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSO</td>
<td>peace-support operations</td>
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<td>SACEUR</td>
<td>Supreme Allied Commander, Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAM</td>
<td>surface-to-air missile</td>
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<td>SFOR</td>
<td>Stabilization Force</td>
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<td>SLOC</td>
<td>sea lines of communication</td>
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<td>SSM</td>
<td>surface-to-surface missile</td>
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<td>STANAVFORMED</td>
<td>Standing Naval Force, Mediterranean</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCITRAL</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on International Trade Law</td>
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<td>UNPROFOR</td>
<td>United Nations Protection Force</td>
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<td>UNTSO</td>
<td>United Nations Truce Supervision Organization</td>
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<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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PART I
THE PAST AS PROLOGUE
2. A Venetian galleass of the sixteenth century. A hybrid, which lacked the best characteristics of oar or sail power, the galleass had a relatively brief existence as a warship type.
Navies and the Mediterranean in the Early Modern Period

Carla Rahn Phillips

Historians of the Mediterranean have paid considerable attention to the period 1450–1700, and for good reason. During the early modern centuries seafarers adopted new ships and sailing techniques that changed the character of trade and naval warfare. Equally important were changes in the rivalries that marked Mediterranean seafaring. After centuries in which Latin and Orthodox Christian powers had dominated the Mediterranean, the rise of the Ottomans led to a titanic clash between Christian and Muslim civilizations. In that struggle, which involved political, religious, commercial and cultural antagonisms, the diverse peoples of the Mediterranean were the major players at first. None the less, a much larger theater of rivalry extended from the Mediterranean northward to central Europe and the Black Sea and southeastward into western Asia and the Indian Ocean. During the sixteenth century, in the aftermath of the Age of Discoveries, the European center of economic and political activity shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and beyond. However, in the broader context of world trade and international rivalries, the Mediterranean retained its strategic importance. During the seventeenth century European states that were primarily linked to the Atlantic world—England, Holland and France—established themselves in the Mediterranean as well.

The overview presented here will trace these developments, relying on the wealth of historical scholarship that has focused on the Mediterranean in the early modern period. Although major powers will dominate the narrative, minor powers will also appear from time to time. Every state in the strategic game of the Mediterranean had different perceptions, goals and method, some of which pertained only to the age of oar and sail and others of which continue to the present day. In so far as possible, the narrative that follows will try to retain those varying perceptions of reality.
3. The Mediterranean Sea: prevailing winds in summer
It is worthwhile to sketch some of the enduring physical realities that shaped the Mediterranean as a stage for historical drama. Ecological conditions—soil and rainfall, winds and currents, ports and hinterlands, climate and seasons—had always posed a daunting challenge for inhabitants of the Mediterranean littoral. The region is rich in natural beauty but generally poor in natural resources. Some favored areas can grow nearly anything with ease, but there are vast areas that can barely be farmed at all owing to unfavorable conditions of soil, climate, topography and rainfall. Seafarers also faced difficult conditions. The prevailing winds blow from the northwest to northeast quadrant and the currents generally run counterclockwise. Winds may fail altogether in some seasons and blow at gale force in others. At choke-points, such as the Strait of Messina, strong currents, riptides and whirlpools gave rise to ancient legends of monsters beneath the boiling seas.

Rivers provide only about 25 per cent of the water lost through evaporation in the main body of the sea, plus another 4 per cent from the rivers that flow first into the Black Sea. The other 71 per cent of the Mediterranean’s water comes from the Atlantic Ocean, flowing in as a surface current. Until the development of the sternpost-mounted rudder and the full-rigged sail plan, from the late thirteenth to the fifteenth century, sailing ships had great difficulty making headway against contrary winds and currents. Oared ships such as galleys could concentrate enough human power to battle the elements, but they were highly vulnerable to bad weather and dangerous coastlines. None the less, what the galleys did they did very well, within the confines of the sea. Without the need regularly to confront the open ocean, Mediterranean trade and warfare continued to rely on the galley from ancient times through the sixteenth century.3

Historians of the Mediterranean often divide their discussion between the eastern and the western halves of the sea. In its physical characteristics, however, the true distinction is between north and south. In general, the southern coastline is dangerous, even without taking the winds and currents into consideration. Moreover, the best ports often suffer from insufficient supplies of fresh water, food or both, a pattern of scarcity that posed great problems for galley fleets that had to be resupplied regularly. Though long stretches of the Mediterranean coastline are inhospitable for both people and ships, nature bestowed extraordinary favors on a few sites. The northern half of the Mediterranean is relatively benign, marked by abundant natural ports on the mainland and on selected islands. Given these characteristics, it is no wonder that seafarers tended to favor ‘trunk routes’ in the northern half of the sea, where they could move easily from island to island and from port to port. On both the eastbound and the westbound trajectory, ships preferred to follow these trunk routes, where natural conditions presented fewer risks and supported abundant ports and markets.
For thousands of years, political and military rivalries focused on a number of key points along the trunk routes in the northern Mediterranean. Whoever controlled enough of those points could determine the terms and conditions of access to the trunk routes, even if they could not monopolize their use. However, if they could keep their lines of communication and supply open, well-entrenched forces could maintain a presence in the heart of alien territory. Nearly all the major battles and sieges in the early modern period were fought over one or another key point along the northern trunk routes. Only certain areas of the Mediterranean were appropriate for large sea battles during the age of oar and sail. Nearly all the ideal battle sites are in the northern half of the Mediterranean, and most of them are clustered from Sardinia and Corsica eastward. It is no coincidence that the Battle of Actium in 31 BC and the Battle of Preveza in 1538 occurred at virtually the same place in the Ionian Sea. In general, however, major battles were less important in themselves than in their implications for the control of key points along the northern trunk routes.

The physical characteristics of wind, currents, coastlines and ports influenced trade as well as military confrontations. Moreover, in war or peace, the concentrated flow of goods along the trunk routes naturally attracted marauders. Trade and piracy have much in common, and it was not unusual in the early modern period to find the same individuals involved in both seaborne trade and in corsairing, commonly called piracy. Pirates might come from anywhere in the Mediterranean region, and newcomers from northern Europe in the seventeenth century would join in as well. Their attacks might be sanctioned by political authorities or not; they might be carried out by Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, Latin Christians or groups with mixed religious affiliations. It is no exaggeration to say that every great trading people engaged in piracy at some stage in its development, and many of them honed their skills in the Mediterranean.

All these considerations provide the framework for strategic developments in early modern times. The rise of the Ottoman Turks on the western edge of the Muslim world in the fifteenth century set the stage for what would follow, but their advent was part of a much longer process. From the eleventh to the fifteenth century Christian forces dominated both the western and the eastern Mediterranean. Their presence was spawned by the Crusades and maintained by control of key ports and islands such as Zante and Rhodes that linked Crusader enclaves to Christian states in the west. The several Christian powers were rivals as well as natural allies, however, and they often warred against one another as vigorously as they warred against the Muslims. This was particularly true of the rivalry between the Orthodox Christians in the eastern Mediterranean and the Latin Christians in the west.
4. The Mediterranean Sea: sea currents
Gradually, several Muslim polities began to squeeze out the crusader states, but not in a concerted fashion. The Seljuk Turks consolidated their authority in Anatolia in the thirteenth century and ended Christian dominance in the eastern Mediterranean. In its turn, the Seljuk state was reduced by the Mongols to a collection of emirates on the Aegean Sea. By the late thirteenth century pirates from these ghazi emirates of western Asia Minor were attacking shipping in the eastern Mediterranean, and their power grew in the fourteenth century. Rather than acting together to protect Muslim shipping, the emirates took a narrower view, aiming for short-term gains and relying on outsiders to maintain trade. Christian pirates also preyed on shipping in the area: raiding, collecting tribute and capturing slaves. To lessen the threat of Muslim piracy, Christian merchants from the western Mediterranean made deals with individual emirates and thus diverted the pirates’ attention to the trade of their rivals. A similar pattern of behavior would characterize the seventeenth century as well.

The Ottoman Turks began to unite all of the ghazi emirates in the 1390s, but Tamerlane shattered the Ottoman sultanate into its component parts again in 1402, and it was not until 1426 that the Ottomans under Murad II reconsolidated the emirates into a single state. The Ottomans were willing to make deals with Christian merchants for peaceful trade, but they never abandoned the notion of jihad (holy war) against Christians, which included official raids on Christian possessions (ghawuz) and the sponsorship of corsairing against Christian shipping. Before 1453 Ottoman naval actions were generally brief raids rather than concerted campaigns. The Ottomans were fairly new to Mediterranean warfare, but they learned quickly that an amphibious strategy was the best way to achieve control of shipping lanes. They also learned, like others before them, that strategic ports and islands could be used as bases for galley raids on shipping and to control choke-points and collect tribute.

Scholars have found no documentation for the strategic concerns of the Ottoman sultanate. We learn how they approached naval warfare largely through their actions. Traditional Western scholarship once emphasized the military prowess of the Ottomans and tended to see the sultanate largely as a fighting machine intent on fulfilling medieval prophesies of world conquest in the name of Islam. Relying on ambassadorial reports from Venice and elsewhere, scholars argued that the sultans cared little for commerce, except in so far as it generated tribute payments and restricted commercial activities within their realms. Such arguments portray the Ottoman Empire as the quintessential ‘other’ against which western Europe and its nascent capitalism defined itself.

Modern scholarship paints a different picture. We now know that economic, and especially commercial, concerns were an important part of Ottoman strategy. The sultans used their formidable military machine on
land and sea to control trade in their sphere of influence, which extended from central Europe to the Indian Ocean, with the eastern Mediterranean as its hub. This strategy evolved in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, as the Ottoman state consolidated its authority. Medieval prophesies of world domination may have inspired the effort, but it was firmly based on existing realities.

Sultan Mahomet II (1451–81) conquered Constantinople in 1453, after several decades of smaller gains. The conquest sent shock waves throughout Christendom, but the Sultan wisely tried to mollify the Orthodox Christians who came under his rule, capitalizing on their fear and distrust of Latin Christendom, which dated from the Crusades. After Constantinople fell, Venice and the Knights Hospitaller of St John, with their stronghold on the island of Rhodes, reinforced and extended their control over a chain of islands in the Aegean. This temporarily blocked the naval expansion of the Ottomans, despite their enormous resources and manpower.

As John H.Pryor has argued, the key to understanding warfare in the eastern Mediterranean in this period is that it was always amphibious, with hit-and-run battles at sea, as attacking fleets aimed for strategic points. ‘When fleet engagements did occur, they did so invariably in the context of amphibious assaults by the forces of one of the two faiths against strategic bases or islands held by the other.’ For effective defense, the defenders had to prevent the land and sea forces of the attackers from meeting.

The Ottomans captured the island of Lesbos in the Aegean in 1462 and moved westward from Serbia to Bosnia. In response, Venice declared war on Turkey, initiating the first Turco-Venetian War (1463–79). Venice had aimed in earlier times to control the sea, protecting its merchant fleets against depredations and attacking rivals to deny them the use of the favored trunk routes. The Venetians had not aimed at a monopoly of seaborne trade, however. Instead, they captured and held a string of fortified places along the Adriatic, plus Zante, Crete and Cyprus, to use as strategic bases to protect their trade and harass that of their rivals. In the late fifteenth century the Ottomans learned how to defeat the Venetians at their own game. As a result, the Ottomans captured the Negropont (Evvoia) and several trading posts in Morea (Peloponnese).

In what would be his last major campaign, Mahomet II planned simultaneously to drive the Knights Hospitaller of St John from Rhodes and conquer southern Italy. Although the Turks reportedly landed an army of 70,000 on Rhodes (probably an exaggeration), supported by a large galley fleet, they could not dislodge the defending force of 600 knights and 2,000 soldiers, plus the local inhabitants. Formidable fortifications, and the determination of the defenders, thwarted the assault, and the Ottomans withdrew from Italy as well. Though the defense of Rhodes was hailed throughout Christendom, and Mahomet II died the following
5. The Mediterranean Sea, showing location of naval battles, 431 BC to AD 1538
EARLY MODERN PERIOD

year, the Ottoman advance was merely deferred, not defeated. In between
wars, trade by Christian merchants continued in the eastern
Mediterranean, protected and taxed by the Ottomans.

Under Bayazit II (1481–1512), the Ottomans developed a large navy at
enormous cost and waged an inconclusive ten-year war with the
Mamelukes of Egypt (1481–91). Ottoman galleys also won a major naval
engagement against the Venetians in 1499, the first time that the latter had
lost a battle since rising to power. For the rest of his reign, Bayazit
continued to build the Ottoman Navy. His forces inexorably extended
their control of territory and strong points, forcing Venice to recognize
that its vulnerability to Ottoman attack had become a fact of life.\textsuperscript{10} In 1500
Venice had the ‘oldest and largest’ permanent navy in Europe (25–30
galleys), with a small strike force afloat and a reserve force of 50–100 that
could be mobilized rapidly.\textsuperscript{11} None the less, its status among the Christian
powers was being eroded by the rising power of Spain in the western
Mediterranean and by the expansion of Iberian trade into the Atlantic
Ocean and beyond.

In 1415 combined sea and land forces from Portugal captured Ceuta in
Morocco, the second Pillar of Hercules (Abyla) in classical mythology.
This began a remarkable century in which Iberian mariners and merchants
explored and traded along the West African coast and into the eastern
Atlantic. In 1486 Bartolomeu Dias of Portugal reached the Cape of Good
Hope and in 1498 Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon to Calcutta,
pioneering a sea route to India.

Meanwhile, in Spain, the so-called ‘Catholic Monarchs’, Isabella of
Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, ousted the Muslim king of Granada in
1492 after a ten-year war, nearly 800 years after the peninsula had been
largely conquered by the Muslims. Thereafter, in addition to sponsoring
the voyages of Christopher Columbus and dozens of other explorers
across the Atlantic, Spanish monarchs began a series of campaigns in
North Africa. The Ottomans’ conquest of Constantinople and their
continuing drive to the north and the southeast provided ample incentive
for the Spaniards to secure the western Mediterranean. Given the ecology
of the region and because their naval forces were limited, they maintained
cordial relations with some North African states but also captured and
secured a line of strong points from Melilla to Tripoli between 1497 and
1510. Both Ferdinand and Isabella were also inspired by dreams of
reconquering Jerusalem from the Muslims.\textsuperscript{12}

As Iberian exploration and colonization proceeded, the Ottomans felt
threatened by the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean and by the Spaniards in
the western Mediterranean. In 1513 Sultan Selim I sent supplies and men
to build a fleet at Suez to help the Mamelukes against the Portuguese in the
Indian Ocean. Overstaying his welcome, the sultan decided to conquer the
Mamelukes, using his navy to supply and guard the rear of the invading
force. By 1517 he had succeeded, taking over Syria, Palestine and Egypt. By the early sixteenth century the eastern Mediterranean was largely under Ottoman control. The few remaining Christian strong-holds were helpless to protect their shipping against attack and found themselves forced to co-operate with the Ottomans. Not for the first time nor the last, self-interest overrode loyalties based on cultural or religious identity. In the west, Muslim corsairs established themselves in Algiers in 1516 and asked for the protection of the sultan two years later. The corsairs of Algiers became the first of a series of client states in North Africa that would serve the Ottomans as forward bases against Spain.

From the 1520s to the early 1570s Mediterranean affairs revolved around the titanic struggle between two powerful civilizations and their champions: in the west, Christianity, represented by the Spanish Habsburgs, and in the east, the world of western Islam, represented by the Ottoman Empire. All the other players in the Mediterranean game would define their strategies with relation to the Habsburg-Ottoman rivalry, but not consistently nor predictably.

Under the leadership of Suleyman I (1520–66), the Ottomans extended their presence from central Europe to the west coast of India. In this larger struggle the Mediterranean was a crucial focal point, but by no means the only one. Likewise, naval strategy was part of the larger picture, sometimes co-ordinated with land strategies, sometimes working at cross-purposes, fighting for the sultan’s attention and resources. Similar observations may be made about Spain. The Habsburg dynasty inherited Spain and the lands under Spanish rule in Europe and abroad in 1516. Consequently, successive monarchs had to craft an overall strategy that concerned areas from the Mediterranean to central and northern Europe, plus an overseas empire that circled the globe.

In the early sixteenth century the Ottomans effectively commanded three navies. The official navy at Constantinople could be formed into large battle fleets and co-ordinated with land forces for major assaults, but it was not maintained at full strength the rest of the time. Smaller galley fleets were kept in Greece, the Levantine coast, Egypt and the Red Sea, financed locally in Ottoman territories and used primarily for sea control. In addition, the client states of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli were subject to the sultans but had their own rulers, called beys. They lived largely from corsairing or piracy on Christian shipping, acting as a proxy force for the Ottomans. The Spanish Habsburgs had a small permanent navy, but relied on their ability to embargo and rent private vessels when needed. In addition to galleys for use in the Mediterranean, Spanish mariners adapted and developed ships for use in the Atlantic and the Pacific, especially the galleon, the caravel and merchant ships of various sizes and designs. In the Mediterranean region both Spaniards and Ottomans understood the importance of holding strategic bases. With rare exceptions, their long
engagement did not involve large naval battles, even though they could each create massive battle fleets when the need arose.14

Suleyman simultaneously used land and sea forces in the early 1520s, as part of a co-ordinated strategy that took advantage of the disarray in Christendom related to the Protestant Reformation. In 1521 the Ottomans captured Belgrade, and in June 1522 Suleyman invaded the island of Rhodes, home base to the international body of Knights of St John, also known as the Knights Hospitaller, whose mission since the Crusades had been to wage an unending crusade against the Muslims, under the sponsorship of the papacy. The knights had carried out their mission with skill and dedication, largely by launching corsairing raids against Muslim shipping and strongholds all over the eastern Mediterranean. With the Ottomans already in control of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, Suleyman was determined to oust the Hospitallers from Rhodes, making up for the failed siege of 1480. He committed massive land and sea forces to the effort and sustained heavy losses during a six-month siege, but he prevailed, driving the last of the Christian crusaders from the eastern Mediterranean. The Grand Master of the knights, the 70-year-old Philippe Villiers de l’Isle Adam, was allowed to leave with his men on the promise that they would relinquish their struggle. With their ousting from Rhodes the knights had no base. The pope asked all the Christian powers to help to resettle them, but that took several years to arrange.15

By the 1520s Ottoman interests spanned an area extending from a core in the eastern Mediterranean northward to central Europe and the Black Sea and southeastward to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Despite strong arguments that Suleyman should commit more resources to fighting the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, he decided on a land assault in eastern Europe. Circumstances favored his plans, because the growing Protestant movement had shattered the unity of Latin Christendom. Charles V, the Habsburg king of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor, had alienated many of his subjects in the Germanics by his staunch defense of the Catholic faith. In his role as king of Spain Charles was also fighting a series of wars with France over the control of Italy. The French king Francis I, hemmed in by the lands of Charles’s inheritance, had no more reason than the German princes to co-operate with the Habsburgs, even in the interests of Christian unity. In 1525 an army of Charles V captured Francis I at Pavia. Humiliated but hardly cowed, the king of France allied with the Ottoman Turks and encouraged Ottoman attacks on eastern Europe, as well as on Habsburg lands in the west. The French also encouraged the German princes in their opposition to the emperor.16 The real possibility of an Ottoman takeover of central Europe temporarily overrode other concerns, enabling Charles to patch together a Christian defensive coalition. In 1526, at the Battle of Mohács, King Luis I of Hungary lost his life. Not only was he a brother monarch, but he was also Charles V’s
cousin and brother-in-law, which personalized his struggle against Ottoman expansion. In 1529 the Turks had advanced far enough to besiege Vienna, but the Christian coalition managed to hold them off. The sultan acknowledged this major setback by redirecting his efforts from central Europe back to the Mediterranean.

Charles considered a galley fleet essential to Spanish military power and defense in the Mediterranean. France also built a galley fleet and used it against the Habsburgs until the middle of the century. Both Spain and France also maintained armed sailing ships in the western Mediterranean in the early sixteenth century, but had phased them out by the 1540s, presumably because the galley was a better choice at the time. Meanwhile, Charles continued to pursue his goal of controlling Italy. He had inherited the Kingdom of Naples from his grandfather Ferdinand of Aragon. In the 1520s and the 1530s he extended his hold over the northern part of the peninsula, inducing local rulers to ally with him against France and the Ottoman threat. France had controlled Genoa since 1500, but Francis forfeited their loyalty by pushing the Genoese too hard in his ambitions in Italy. In 1528 Andrea Doria of Genoa rebelled against France and allied himself with Charles. The Dorias brought a powerful naval presence to Habsburg forces in the Mediterranean and remained loyal to Spain through the early modern period. Florence, Milan and Savoy were also incorporated into the Habsburg effort. In all, the Habsburgs maintained four co-ordinated galley fleets in the sixteenth century, known by their bases of operations in Spain, Sicily and Naples, plus the galleys of Genoa on contract with the Doria family. Together, in Charles V’s time, they normally numbered about 40 galleys, which could be increased for large battles.

Only Venice and the papacy remained outside the Habsburg fold in Italy, each for its own reasons. Despite the best efforts of the Ottomans, the Portuguese had established a series of armed trading bases around the Indian Ocean, thus ending Venice’s near-monopoly of the trade in Asian spices. To preserve what remained, Venice had to maintain a working relationship with the Ottomans. In the great struggle between Habsburgs and Ottomans, Venice had no choice but to remain in the middle, desperately trying to maintain its trade and freedom of action, respected by both sides but trusted by neither. The papacy had its own reasons for holding the Habsburgs at arm’s length and often had openly hostile relations with Spain and the Habsburgs, despite their common religious interests.

To strengthen Spanish control over the western Mediterranean, Charles ceded Malta to the Knights of St John in 1530, in exchange for a yearly tribute of one falcon and a pledge to take over the defense of Tripoli, which had been a Spanish base since 1510. Fortifying Malta at great expense, the knights soon reneged on their pledge to Suleyman, periodically launching
fierce raids on Muslim territories and commerce, especially on the key route between Alexandria and Constantinople.

In 1532, Andrea Doria of Genoa, sailing for Spain with a hundred ships, captured the fort of Koron in the southwest Morea. According to Andrew Hess, this attack began a new naval phase of the struggle between Habsburgs and Ottomans. The Mediterranean was defined by both sides of the great cultural divide as the theater of confrontation for nearly five decades thereafter. This was not an absolute choice for either power, but simply an ordering of priorities. Each side continued to treat issues and lands far beyond the Mediterranean as vital concerns and was willing to shift resources away from the Mediterranean when necessary.

During the course of their naval rivalry, both empires developed a limited battle-fleet strategy. The idea was to form a large fleet in a key area, for defensive and offensive uses, forcing the enemy to concentrate its forces as well. The aim was to prevent the enemy’s defensive use of convoys to protect trade and communications (often called sea control), and the offensive use of raids, often by sponsoring third parties to prey on the enemy’s shipping (often called sea denial). Outside the piracy by proxy carried out by their clients, the two giant empires both discouraged freebooters in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean.

Even when Habsburgs and Ottomans formed large battle fleets they did not maintain them for long. In other words, they made no attempt to control the sea in a modern sense. Few large sea battles took place in the sixteenth century; notable exceptions being Preveza in 1538, Djerba in 1560 and Lepanto in 1571. Moreover, even in those cases the large fleets gained their objective quickly and thereafter withdrew, or simply withdrew if their objective seemed unattainable. The limited battle-fleet strategy of the sixteenth century bowed to the realities of the Mediterranean ecology, focusing on the control of strategic bases.

Naval warfare between Spain and the Ottomans in 1532–38 served to strengthen Ottoman control of the eastern Mediterranean. One of the most interesting aspects of this success was in the recruiting of corsairs and putting them in charge of major naval efforts. This was one reason that the Ottoman Navy gained only slowly in prestige, despite frequent victories at sea. In 1534 Suleyman appointed as his admiral the corsair Kheir-ed-Din (called Barbarossa by the Christians). He promptly conquered Tunis with a fleet of 74 ships and deposed Muley Hassan, an ally of Spain. In response, Charles V assembled a fleet of 300 ships, retook Tunis, restored Muley Hassan to power and freed 20,000 Christian captives. Then, in July 1537, Suleyman landed troops in Italy, supported by a fleet of over 200 ships, but was forced to withdraw in the face of a Habsburg coalition.

The only major naval battle of the war was fought near Preveza in the Ionian Sea, in late September 1538. The Turkish admiral Kheir-ed-Din sailed his fleet into a narrow inlet when he received word of an
approaching fleet under the command of Andrea Doria. From an ideal defensive position Kheir-ed-Din avoided general engagement with Doria’s larger fleet and captured seven stray vessels. He lost one vessel when his fleet came upon the ‘Great Galleon of Venice’, a large heavily armed sailing ship. The commander of the galleon fired broadside at the approaching line of galleys and inflicted great damage. Many authors see this as a precursor of future battles, in which heavily-armed sailing ships would always beat galleys that relied on maneuverability, grappling and boarding. None the less, at Preveza the Ottoman fleet held the commanding position and the Christian fleet could not co-ordinate its galleys and sailing ships well enough to compensate, despite their superior numbers. Doria withdrew on 29 September 1538, leaving Kheir-ed-Din to gloat. Though Doria has been roundly condemned for the withdrawal, one could argue that in the circumstances he made the only rational choice.21

Pushing beyond the Mediterranean, Suleyman sent the Muslim governor of Egypt to confront Portuguese forces in the Indian Ocean, but he returned in 1539 with no clear victory. Though Suleyman failed to extend the Ottoman sphere further west and southeast, he undoubtedly retained the commanding position in the eastern Mediterranean. The 1540s saw a continuation of the duel, with thrust and parry at vital points around the Mediterranean. Habsburg and Ottoman forces also engaged on land in central Europe, and the Christian emperor and the Muslim sultan each confronted enemies on their flanks among their co-religionists. For Charles that meant the continuing hostility of France and his Protestant subjects in northern Europe, plus the changeable loyalties of Venice and England. Although Spanish forces dominated the western Mediterranean, clients of the sultan were no further away than the other side of the Strait of Gibraltar. Muslim corsairs from North Africa continually harassed Spanish shipping and coastal settlements. In the course of the sixteenth century several strong points became corsairing city-states allied to the Ottomans. Algiers was a port without a supporting hinterland, dependent for survival on corsairing raids and the proceeds from the ransoming of captives. Kheir-ed-Din also used it as a base. In 1541 Charles launched an expedition to capture Algiers, with distinguished soldiers such as Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, and 400 knights of St John in his entourage. Owing to violent storms, they lost 150 ships in the failed attempt. It was the emperor’s last campaign at sea.

In perhaps the most startling military action of the period, Francis I of France joined forces with the Ottomans, who helped him to capture Nice from the Duchy of Savoy. In gratitude, Francis allowed Kheir-ed-Din’s fleet of galleys to winter over in Toulon in 1544, with captured Christian slaves in their crews. At the time it was the scandal of Christendom, disgusting even the staunchly anti-Spanish citizenry of Toulon. Kheir-ed-Din died in 1546 and was succeeded by his protégé Dragut Reis. Francis I of France
and Henry VIII of England died in 1547, marking the beginning of the end of an era.

The 1550s generally saw the Ottomans inching ahead in their struggle both with the Habsburgs and with the Persians to the east. From 1548 to 1566 Suleyman launched several campaigns against Persia, in a rivalry that was complicated by religious divisions: the Ottomans followed the Sunni version of Islam, whereas Persian Muslims were Shi’ites. In the Mediterranean the Ottomans sent raiding expeditions against Christian shipping and coastal settlements, aiming, as always, to capture strong-points in enemy territory. In 1551 a Turkish fleet under Dragut captured Tripoli from a contingent of the Knights of St John. The surrender of Tripoli, brokered by the French ambassador to the Ottomans, was fraught with political intrigue and Franco-Spanish rivalry among the knights. The most recent history of the knights notes that it ‘had all the appearance of a politically inspired betrayal’. In Muslim hands Tripoli would be used as a base from which to attack Spanish and Italian shipping. Whatever the role of the French in the Christian loss of Tripoli, in 1553 Turkish and French forces joined again to attack the island of Corsica. Clearly, in Mediterranean warfare of the sixteenth century, religious loyalties often bowed to political concerns.

Charles V retired from his various responsibilities in 1555–56, exhausted and dispirited by decades of warfare throughout Europe, much of it against his Christian co-religionists. His son Philip succeeded him in Spain, the Netherlands, Italy and the New World; his brother Ferdinand succeeded him as Holy Roman Emperor. Though the Habsburg lands were no longer joined under a single individual, they remained united in their opposition to the Ottomans in central Europe and the Mediterranean.

A period of renewed activity in the Mediterranean ensued in the 1560s, spurred by Piali Pasha’s audacious attack on the Balearic Islands off the coast of Spain in 1558. That attack, with a fleet of more than 100 ships, seems to have alarmed even the French. Until about 1573 the Mediterranean headed the list of Spanish priorities under Philip II (1556–98); under his leadership the Habsburg galley fleet increased to about 100 ships, and more in wartime. Spain sent a major fleet against the Turks in 1560, aiming for the island of Djerba off the coast west of Tripoli. The Ottoman fleet won a resounding victory, killing 10,000 men and sinking many vessels. However, typical of the aftermath of Mediterranean battles, they did not follow up the victory. Spain was able to rebuild its fleet in the next two years and prepared a new offensive in 1563–64 with nearly 100 ships. In response, Suleyman, still sultan of the Ottomans after four decades in power, launched an all-out effort to take Malta from the Knights of St John.

In what became known as the ‘Great Siege’, a Turkish force of about 40,000 men and 180 galleys blockaded and attacked the fortified island in May 1565. About 540 knights and subordinates, plus 1,000 troops from
Spanish Sicily in two contingents, held out for four months until the main relief force of 16,000 arrived in September. With enormous loss of life, the knights, under the iron-willed Jean de la Valette Parisot, prevailed. In honor of the victory, and recognizing that they could never return to Rhodes, the victors styled themselves thereafter as the ‘Knights of Malta’. The Ottomans blamed poor co-ordination between their sea and land forces, plus several tactical errors, for the failed siege, which also cost the life of Dragut Reis. With winter coming and rumblings against Spanish rule in the Netherlands, Philip II did not press the Ottomans after relieving the siege. Instead, he turned his attention to northern Europe until the summer of 1566, when a new Turkish offensive in the Mediterranean commanded his attention.

The death of Suleyman in the late summer of 1566 and the internal turmoil that ensued briefly neutralized the Ottomans, and Philip turned his attention increasingly toward the Netherlands. None the less, the Habsburg-Ottoman struggle in the Mediterranean would continue until the late 1570s, punctuated by the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, but marked as well by a political war of nerves and the continuing tug-of-war over strategic bits of land. A major rebellion in Spain by Christians of Muslim ancestry (the Moriscos) in 1568–70 was supported by the Ottomans, fishing in troubled waters. At the same time, Tunis became a sought-after prize on both sides of the cultural frontier. In 1569 the Bey of Algiers took Tunis and in July 1570 besieged Cyprus, which was held by Venice as a tributary of the Ottomans. Cyprus was not simply a Christian enclave in the heart of the Ottoman world, however, but a hugely profitable enterprise for the Venetians, who let Christian pirates use it as a base and profited from the sale of their booty. Though the Ottomans resented these activities, they tolerated them for decades. Finally, their patience at an end, the Ottomans besieged Cyprus in 1570.

In May 1571 Pope Pius V formed a Holy League with Spain, Venice and allies of Spain such as Genoa and Ragusa, and during the summer they assembled a combined fleet to confront the Ottomans. Led by Don Juan de Austria, the natural son of Charles V (and half-brother of Philip II), the Christian fleet comprised 208 galleys and additional sailing ships. Some of the most famous military officers, soldiers and sailors in Spain had volunteered for the fleet, plus others such as Miguel de Cervantes, who would achieve fame in other spheres. The Ottoman fleet commanded by Piali Pasha numbered 230 galleys, with their complement of sailors and soldiers. In all, over 150,000 men purportedly took part on both sides. The fleets met on 8 October near Lepanto at the mouth of the Gulf of Patras. After a fierce battle, the Christian fleet won a resounding victory, highlighted by the capture and execution of the Turkish admiral. His battle flag and armor, along with the magnificent poop lantern from his flagship, are still on display in the Royal Armoury in Madrid.
All over Christian Europe the victory at Lepanto was celebrated with lavish celebrations and great outpourings of joy, and hailed as the Christian response to the loss of Constantinople over a century before. But those in charge were under no illusions that the battle had been definitive. They knew the realities of Mediterranean strategy too well. In the long run the Ottoman capture of Cyprus was likely to have more effect than a single naval battle, however spectacular.

Though historians often blame the Christian coalition for failing to capitalize on the victory, it was not for want of trying. The Holy League launched a campaign in the Morea in 1572, but met with little success. Venice effectively ended the Holy League in 1573 by making a separate peace with the Ottomans, to preserve what remained of its Levantine commerce in the face of pirate raids and skyrocketing insurance rates. None the less, Don Juan reconquered and refortified Tunis in 1573 to defend the furthest frontiers of Spain’s North African colonies. The Ottoman response was immediate and overwhelming. With an extraordinary military and diplomatic effort, they retook Tunis in 1574, again signaling their resolve to drive all challengers from the eastern Mediterranean.

Both the Ottoman and the Spanish states had accumulated enormous debts as a result of the campaigns of the early 1570s. Both sides were also pressed by enemies far beyond the Mediterranean—the Ottomans by the Persians and the Spaniards by rebels in the Netherlands. In 1577 the weary combatants agreed to a one-year truce, formalized in 1580 and extended to ten years. The long battle for control of the Mediterranean was effectively over. The sieges of Malta, Cyprus and Tunis, and the Battle of Lepanto had not in and of themselves settled the rivalry, but their cumulative effect was exhausting and enormously expensive. Both sides seemed to recognize that continued, large-scale confrontations in the Mediterranean would not repay the effort and expense involved. They therefore accepted one another’s sphere of influence and called it a day.

The withdrawal of the major players from active confrontation left a power vacuum in the Mediterranean. There was still some active Christian campaigning against the Turks until the early seventeenth century, but no one seemed to believe in a general crusade any more. Instead, a ‘little war’ of corsairing, shifting alliances and ephemeral loyalties replaced the great war of the past. Such activities were hardly new. When they became the dominant features of Mediterranean affairs, however, they exposed the naked reality of self-interest, stripped of its modest covering of religious principles and cultural confrontation. Seventeenth-century statesmen did not invent reasons of state as a motivation for foreign policy; they merely recognized that it could sometimes stand alone, with no need for further justification.
Mediterranean corsairing flourished from the 1590s to the 1730s. Up to about 1580 one may argue that the raids of the Barbary corsairs and the Knights of Malta were part of the cosmic struggle between Christianity and Islam. Thereafter the situation resembled a free-for-all, characterized, in the words of Alberto Tenenti, by ‘systematic plunder transcending religious barriers’. Corsairing became more a business than an honorable quest, only slightly more risky than other forms of trade. The many fortified ports and islands around the Mediterranean provided ideal corporate headquarters for well-established companies of corsairs and brash new start-up operations as well.

Among the established companies the Knights of Malta held first position. Dating from the Crusades and established on Malta since 1530, they enjoyed renewed power and prestige as the Ottomans retreated. The main harbors on the island were ideal for corsairing and nearly impossible to conquer, even with enormous assault forces, as the Great Siege of 1565 had demonstrated. The knights would grow astoundingly wealthy during the great age of corsairing, still pledged to their eternal war against the Muslims and profiting handsomely from it.

The Uskoks of the Dalmatian coast were also old hands at corsairing, having plied their trade at least as early as Roman times. In the late Middle Ages the Christian Uskoks were infuriated by Turkish conquests in Hungary. Protected by the papacy and the Habsburgs, they waged their own eternal war against non-Christians during the sixteenth century. After Lepanto the Ottomans agreed to stay out of the Adriatic and the Venetians agreed to protect Turkish trade there. The Uskoks, unimpressed, continued their attacks and regularly stopped ships to inspect them for Turkish or Jewish goods. Though Venice still controlled much of Dalmatia, the Uskoks easily found allies and trading partners. During the early seventeenth century a large part of the Venetian fleet was tied down fighting the Uskoks in the northern Adriatic.

On the Islamic side of the cultural frontier were the Barbary corsairs, established in the early sixteenth century and enjoying renewed vigor in the seventeenth. Local populations along the North African coast collaborated with the corsairs, providing them with havens, protective fortifications and facilities to aid in smuggling and selling stolen goods. Their main overseer, however, was the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans tried from time to time to curb the activities of the Barbary corsairs and tear down their forts. But successive sultans also found the corsairs useful from time to time and had no incentive to wipe them out completely.

In common usage, pirates were free-booters, working for no one but themselves and outside the bounds of law. Privateers were licensed and sponsored by a government and corsairs were an official arm of a state. Whatever we call them, and whoever sponsored them, their methods—usually called corsairing here—were strikingly similar. Small fleets of light,
RAPID GALLEYS LAUNCHED ATTACKS TO SEIZE SHIPS, GOODS AND CREWS TO BE SOLD OR RANSOMED. TRADITIONALLY, GALLEY FLEETS RELIED ON SLAVE LABOR, MUCH OF WHICH WAS OBTAINED THROUGH WARFARE OR CORSAIRING. PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF BOOTY AND SLAVES WENT TO GOVERNMENT SPONSORS, FINANCIAL BACKERS, RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS AND THE OFFICERS AND CREWS ON THE SHIPS. THE USKOKS RITHED TO THEIR LOCAL CATHOLIC PARISH AND THE BARBARY CORSAIRS GAVE ALMS TO THEIR LOCAL MOSQUES.


WITH THEIR BASE IN LIVORNO (KNOWN AS LEGHORN TO THE ENGLISH), THEY LAUNCHED THEIR FIRST ASSAULT ON MUSLIM TRADE AND PORTS IN 1564. THE SALES OF BOOTY IN LIVORNO ENRICHED THE CITY AND ITS DUCAL PATRONS, JUST AS SIMILAR SALES ENRICHED THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA AND THE BEYS OF BARBARY. MERCHANTS AND CORSAIRS FROM NORTHERN EUROPE, ESPECIALLY ENGLAND AND HOLLAND, STREAMED INTO LIVORNO IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, SWELLING THE POPULATION TO ABOUT 5,000 BY 1601.


SIZEABLE NUMBERS OF ENGLISH PIRATES SETTLED IN NORTH AFRICA AS WELL AS ITALY AFTER 1604, WHEN AN ANGLO-SPANISH PEACE TREATY PUT PRIVATEERS OUT OF WORK. IN RESPONSE, THEY SIMPLY CHANGED VENUE AND CONTINUED PREYING ON SPANISH SHIPPING. ENGLISH PIRATES HAD FEW SHIPS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AT THAT POINT, BUT THEY WERE ABLE TO SEIZE PRIZES WITH SWIFT AND HEAVILY ARMED
sailing ships. Once established in Barbary, English pirates could easily find ships and crews for corsairing expeditions. Northern European pirates tended to sail from fall to spring, Barbary pirates favored the summer; combined, they presented a year-round scourge to the shipping of Venice and Spain, in particular. In the summer of 1608 alone Algerian pirates captured 50 vessels off the Valencian coast. The reintroduction of the armed sailing ship to the Mediterranean was one of the most lasting developments of the seventeenth century. After a century of development in the Atlantic and beyond, the most agile of these vessels were well suited to Mediterranean piracy and cheaper to operate. The Grand Dukes of Tuscany bought sailing ships in 1602, and there are reports of numerous raids by sailing ships in the eastern Mediterranean in the early seventeenth century.31 Galleys were still in use, of course, but they faced increasing problems of maneuverability as artillery became heavier.

Despite the decline in wholesale crusading, religious differences still infused the relations between pirates and their prey in the seventeenth century. One interesting example concerned the Moriscos of Spain, converted former Muslims whom the government had long regarded with suspicion. In 1609, having abandoned hope of assimilating Moriscos into Christian society and alarmed by evidence of their collusion with the Ottomans, the government expelled upwards of 150,000 of them. Many ended up in corsairing communities in Morocco and the Barbary states, raiding Spanish shipping. Though Morocco borders the Atlantic rather than the Mediterranean, the pirates of Salé (the ‘Salley Rovers’) were important additions to the world of seventeenth-century corsairing.

The balance sheet of corsairing in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century has only begun to be estimated. Peter Earle thinks it was substantial in the seventeenth century, with more than 100 armed ships a year sailing out solely to attack and take prizes. Trade continued despite their depredations and merchants were rarely held long if they were captured, because they were worth more as merchants than as hostages for ransom.32 Yet the effects on profits overall cannot have been negligible.

The arrival of large numbers of northern European merchants and pirates changed the character of Mediterranean trade and warfare. Their main aim was to gain regular access to the goods on the Levantine trade routes, using any means from forced business exchanges to piracy. While northern pirates lived by force, legitimate merchants were successfully invading Mediterranean markets with bolts of cloth as their only weapons.33 In the early seventeenth century, merchants from northern Europe negotiated with the Ottomans for trading privileges in the eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, using bombardment and other military tactics, they forced the corsairing states of Barbary to agree to truces and trade in exchange for tribute payments. These tactics accomplished three goals: they provided northern Europeans with some control over attacks
against the ships of their home country; they compensated the Barbary
states with tribute, providing an incentive for them to keep the treaties;
and they shifted the corsairs’ attentions to the shipping of other countries,
raising protection costs for their rivals, in what might be called ‘piracy by
proxy’.

The actions of official navies in the seventeenth-century Mediterranean
are difficult to characterize. Historians often view official actions as
different in kind from corsairing raids. That is a problematic approach,
given the relationships among official navies, licensed corsairs and
aggressive merchants. It would probably be more accurate to think of a
continuum of behaviors that included piracy, privateering, state-sponsored
corsairing, aggressive trade and naval rivalry. The lines between these
activities were especially blurred in the seventeenth century, with
individual European powers participating in a wide range of activities,
depending on their changing interests.

In 1612 the Dutch signed a capitulation with the Ottomans, gaining
permission to trade with the Levant. They also dealt in coastal trade
around the Mediterranean, in competition with the Italians. In 1620, in the
eyears of the Thirty Years War, an English squadron was sent to the
Mediterranean to cut the links between Spain and Austria. England also
sent a fleet against Algiers, trying to curb the activities of the corsairs,
culminating in a treaty in 1622.

By the 1630s fleets of sailing ships were common in the Mediterranean
and figured in several confrontations between France and Spain during the
Thirty Years War. Treaties in 1648 and 1659 ended large-scale hostilities
and ratified the altered power relations among European powers. The
Dutch officially gained their independence from Spain, which lost its
dominant position to France on the continent. England, though still in
turmoil from its civil war, made a bid for a greater international role
during Cromwell’s Protectorate. In 1655 England sent fleets against both
Tunis and Algiers, securing a renewal of her treaty with Algiers. In 1658
threats of force against Tripoli and Tunis led to treaties with those two
powers as well. England officially became a Mediterranean power as the
result of a marriage pact that Portugal arranged with the exiled Charles
Stuart: if he were restored as King of England and married Catherine of
Braganza, Portugal would give him a large dowry and the port of
Tangiers. The agreement came to pass with the restoration of Charles
Stuart as Charles II.

During the long reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715) France actively
expanded her maritime forces. From the 1650s on the so-called ‘mariti-
time’ powers—Holland and England—also built large fleets to counter the
French threat. The Mediterranean became one venue in an ongoing
struggle for seaborne dominance. European states adopted a battle-fleet
strategy first on the high seas and then in the Mediterranean from the late
1680s. Until then, individual states continued to force the Barbary corsairs to sign truces, accept tribute payments and accept trade. Historians sometimes present this strategy as a war against the Barbary corsairs, designed to achieve a ‘peaceful infiltration’ of the Mediterranean through trade.\textsuperscript{35} It is better understood as a broad and often militarily based campaign to gain commercial advantages over rivals.

The corsairing states were willing to accept forced truces, at least for a time, as long as the terms did not include all of their potential targets at once. The Ottoman sultans, likewise, accepted truces and tribute payments when it suited their interests, but did not renounce the traditional bases of their relations with the outside world: holy war (\textit{jihad}), periodic attacks (\textit{ghauz}) and the sponsorship of Muslim corsairing. Viewed by outsiders, their behavior was considered capricious and duplicitous and drove many northern Europeans into fits of self-righteous indignation. The most realistic (or the most cynical) among them recognized that they were all playing variations of the same game, even if they chose to define the rules differently. Venice had understood this for centuries, and continued to do what it could to preserve its trade, alternately making deals with the Ottomans and fighting them alone when necessary in intermittent warfare from 1644 to 1718.

The 1670s and the early 1680s were punctuated by a series of small but dramatic confrontations in the Mediterranean. An English attack on Algiers in 1671 and a war in 1677–82 forced renewals of treaties and tribute payments; the same happened in Tripoli in 1676.\textsuperscript{36} The French were also inclined to use force and were able to dominate the western Mediterranean until the late 1680s from their base at Toulon. The Dutch lacked the firepower of their rivals and generally preferred to buy their way in, arranging treaties with all three North African powers in 1682. Only in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century would large battle fleets be able to restrict the depredations of the corsairs by force.

Away from the Mediterranean, in the late seventeenth century, the Ottomans again tried to gain control of central Europe, mounting an all-out siege of Vienna in 1683. An international force led by King Jan Sobieski of Poland turned back the Turkish Army and, many have argued, finally ended the Ottoman thrust that had begun in 1453. In western Europe wars spawned by the territorial ambitions of Louis XIV shaped the remainder of the seventeenth century. In the War of the League of Augsburg in 1688–97 the actions of French naval forces finally convinced England of the value of a permanent Mediterranean base.\textsuperscript{37} With William of Orange as King of England after 1688, Dutch and English naval forces co-ordinated their efforts to thwart the ambitions of Louis XIV.

In the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13) most of Europe joined an alliance to block the accession of a French Bourbon to the throne of Spain. Although the alliance eventually gave up that goal, the English fleet
captured Gibraltar in 1704, establishing a base for its future strategy in the Mediterranean. Although the Atlantic seaboard and beyond had become the focus of European struggles for dominance, the Mediterranean continued to be a venue for political, commercial and naval rivalry into the modern age.

The developments in the Mediterranean region during the early modern centuries demonstrate several principles:

- Given the varied and difficult ecological conditions, political power depended upon the availability of natural resources. Without adequate timber supplies, a large navy could not be sustained. Without an adequate population and a rich agrarian base, neither land nor sea forces could be sustained.

- Also, because of the ecology, effective control of the Mediterranean could be maintained by holding strategic ports and islands as bases. Once fortified, strong points could be successfully defended against all but the largest amphibious assaults.

- Consequently, in early modern times large naval battles were less important than the control of strategic bases.

- In epochs dominated by expansionist powers, resistance from their neighbors defined the limits of their expansion. From the late fifteenth to the late sixteenth century, the Spanish Habsburgs in the west and the Ottoman Empire in the east effectively split the Mediterranean into two spheres of influence.

- Self-interest governed political alliances. Even in periods in which strong religious and cultural identities defined rival power blocs, alliances could cut across religious and cultural boundaries if they filled the needs of the allies.

- Minor states usually found it necessary to establish a working relationship with the dominant power in their region, regardless of its religious or cultural identity. Constancy was a luxury that minor states could not afford, unless they had powerful patrons outside the region.

- Corsairing was an ancient and persistent feature of Mediterranean life, necessitated and fostered by the region’s ecology. Whether the corsairs were unrestrained, tolerated or actively sponsored depended on the circumstances. Major powers often found it useful to encourage the activities of corsairs against their rivals. In the absence of major powers corsairs flourished without any overarching authorities to restrain them.

The Mediterranean region remains a diverse mixture of peoples and states, with a wide range of resources. Although it would be foolish to base
modern policies solely on historical precedents, it would be equally foolish
to ignore the characteristics that defined Mediterranean strategic concerns
in the early modern centuries.

NOTES

1 For background to the sixteenth century see Fernand Braudel, *The
Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols
(London, Collins, 1972–73); and the same author's three-volume exploration
of *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (New York: Harper & Row,
1981–86). Individual volume titles are *The Structures of Everyday Life: The
Wheels of Commerce* and *The Perspective of the World*. For a recent summary
of the available literature, see Michel Fontenay, *The Mediterranean, 1500–
*Hospitaller Malta 1530–1798: Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order
of St John of Jerusalem* (Msida, Malta: Mireva Publications, 1993), pp. 43–
110. John Hattendorf kindly supplied me with a photocopy of this article.

2 The 1948 Sorbonne lectures of Gaston Zeller are still useful for their wide-
ranging discussion of Mediterranean states and their strategic concerns. *La Méditerranée et ses problèmes aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Centre de
Documentation Universitaire, 1948).

3 John Pryor, *Geography, Technology and War: Studies in the Maritime History
of the Mediterranean*, 649–1571 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1987), pp. 13–15; Lawrence V. Mott, *The Development of the Rudder: A
Technological Tale* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M Press, 1997); John
and J. S. Morrison (eds), *The Age of the Galley*, pp. 217–23 (Annapolis, MD:
Naval Institute Press, 1995); John F. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys:
Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth
Century* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974); and The
Logistics of Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century: The Spanish Perspective’,
in John A. Lynn (ed.), *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare From the


5 John Pryor, ‘The Geographical Conditions of Galley Navigation in the
Mediterranean’, in *The Age of the Galley* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute
Press, 1995), pp. 208–12, with a map.


7 See Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the

developments in the eastern Mediterranean in the late fifteenth and early
sixteenth centuries.

9 H. J. A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University

10 Andrew Hess, ‘The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt (1517) and the Beginning of
the Sixteenth-Century World War’, *International Journal of Middle Eastern

11 Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State-Building in Europe


13 For a recent overview of Ottoman naval activities, see Andreas Rieger, *Die Seeaktivitäten der Muslimischen Beutefahrer also Bestandteil der Staatlichen Flotte Während der Osmanischen Expansion im Mittelmeer im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1994).


15 Sire, *Knights of Malta*, pp. 57–9, and the sources cited therein. Over time, the Ottoman forces have been estimated at 100,000–120,000, but that is surely an exaggeration. Sire suggests only that it was likely to have been 30,000–40,000. He further warns readers against the popular account by Ernle Bradford, *The Great Siege* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1961), which he finds ‘seriously deficient at every level’ (pp. 288–9), except that of entertainment.


19 See Guilmartin, *Gunpowder and Galleys*, who argues persuasively that Alfred Thayer Mahan’s theory of using large battle fleets to gain control of the seas was not appropriate to Mediterranean warfare in the sixteenth century. Other useful discussions of Mahan’s work are included in John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *The Influence of History on Mahan* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1991).


22 Sire, *Knights of Malta*, p. 66.


37 Ironically, Charles II of England had abandoned Tangier in 1684, ordering the destruction of English fortifications, so that they could not be used by anyone else.
6. Battle of the Nile, 1798. Admiral Nelson’s 14 ships of the line bearing down at dusk to envelop the French fleet anchored at Aboukir Bay. This unusual night battle in the age of sail is often used today to illustrate the basic points in maritime warfare.
Historians have actively researched matters on the Mediterranean for a long time. The Mediterranean is perhaps the best known area in the field of economic history as well as in naval history and this is not surprising. The Mediterranean is the ‘oldest’ sea. It saw the first designed warship, the trireme in the seventh century BC; the first great naval battle was fought near Corcyra in 664 BC, the first permanent battle fleet was created by Athens in the fifth century BC and its model of thalassocracy has aroused endless controversies.¹ From antiquity to the great discoveries of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, the Mediterranean was truly the center of the Western world, the link between West and East, the theater of conflict between Christendom and the Muslim world.²

We have many studies on naval battles, on maritime trade and on national naval histories. Nevertheless, we still lack a comprehensive study of seapower. The problem is not a Mediterranean one but rather a global one. Historians frequently do not have such a broad strategic view of their subject. They tend to view globalist interpretations with suspicion and their knowledge of strategic analysis is often poor, if not non-existent.

A century ago Alfred Mahan gave us a conceptual framework with his concept of seapower.³ Seapower has since become a widely popularized concept,⁴ but did not provoke a real theoretical reflection about its definition and content. Seapower is a general idea, more or less precisely associated with a naval fleet and the command of the sea, also with the merchant fleet and maritime hegemony which combine to give a global control or sea supremacy in the case of thalassocracy. But we know that the concept of seapower is a polysemous one.⁵ If we want to have a rigorous and precise interpretation of history, the only one useful for learning from the past, we must define more precisely the concept of seapower.
Seapower is not naval power; it is global power at sea. It has many dimensions: an economic one with fisheries and maritime trade as part of a global economy. The ascendancy of a dominant seapower is not only linked with a strong navy and merchant fleet but also, and even above all, to its economic background: agricultural surplus, industrial base and commercial structures. There have been many possible combinations of these factors. Some thalassocracies were based on a commercial organization without a real industrial background. This was the case in antiquity, of course, but it was also true again with Portugal in the sixteenth century. Others were based on a strong economic base which needed access to foreign markets. In addition, there is also a political dimension with the use of the navy as an instrument of foreign policy, a cultural one with an understanding of the logic of sea trade and sea domination by peoples and elites. And there is a military dimension with a naval force which is a complex one. A navy is not only a collection of warships, it is an organization with a system of command and training, with a doctrine, with a logistical infrastructure and with a basis of shipyards. Venice built its sea supremacy around active merchant guildes, superb galleys, a unique system of convoy (the mudda), and the best shipyard on the Mediterranean. English thalassocracy is the result of an outstanding navy, but also of the abundance and quality of English products.

In fact, we may say that seapower is a system. Systems analysis would be extremely useful to understand every dimension and every implication of this complex network. This has not yet really been done, even if we have some attempts such as the long cycles of George S. Modelski or the reinterpretation of British maritime history by Paul M. Kennedy. This kind of work must be generalized and deepened to avoid misinterpretations and anachronisms. For example, we speak frequently of sea control in ancient times, as if the Mahanian world were universally valid. We see Salamis or Actium as illustrations of naval warfare in the context of writings about decisive battles such as Trafalgar or Jutland. Following Mahan, Admiral Castex reasoned in this manner half a century ago. It is but recently that we have really understood that the modern concepts of sea control, of open sea campaigns and of decisive battle, do not fit in the ancient world, where the instrument of naval warfare, the galley, was subject to limitations which prohibited it from gaining and keeping sea control.

The Mediterranean in the eighteenth through the nineteenth century is a good case study to use in trying to understand the full implications of the concept of seapower. We have good historical documentation and the period is the one which allowed Mahan and his successors to build their classical concepts and framework. That world was not a very different one from our own and the records are not difficult to read or to interpret. Nevertheless, the task is difficult. First, a global interpretation of seapower...
needs a synthesis of both economic and naval history, which is not frequent (and this writer is no exception to this rule). Secondly, our documentation is still fragmentary: we see naval history from the point of view of dominant naval powers. Too often we forget the second-rank navies, whose role may have been important. Jan Glete tried to give a comprehensive view of navies which must be considered a model in its scope, as it includes Tuscany, the papal navy and others. But his work is limited to quantitative data and we have to go beyond that approach to try to evaluate seapower fully.

THE CHANGING PATTERN OF MEDITERRANEAN WARFARE AT SEA

From Greek antiquity to the end of the sixteenth century, from Corcyra to Lepanto—that is for 2,000 years—warfare at sea in the Mediterranean was dominated by the galley. The galley was a perfect instrument of war for coastal waters that had inconstant winds and few harbors able to receive large ships. It is not surprising that galleys survived longer in the narrow seas (in the Mediterranean and also in the Baltic, where the last galley fight occurred in 1810) than in the ocean. It is not sufficient to blame either social or bureaucratic inertia for this. In landlocked sea and in coastal waters the galley was an effective tool which performed well and which created a model of Mediterranean warfare characterized by the close integration of naval operations, amphibious warfare and sieges, with few large-scale battles. The sixteenth century saw only three such large battles: Preveza in 1538, Djerba in 1560 and Lepanto in 1571. These battles were spectacular. Lepanto was the greatest battle of the century, either at sea or on land, involving 150,000 men. Nevertheless, these battles were not really decisive; a galley fleet can be built in a few months and the logistical limitations of galleys prohibit the strategic exploitation of victory. For example, Piali Pasha was victorious at Djerba, but he was unable to attack the Venetian center of gravity. Two years after the disaster of Lepanto the reconstituted Turkish fleet under Uluch Ali made a great demonstration against the Apulian coast. Sea control could not be obtained in so large an area for a long period of time. It was always temporary and local. Thus we should say that it was a tactical victory not a strategic one.

This technical point must be combined with a political fact. From the beginning of history until the seventeenth century, the Mediterranean was a closed sea, with a rivalry between riverine countries with little intervention from outside intruders (one of the few exceptions being the Vikings in the Middle Ages). Again in the sixteenth century, the navies which competed in the Mediterranean were those of the Ottoman Empire, of Venice and of Habsburg Spain. This system collapsed during the
seventeenth century confronted by a dual revolution, one involving technological change and the other of a political nature.

**Technical change**

From a technical point of view, the galley was progressively supplanted by the ship-of-the-line. With her huge artillery and with her high free-board, the ship-of-the-line outranked the galley. There is, for example, the case of the French *Le Bon*, which resisted the attack of 30 Spanish galleys. This military revolution at sea occurred in the northern waters, particularly during the Anglo-Dutch wars, and the Mediterranean followed the northern example, but as already suggested, galleys lasted in the Mediterranean until the middle of the eighteenth century. The superiority of the ship-of-the-line was so evident that the transformation was a necessity.

**Political change**

From a political point of view, the seventeenth century sees the end of the crucial antagonism between Christendom and the Muslim world, between the western and the eastern Mediterranean, yet the rivalry between the two ‘blocs’ did not disappear. There was, for example, the Morea War at the end of the seventeenth century, between Venice and Turkey (1684–98) in which the Venetian victory was recognized by the Treaty of Carlowitz. The Turkish revenge took place in the war of 1714–18, where, after battles at Corfu, Lemnos and Cape Matapan, Venice lost the Morea at the peace of Passarowitz. These events, however, were no longer the central pieces in Mediterranean diplomacy and strategy. The eastern and the western Mediterranean area followed relatively independent developments.

The most important political innovation was the first serious intrusion of outside powers into the Mediterranean. During the Franco-Dutch War of 1672–79, a decayed Spain was obliged to call in the Dutch fleet of Admiral de Ruyter. At the end of the century England appeared in the Mediterranean. During two decades, 1664–84, it controlled Tangiers but eventually withdrew from it due to budgetary constraints and to the doubtful strategic utility of maintaining that position. It returned during the Nine Years War (or the War of the League of Augsburg, 1688–97) and its presence became permanent with the seizure of Gibraltar during the War of the Spanish Succession in 1704 and of Minorca in 1708.

To this, we may also add the growth of the French Navy. France is, of course, a Mediterranean power but it is also an Atlantic power and the division of its navy between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean will remain one of its major problems. Similarly, we must note in the first years of the eighteenth century the appearance of Russian power on the Black
Sea coast, which marks the beginning of a process which would dominate the Mediterranean system during the nineteenth century.¹⁴

With these technical and political transformations, the traditional pattern of Mediterranean warfare at sea ended. A new model emerged which progressively became more and more similar to the Atlantic model. The growth of the Atlantic system did not mean that the Mediterranean had become a secondary theater. Recent historical research suggests that it is wrong to think that there was a sharp decline in the Mediterranean economy due to the great oceanic discoveries. While those discoveries favoured the rapid development of the northern countries—first Holland and then England—the economic base of the Mediterranean countries remained strong. In the eighteenth century, Venice was still as rich as Holland and the trade between England and the Mediterranean was an important one.¹⁵ The somewhat overestimated decline of Spain has erroneously been extended to the whole Mediterranean system, but the Mediterranean area remained vital to the great power system of the eighteenth century.

THE BALANCE OF SEAPower IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The French Case

In this new context the idea of the command of the Mediterranean appeared. In France, Colbert built his naval policy around this idea. In 1679 he wrote to the général des galères: ‘Considérez s’il vous plaît quelle gloire le Roy et vous recevrez d’être entièrement maitre de la Méditerranée et de n’avoir jamais aucune puissance dans cette Mer qui puisse ni égaler ni balancer celle du Roy.’ In his instructions to his son and successor Seignelay, he repeated that the minister must ‘penser continuellement aux moyens de rendre le Roy maître de la Méditerranée’.¹⁶ The first step of his grand dessein was first executed with the Sicily campaign, where Vivonne and Duquesne were victorious at Stromboli, Augusta and Palermo in 1676, but the tactical command of the sea obtained through these victories could not be exploited strategically. France was too heavily engaged on the northeastern front and was unable to provide enough troops to subdue Sicily. The island was finally evacuated and the campaign ended without result.

The efforts of Louis XIV, of Colbert, and of the latter’s son Seignelay to build a strong navy are well known.¹⁷ The results are impressive: a nearly ruined navy became, in two decades, the first in Europe. France competed more than honorably with the Anglo-Dutch coalition, particularly during the Nine Years War. In this war, however, the main strategic theater was in the English Channel,¹⁸ the Mediterranean had become secondary. The
main French base was Brest, even if Toulon received important equipment and many more projects.\textsuperscript{19} Toulon was still active in the first years of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701–14.\textsuperscript{20} There was only one battle-in-line, Velez-Malaga in 1704, but both fleets were engaged in the support of military operations in Catalonia. In October 1707, soon after the siege of Toulon, the well-known Duguay-Trouin and Forbin surprised an English convoy at Cape Lizard and captured it almost entirely: four warships and 60 merchant vessels. This \textit{coup d’éclat}, somewhat forgotten by contemporary naval historians, had a great impact on the war in Spain. It was a severe blow for the Imperial Army in Catalonia and contributed to the victory of Felipe V The French fleet also supported the sieges of Gibraltar and Nice,\textsuperscript{21} but the naval effort collapsed after 1706 for several reasons. Priority was given to the Army to repel the invasion; Toulon was besieged by the allies and suffered heavy casualties in 1707, and, first of all in the \textit{longue durée}, the British, having seized the splendid position of Gibraltar, constantly threatened the links between Brest and Toulon.

In the face of this France was not able to establish itself as a durable seapower in the Mediterranean. It tried periodically to compete with England, but could not impose domination at sea. In the end, the \textit{grand dessein} of Louis XIV and Colbert was abandoned by their successors. The Regency accepted second rank at sea and Louis XV made no serious effort to rebuild the Navy. After the great disasters of the Seven Years War, which occurred more in the Atlantic than in the Mediterranean, Choiseul tried to reconstitute French naval power. His aim was to have a navy equivalent to two-thirds of the Royal Navy, with the hope that the Spanish and the Neapolitan Navy would provide the complement to match British superiority.\textsuperscript{22} His policy was validated during the American War of Independence. Finally, during the last decades of the \textit{ancien régime}, France had an efficient navy that was able to match the Royal Navy. Yet France was not a naval power in relation to its military power. French maritime trade suffered heavily during the Seven Years War, but during the War of the Austrian Succession and the American War of Independence the Navy was able to organize an effective convoy system for the protection of trade.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{British Command of the Sea?}

If eighteenth-century France was not a seapower, may we say that England was a seapower in the Mediterranean during that century? The answer seems evident. The eighteenth century was the period of English ascendancy at sea. It no longer had naval rivals; its maritime trade was flourishing and its navy was able to compete with any enemy and even deter some reluctant countries. In the Mediterranean the Royal Navy relied on the strategic base of Gibraltar, seized in 1704 (and retained after
the inconclusive battle of Velez-Malaga, 24 August 1704), and, during the first part of the century, on the advanced post at Minorca which was seized in 1708. From that point onward, it maintained a permanent squadron in the Mediterranean. As Jeremy Black has noted, the British naval presence in the Mediterranean during the eighteenth century marked the beginning of naval diplomacy: ‘it led some admirals, such as Byng in the late 1710s and Mathews in the 1740s, wielded proconsular power, negotiating with foreign rulers, dictating to British diplomats’, to be able to convoy troops, to mount amphibious operations and to intimidate Naples into neutrality in 1742.24

Britain was not able to do this without difficulties. During the Nine Years War England had to engage privateers in the Mediterranean (1695), which meant that it did not have sea control. The use of Gibraltar was the condition for exercising seapower in the Mediterranean, but during the wars the pressure on the Rock was so great that a good part of the Royal Navy’s capabilities had to be diverted to resupply the garrison. When the base was supposed to sustain the fleet, it was, in fact, sometimes the fleet which sustained the base. Consequently, British capabilities were weakened in effectively dominating the western Mediterranean during periods of conflict or simply in protecting British trade. After achieving success in holding Gibraltar (19 March 1705, after five French ships-of-the-line had been sunk and the siege of Gibraltar raised), the Royal Navy was unable to launch the attack against Cadiz that the French and the Spaniards had feared.25 Even though French trade had suffered heavily, British trade received severe blows from French privateers and also from Tourville’s fleet in the capture of the Smyrna convoy off Cape St Vincent in June 1693 (80 merchantmen seized).

For a long time British admirals were not very lucky in the Mediterranean. In 1704 the battle of Velez-Malaga was inconclusive, but would have ended in a British disaster if the Earl of Toulouse had chosen to pursue the fight, since the British ships had no more ammunition. Similarly in 1744, during the War of the Austrian Succession, the blockade of the Spanish fleet initiated by Admiral Mathew ended in failure after the battle of Cape Sicié and he was court-martialed. At the battle of Port Mahon on 20 May 1756 Admiral John Byng was unable to repel the French fleet of La Galissonière and to prevent the fall of Minorca. He was court-martialed and shot after an unfair trial. The Royal Navy took its revenge three years later in the battle of Lagos, which saw the destruction of the French Mediterranean squadron. The result, however, was strategically ambiguous. The British were unable to recover Minorca and the shortage of naval bases would be fatal for them during the American War of Independence.

From this overview we may then conclude that the Royal Navy did hold sea control in the Mediterranean throughout the century. During this
period British trade in the Mediterranean remained active and was less sensitive to the shock of wars than the French,\footnote{26} thanks to an efficient system of convoys.\footnote{27} It is this combination of commercial and naval pre-eminence that characterizes seapower. Seapower, however, is not synonymous with hegemony. Britain had a good instrument in its navy but it was insufficient to match a coalition of Mediterranean powers. Britain had to rely on a French alliance against Spain during the Regency, when the Spanish fleet was destroyed at the battle of Cape Passaro on 11 August 1718, while supporting operations in Sicily.\footnote{28} It had to rely on a Spanish alliance against France during the first years of the Revolution. Later, when confronted by a coalition of Mediterranean powers, it was unable to retain strategic sea control, as shown during the American War of Independence or for some months in 1797–98. The experience of the British in the Mediterranean during the eighteenth century reminds us that seapower is not necessarily absolute and does not mean the same thing as sea supremacy.

The Myth of the Spanish Decline

The dominant historiography tends to consider modern history through the lens of Anglo-French antagonism. Other countries are implicitly dismissed as insignificant. It is, perhaps, true of the Italian states, where navies were virtually non-existent, even if the kingdom of Naples tried to build one in the second half of the eighteenth century. Austria had no navy, except for a brief attempt during the reign of Charles VI. In 1739 the fleet was disbanded and the ships sold to the Republic of Venice.\footnote{29} Venetian seapower was declining, even if it had peaks in strength as late as 1780,\footnote{30} and was clearly a second-rank power. During this period Malta was an emporium which tried to preserve its independence between France and Naples\footnote{31} with some echo of its ancient glory in such events as the great cruise of the Marquis de Chambray (‘the Rogue of Malta’) against the Turks in 1732.\footnote{32}

This was not the case with Spain. The image given by Anglo-Saxon historians suggests a chronic decline from the loss of Gibraltar until Trafalgar. Spanish historians called it \textit{la leyenda negra de la Armada española} (‘the black legend of the Spanish Armada’).\footnote{33} Recent research corrects this view. During the eighteenth century ‘Spain again became, if briefly, a dynamic seapower’.\footnote{34} Under Kings Felipe V (1700–46) and Carlos III (1759–88), with the great minister the Marquis de Enseñada, there was shipbuilding of high quality and there were able leaders,\footnote{35} such as Admiral José de Mazarredo, one of the finest seamen of his time, and Luis Córdoba y Córdoba, who captured two British convoys, taking a total of 79 merchant ships during the American War of Independence. The Spanish Navy was able to recapture Minorca, which the British had
recovered in the Treaty of Paris at the end of the Seven Years War in 1782. After the failure of the Spanish expedition to Sicily in 1718 the Mediterranean area was not the center of gravity for Spanish strategy, but rather the line of communication across the Atlantic to the Spanish Empire in America. The decline in its importance occurred in the last decade of the century, mainly for political reasons.

The March to Hegemony: The Wars of the French Revolution and Empire

The wars of the French Revolution and Empire were a continuous and unequal struggle. The French Navy was put in complete disarray by the Revolution. Nevertheless, the naval history of the wars during this time is interesting, because it shows the versatility of seapower. It was clear that the French Navy was unable to succeed in a major battle line with the Royal Navy. The battles of the Nile (Aboukir) and Trafalgar were the depths in a long series of defeats. Yet the French Navy was able to initiate large operations, such as Bruix’s campaign in the Mediterranean in 1799, which was nevertheless unsuccessful. Britain retained command of the sea, but Admiral Nelson was unable to intercept the convoy of the Army of Egypt and only after a long chase was able to destroy the French fleet in the battle of Aboukir.

Britain maintained a network of insular positions in the Mediterranean, including Corsica for a few months between 1794 and 1796 and on Minorca from 1798 to 1802, but had to rely first on Spanish and then on Neapolitan alliances. When the Spanish alliance ceased to exist after the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1796, the Royal Navy, in spite of the weakness of the French Navy, was obliged to evacuate the western Mediterranean for logistical reasons and this move prompted the quick withdrawal of Austria from the war.

The Royal Navy returned to the Mediterranean after a short period and this contributed to the determination to maintain a position in the Mediterranean at any price. The British took the island of Malta in 1800 and, after the Peace of Amiens in 1802, it became, with Gibraltar, one of the cornerstones of British maritime hegemony in the Mediterranean during the nineteenth century. In 1815 Britain added the Ionian Islands with their key strategic point at Corfu, so coveted by Napoleon as well as by the Russian newcomers, with the fleet of Uschakov and Seniavin which operated from the islands for some years until the Treaty of Tilsit.

During the Wars of the French Revolution and Empire, Britain succeeded, for the first time, in establishing a permanent blockade. It employed a close blockade against Brest, but Nelson personally preferred a distant blockade to allow the escape of the enemy and preserve the possibility of a decisive battle. After Trafalgar the morale and material
superiority of the Royal Navy was so great that the French Navy would not even try to go to sea and remained in its bases. While Napoleon built many warships they did not truly constitute a navy, so great were the lacks in morale, training and doctrine.

British warships were a constant presence on coasts of Europe. After Trafalgar Britain was able through its predominant naval strength, to thwart Napoléon’s Continental system in these seas, by encouraging large-scale smuggling on the southern fringe of his empire, by blockading French ports in Italy and Dalmatia, interrupting the supply of food and naval stores to them and to French-controlled dockyards, while establishing its own bases at Malta and after 1803 at Lissa (modern Vis) and defeating a French force which tried to take it in 1811 and by supporting anti-French guerrilla activity in Calabria, Dalmatia and Morea.39

The British blockade, however, had limited effects. The French economy was oriented toward the continent and the French Treasury was supplied by contributions from defeated countries. Until 1813 the economic situation of France remained fairly good.40 The British strategy of peripheral action never obtained decisive results and conjunct operations, as, for example, those in southern Italy in 1806, were as unsuccessful in the Mediterranean as they were elsewhere.41

Seapower played a decisive role in the result but it was unable to create it by itself. As John Hattendorf has written about this period: ‘The ministry in London did not design its naval strategy in the Mediterranean to strike a mortal blow at France, but to maintain Britain’s ability to control and to limit French moves, while crippling blows were struck elsewhere.’42 The command of the sea gave to the coalition a great freedom of action and limited the possible alternatives for the French. It was decisive in the long term and without it Napoleon would not have been defeated, but it is not accurate to say that Trafalgar was the mortal blow. The collapse of the French Empire occurred a decade later and only after the disastrous retreat from Russia. Thus British seapower was able to motivate coalitions and to prevent French hegemony on the continent only when it co-operated with associates on land against the hegemonic power.43 Once again, it must be remembered that seapower is truly effective only when it is part of global power.

The Nineteenth Century: From Hegemony to Balance of Power

In the nineteenth century the Mediterranean Sea was a united theater of operations. This unification was permitted by two factors, as in the seventeenth century, one technical and one political. In the nineteenth
century the technical factor was the progressive introduction of the steamship,\(^4\) which allowed long cruises all around the year; the political factor was the decay of the Ottoman Empire by which the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin was no longer closed to the Christians, who were able to launch major expeditions against Egypt in 1801, Greece in 1827 and in the Black Sea in 1855–56.

In contrast to the eighteenth century, there was no great war at sea in the Mediterranean between 1815 and 1914. The only notable naval events were the destruction of the Turkish fleet by a combined British-French-Russian fleet at Navarino in 1827, an episode of gunboat diplomacy which degenerated into battle,\(^4\) and the battle of Lissa in 1866, between Austrian and Italian fleets, which is not a major event when measured by the number of ships involved, had no strategic effects but had a great tactical impact through the revived used of the ram. Throughout the century there was an intensive use of naval diplomacy linked to the ‘Eastern Question’.\(^4\)

The survival of the Ottoman Empire until 1914 was due more to the diplomatic game played between the great powers, and particularly to the will of the hegemonic power, than to the Ottoman Empire’s own strength.

**British Hegemony: Diplomacy and Strategy**

After 1815 British sea control had become hegemonic. The global superiority of Great Britain was undisputed and it was able to maintain local superiority through reinforcements. The Mediterranean squadron, based at Malta, could fairly quickly receive reinforcements from the Home Fleet. Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to see this period as one of quiet hegemony with a naval instrument that was so strong that Great Britain no longer needed to use diplomatic alliances. The diplomatic game of the eighteenth century continued to be pursued in the nineteenth century, but with less difficulty, thanks to naval and economic superiority. British alliances performed remarkably well throughout the century.

Britain’s first potential enemy was France. After the Treaty of Vienna French naval power was destroyed and would never recover fully, although during the *Monarchie de Juillet* (1830–48), King Louis-Philippe began a policy of naval restoration\(^4\) and colonial expansion. The axis of his Mediterranean policy was to support the Pasha of Egypt Mehmet Ali. Lord Palmerston’s nightmare was that Mehmet Ali would succeed in creating ‘an Independent state consisting of Syria, Egypt and Arabia. Once this was accomplished, then Tunis and Tripoli would be pressed into the same system and France [which had occupied Algiers in 1830] would become practically mistress of the Mediterranean.’\(^4\)

To prevent this possibility Britain organized a diplomatic coalition with Prussia, Austria and Russia whose Tsar, Nicholas I, disliked Louis-Philippe. On the verge of war in 1840 Louis-Philippe retreated.
This crisis is a good example of the way in which British power was able to deter the French government from pushing ahead with its ambitions. It shows, too, British diplomatic skillfulness in making an alliance with Russia when it was already in competition with Britain over the Eastern Question. At the same time it also shows the limitations of peacetime British naval power. The Turkish sultan asked for British naval assistance against Mehemet Ali as early as 1831, but Britain was very slow to respond. It was not until 1839 that it seriously reinforced the Mediterranean fleet and this delay was beneficial for Russia, which used the opportunity effectively and succeeded in obtaining paramount influence over the Porte by the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi in 1833. This failure was not due to British incompetence or blindness, but simply to the weakness of the Royal Navy: as one historian has commented, ‘With only 14 line-of-battle ships in commission and two other international crises brewing—Portugal and Holland were the critical areas—Britain was physically incapable of responding at once to the Sultan's appeal.’

The Franco-Egyptian fleet outclassed the British Mediterranean fleet, but LouisPhilippe understood well that this local superiority would be only temporary and that France would eventually be defeated if Great Britain put its global power in action.

What is truly remarkable in British conduct in this period was that, after succeeding in obtaining the support of Russia against France, 15 years later the country succeeded in obtaining French support against Russia. The Crimean War broke Russia’s movement in the direction of the Mediterranean and the Near East for two decades. Only after having denounced the limitation clause of the Paris Treaty following the French defeat by Prussia in 1871 did Russia try to renew its diplomatic progress in the Balkans. Its initial success was offset by the coalition of Germany and Britain, nullifying the effects of the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878. As in the eighteenth century, one can see that seapower in the nineteenth century was also part of global power, demonstrating once again that strategy is part of policy alongside diplomacy. During the nineteenth century Britain had the most powerful naval instrument, but it also had the most skillful and coherent diplomacy.

France and Great Britain at the End of the Nineteenth Century: Two Geopolitical Conceptions

The last part of the nineteenth century saw a strategic revolution with the opening of the Suez Canal. The impact of this event was enormous. The Mediterranean ceased to be a landlocked sea and became the vital link to the part of the British Empire that lay along the shores of the Indian ocean. Consequently, the British tried to maintain control of the canal and they succeeded in 1881–82, thanks to an incredible blunder in French
diplomacy. Great Britain transferred the profits from the canal to the French-owned Compagnie universelle du Canal de Suez, but maintained strategic control of the canal and reinforced its strategic network by taking Cyprus in 1879 as a compensation for the Ionian Islands abandoned in the preceding decade. (In fact, Cyprus was as deceptive as the Ionian Islands had been; it had no good harbor and proved to be of doubtful utility.) As Prime Minister Disraeli declared in Parliament: ‘In taking Cyprus, the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian. We have taken a step which we think is necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and for its preservation.’ Thus the British view was an ‘external’ and horizontal one. For them, the Mediterranean was a maritime route, marked out by Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Alexandria and, beyond the Mediterranean, Aden, to the Indian Ocean.

On the other side, the French view was an ‘internal’ and vertical one. The French Mediterranean was limited to the western basin, to the route between Toulon and Algiers and, after 1881, between Toulon and Bizerta, which became a great naval base at the turning point of the two parts of the Mediterranean, although the harbor was poor and too vulnerable. The French view encompassed a strategic triangle, which become a reality only in the 1930s with the building of Mers el-Kébir. In itself, this geographical basis was not sufficient to give seapower to France, due to the lack of an effective navy. The Second Empire (1852–70) made a great effort to build a strong and modern fleet, but all this was destroyed by defeat in the war against Prussia in 1871, and then was followed by the technical and doctrinal disorder which prevailed with the Jeune École during the two last decades of the century.

The New Mediterranean Game

By the end of the nineteenth century the period of Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian rivalry was coming to an end. Paralleling this, two political transformations created a new balance of power in the region. The first was extra-Mediterranean in the form of a new threat coming from Germany, a land power which wanted to become a seapower. Although France and Britain each had difficulties in understanding the new situation and even thought they continued to have colonial rivalries, such as the Fashoda incident, France and Britain were moving progressively toward the Entente cordiale.

The agreements of 1904 marked the settlement of the old, recurrent problems and opened the way for the strategic co-operation which was eventually concluded in the exchange of letters between Sir Edward Grey and Ambassador Cambon on 23 November 1912 and by the naval convention of 10 February 1913. Similarly, the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia was settled by the agreement of 31 July 1907, which opened the way
to the naval convention of 1914. In the light of these agreements the Royal Navy was able to concentrate its forces in the North Sea against the growing German naval threat. The concentration of naval force that Lord Fisher imposed allowed Great Britain to keep its naval superiority in metropolitan waters, but the price was the end of British hegemony in Mediterranean at a point when the dependency of the British economy on the Mediterranean route had never been so high: as Paul Halpern has written, ‘By 1911, the Black Sea accounted for one third of Britain’s annual food imports and when the traffic from the Suez Canal was included, nearly half of all its food supply passed through the Mediterranean.’

The British Mediterranean fleet, which was the strongest component of the Royal Navy, with an average of ten first-class battleships on station in the first years of the century and a maximum of 14 in 1902, declined progressively to eight in 1904 and six in 1907. In the 1912 reorganization the number of battleships was reduced to four based at Gibraltar, with only a cruiser squadron remaining at Malta. After the Foreign Office protested a compromise was found: a squadron of four battle-cruisers would be based at Malta, the first battle-cruiser arrived only in November 1912, followed by two others in August 1913.

From this point, the Mediterranean Sea was now the domain of the French Armée Navale. The French concentration of naval forces began in 1907 and reached its maximum strength in 1911–12. At this time, however, the French Navy was in relative decline. France had been the second ranking naval power in 1898, but had dropped to only the fifth some years later and its ships were being out-classed by foreign shipbuilding. The French naval concentration in the Mediterranean was an attempt to compensate for this decline and for the inability to compete with the Hochseeflotte. Yet French strength had decayed to the point that the Armée Navale was just able to balance the combined Italian and Austrian navies. The appearance of the German Mittelmeer Division, with the superb battle-cruiser Goeben, introduced a new complication for the French Navy. Moreover, the strategic vision of French leaders remained limited to the western and the central Mediterranean. For the French Army the priority was the transfer of the XIX Corps from North Africa to metropolitan France; for the Navy the obsession was with the British concentration in Malta for the decisive battle which, according to the doctrine, must occur at the outbreak of hostilities.

In addition to the changing relationships between the large navies in the Mediterranean, there was another transformation: the growth of regional navies. The process was at work during the second part of the nineteenth century, at least from the Austro-Italian War, which saw the victory of the Austrian Fleet of Admiral Tegethoff against the Italian Fleet of Admiral Persano at Lissa in 1866. The newly united kingdom of Italy built a navy to establish its power status and to counterbalance the Austrian Navy in the
Adriatic while the Austro-Hungarians built a navy primarily for political reasons.

Thus the Triple Alliance was no longer merely a land coalition, its naval component had begun to grow. The naval convention signed on 5 December 1900 was an unrealistic one and remained dormant. However, after the redeployment of the Royal Navy, which gave second rank among the Mediterranean navies to the Italian Navy, and the growth of Austrian Navy (with the building of the Viribus-Unities dreadnoughts) a new convention was concluded in Vienna in June 1913. Naval co-operation between the two countries was hampered by distrust between the Italians and the Austrians. In addition, Italian policy oscillated between supporting the Triple Alliance and attempting to make a rapprochement with France. There was also a division within the French government, as shown in the secret agreement of 1902, which had been negotiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but was not known to the Conseil supérieur de la Marine. Co-operation between the two countries was also permanently compromised by Italian susceptibility and by incidents such as the Libyan War of 1911.

But Austria and Italy were not alone, the first decade of the new century was characterized by the beginning of a naval arms race in the Mediterranean that included a number of other powers. Spain was building dreadnoughts and France, anxious to prevent the risk of another enemy on its borders, reached agreements with Spain in October 1904 and in July 1907 over their interests in Morocco. At the same time, both Greece and Turkey were engaged in a competition which had a tremendous impact on the First World War. The British seizure of the nearly completed dreadnought Sultan Osman prompted the arrival of the German Goeben at Constantinople and the entry of Turkey into the war alongside Germany.

CONCLUSION

Seapower in the Mediterranean between the eighteenth and nineteenth century played an important role in European affairs, even if the decisive theater was the Atlantic. This period saw the triumph of Great Britain, which eventually obtained sea supremacy as part—but also as one of the causes—of global hegemony. This success was permitted by the exceptional conjunction of economic power, diplomacy and strategy. Naval power was but one component, whose efficiency was maximized only when it was fully integrated into a coherent policy. The Mediterranean case is but an illustration of Raymond Aron’s maxim: ‘With the military, you can’t do everything, but without it you can do nothing.’
NOTES

5 See the exegesis by Herbert Rosinski, Commentaire de Mahan (Paris: ISC-Economica, 1996).
6 Cf. James Cable, Gunboat Diplomacy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970, 3rd edn, 1989); Ken Booth, Navies and Foreign Policy (London: Croom Helm, 1976). These books are devoted to the twentieth century but the political uses of the navy have existed for a long time.
15 See, for France only, the numerous theses listed in Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, L’histoire maritime en France, 2nd edn (Paris: ISC-Economica, 1997).
30 Glete, Navies and Nations.
40 This point is emphasized by Admiral Castex in Théories stratégiques (Paris: ISC-Economica, 1997), tome I.Same conclusion in François Crouzet, De la supériorité, p. 237.
41 Toulon in 1793 was a success, at least a tactical success, but only by the virtue of civil war in France.
49 Ibid., p. 71.
52 Quoted in H.Hummel and W.Siewert, La Méditerranée (Paris: Payot, 1939), p. 221. [Disraeli made this remark in the Lords, Hansard at col. 1773. I am grateful to Dr John Beeler for providing this reference. Ed.]
7. Austro-Hungarian battleships of the Tegetthoff class mounted four, triple-gun turrets, all on the centreline and superimposed fore and aft. Four of these Dreadnoughts were added to the fleet in 1913–15, arousing concern among the Allies.
PART II

THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE ERA OF THE WORLD WARS
When Vice-Admiral Sir John Fisher took up his appointment as Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, in 1899, his fleet was ‘Britain’s principal fighting force’ and Britannia, though under challenge from the putatively hostile Franco-Russian alliance, ruled the waves of the middle sea.¹ Austria-Hungary and Italy, moreover, were traditional friends and Britain exercised the paramount influence at the Ottoman court. Though Britain’s political and economic interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East were not negligible, they did not form a significant proportion of the nation’s total economic portfolio, while the principal imperial political responsibilities were located well beyond the region’s bounds. At the century’s opening, then, the Mediterranean’s role in imperial strategy was essentially that of a superhighway to the world wide web, a function underlined emphatically by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Britain viewed the Mediterranean ‘as a single geo-strategic unit’, but in the industrial era it was no longer the centre of the world.²

However, within the reign of Edward VII the entire Mediterranean situation was revolutionized. The exploitation of the oil resources of the Middle East conferred upon the region an intrinsic value, but more significant were the diplomatic and military gymnastics which, though orchestrated elsewhere, had profound implications for the Mediterranean. When Fisher became First Sea Lord in 1904 it was becoming clear to British strategists that the main threat to Imperial security was to the metropole itself, from the rapidly developing German fleet, backed by the Kaiser’s formidable army. Fisher’s solution to this riddle of the sands was to concentrate British naval power in home waters, chiefly at the expense of the Mediterranean, which, ironically, he had reinforced to its highest
ever strength in 1902. Fisher’s young disciple Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty from 1911 to 1915, frantically pursuing the same policy, further reduced British naval strength east of Gibraltar to a handful of second-rate units. The significance of the Mediterranean in British strategy had, in fact, varied greatly over time and on occasion the country had substantially reduced its presence or even withdrawn temporarily from the middle sea, as in 1756, 1776 and 1796.4

What price the superhighway in wartime, given this drastic reduction in its defences, which could scarcely be made good by the Army? Conservative opinion was horrified, the Standard observing in 1912, ‘Because of our pre-occupation with the North Sea we have lost our hold upon the Mediterranean, the carotid artery of Empire.’5 The situation was arguably worse than in 1902. France and Russia had continued to increase their naval budgets, and Italy and Austria-Hungary had joined the dreadnought club. Germany was developing its interests in the Balkans, paying court to Turkey and mapping out a ‘Berlin to Baghdad railway’. Wilhelmine designs were having a destabilizing influence on the region, compounded by the rise of Zionism and its obverse, Arab nationalism. Middle East oil, over which the British held a virtual monopoly and which, by Churchill’s fiat, now fuelled the Navy’s latest warships, thus became an increasingly vulnerable strategic investment.6 For the foreseeable future, however, the dangers were more apparent than real. The hopes of the Jews of the diaspora could be stalled and the Arabs wooed. The Foreign Office engaged in a discreet campaign to retain Turkish friendship. Italy and Austria-Hungary were uneasy partners in the Triple Alliance with Germany and their naval building was directed largely against each other. Most dramatically, French naval power was afflicted by a series of political and matériel crises and that of Russia by the disasters of the war with Japan.7 Of less immediate relevance was the conclusion of ententes with France (1904) and Russia (1907), coupled with the Anglo-Japanese alliance (1902) and the beginning of a century-long appeasement of the United States (1895–1903). The arrangements with America and Japan effectively safeguarded the Western Hemisphere, Far East, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean—and thus the greater part of the Empire.

The implications for the superhighway of the ententes with France and Russia were slow to emerge. In part this was due to traditional British reluctance to embrace ‘entangling alliances’ in the interest of retaining freedom of action and perhaps arriving at an entente with Germany. However, threatening events, such as the Moroccan crises of 1905–6 and 1911, strengthened these ententes. Nevertheless, Britain, unyielding in its traditional policy of keeping the Black Sea fleet east of the Dardanelles, spurned naval approaches from Russia.8 Then, in 1912, Churchill’s proposed sweeping redistribution, to provide a 60 per cent margin against Germany, forced the Committee of Imperial Defence (meeting at Malta),
the Admiralty and the Foreign Office to reconsider the future defence of
the superhighway. Britannia’s Mediterranean nakedness was covered by
euphemisms, temporary deployments and vague promises of future
reinforcements. Two or three battle-cruisers, selected largely because their
speed enabled them to return home quickly should war break out in the
North Sea, were stationed in the Mediterranean, which otherwise was
patrolled only by obsolescent cruisers, light craft and submarines. Fisher
and Churchill were unworried by this tokenism, largely because Fisher,
that eccentric visionary whose prophetic shafts missed as often as they hit,
believed that ‘The immense development of the submarine precludes the
presence of heavy ships of war or the passage of trade through the
Mediterranean Sea; equally, it precludes the capture of Malta by an
invading force.’ Fisher’s dictum apparently satisfied two of the three naval
imperatives: the defence of British bases and the effective countering of
enemy battlefleets by handy torpedo craft. However, imperial statesmen
and strategists were alarmed by the threatened closure of the
superhighway, which would force communications with India and points
east on to the Cape route, and be extravagantly wasteful of both merchant
shipping and naval escorts. The solution was to persuade the French to
shoulder the principal naval defence of the Mediterranean. The
Anglo-French Naval Convention of 6 August 1914 laid down that ‘The
French Fleet will undertake throughout the Mediterranean the protection
of British and French commerce and watch the Adriatic, Suez Canal and
Straits of Gibraltar.’ Indeed, Britain had almost always required the
assistance of allies to help control rogue Mediterranean powers.
Thus did the ancient enemy, one-time arch-rival for global empire, become
gatekeeper to its former antagonist’s imperial superhighway. Thus also did
the Mediterranean slot at last into place in Britain’s pragmatic,
twentieth-century ‘4A’ grand strategy: armaments, alliances,
accommodation and appeasement.

The Anglo-French agreement was signed after the outbreak of the Great
War, which in the Mediterranean scarcely followed the pre-war strategic
script. The first dramatic upset was the belligerence of Turkey, whose
successful seduction by Germany was sealed by the arrival in the Sea of
Marmara of the Goeben and the Breslau. Austria, habitual ally of
Britain, and Bulgaria joined the hostile ranks, threatening not only
Britain’s allies and friends Serbia, Rumania and Greece but also Allied
control of the Balkans, the Adriatic and the Aegean. However, Italy was
the enigma. Italian foreign policy from unification to Mussolini was
always essentially opportunistic and reactive, since the country lacked the
strength to take an independent line and tended to oscillate between the
principal land power and the strongest sea power, hoping that the two
would not come into conflict and force it to take sides, with perhaps fatal
consequences. If Italy’s initial neutrality was something of a relief to
France, its geographical position, reinforced by its acquisition of Libya in 1911, astride the Sicilian Narrows, and supported by its increasingly powerful fleet, posed the most dangerous threat to the superhighway. Little wonder then that accommodation and appeasement were used freely to tempt Italy away from its alliance with Germany and Austria and on to the Allied side in April 1915. At last, the superhighway seemed safe; troops, supplies and oil flowed westward through the canal and round to the killing grounds on the Western Front and at Gallipoli.

If British strategists breathed a collective sigh of relief, it was quickly cut short by military and technical developments predicted by few before the war. Little thought had been given in Britain to the consequences of either Russian co-belligerency or Turkish hostility. Once this situation had come about, the fertile brain of Churchill made a virtue out of necessity. He sought to exploit Allied naval supremacy, which, given Italian policy, was scarcely in question, to knock away the oriental prop of the Central Powers, simultaneously succouring Russia via the Black Sea. The First Lord, employing his familiar, plausible rhetoric to carry the Cabinet and the armed services with him, proposed a naval expedition to force the Dardanelles and bring about Turkey’s surrender. In conception a classic demonstration of the flexibility of seapower and its capacity to project a nation’s power over long distances, causing maximum attrition of enemy strength at small cost, in execution it was a dismal failure. The story of the Gallipoli mud and muddle is an oft-told tale, a ‘how not to’ of combined operations whose blood-drenched lessons haunted the amphibious planners of World War II.

The advent of enemies within the Mediterranean clouded the pre-war strategic vision, which was centred firmly on the protection of the superhighway. As the war dragged on, the clouds became thicker, Britain’s Mediterranean rationale more obscure; the Mediterranean, together with the Middle East, fast became a strategic end in itself. Even when Gallipoli had been evacuated early in 1916, the British and the French sought to keep up the pressure on the Turks and to enforce a blockade of the Dardanelles. Simultaneously, they endeavoured to save Serbia by sending an expeditionary force to Salonika, where it remained, virtually stationary, until the last days of the war, tying up a vast amount of scarce shipping. British light naval forces were employed also on the Danube in support of Rumania and on the Tigris and the Euphrates in another major campaign to strike at Turkey overland. The Austrian Navy, though confined to the Adriatic, was well handled and made life difficult for the Italians, who required substantial reinforcements of British and French light forces, while the French battle fleet made Corfu its principal base. The Mediterranean naval war was, in fact, a series of discrete campaigns, with little in common it seemed, other than burdensome calls upon British mercantile and naval resources.
These disparate campaigns led to ‘a serious waste of energy, of fighting ships and men, and...of mercantile tonnage’. The British, led by the energetic First Lord Sir Eric Geddes, building on the Allied Naval Council, promoted by the Americans in November 1917 as a means of forwarding offensive operations in the European theatre as a whole, envisaged an Admiralissimo’ heading a supreme command. In the spring of 1918, Geddes announced that it was ‘the intention of the Supreme War Council that Admiral Jellicoe shall be in effective strategic command in the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Aegean’, but that frightened the Italians, who, determined to retain full control of their own fleet and of naval operations in the Adriatic, blocked it. Enter then another young man in a hurry, who, like Churchill, was conscious of carrying with him the honour of his clan, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, who visited the European theatre in the summer and autumn of 1918. Roosevelt proposed to the Allies a General Naval Staff with an international membership, headed by Jellicoe. Acknowledging that neither Jellicoe nor his ‘supreme command’ would enjoy significant authority, he argued that it was ‘at least a step in advance’. However, ‘Mutual jealousies and suspicions, often of ancient lineage, combined with ambitions to be satisfied at the peace conference to frustrate genuine Allied co-operation at the highest level.’

Yet a measure of unity of command was forced on the powers by the depredations of German U-boats. They had appeared in the Mediterranean in the spring of 1915 and ultimately numbered about 50, supported by a handful of Austrian boats. Even before the introduction of unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917 they had a devastating effect. Most British shipping for the eastern Empire was diverted round the Cape. The superhighway at last was closed. Attempts to reopen it taxed imagination, energy and resources to little avail. A mine barrage across the Otranto Straits resembled a colander; hunting groups achieved absolutely nothing; and evasive routeing and sailing only by night had but marginal effect on the steady rise in sinkings. The several campaigns in the Mediterranean itself drew in increasing amounts of shipping, with widely scattered destinations, thus increasing the pressure on already inadequate patrols and escorts. The problem was ‘the protection of shipping throughout a sea route of 1,900 miles in length flanked half way by a hostile submarine base impracticable to close by any known methods’. It also proved impossible to prevent the ingress of fresh submarines via the straits of Gibraltar. A number of officers suggested the introduction of convoys, but it was not until these had proved effective in the Atlantic in the spring of 1917 that they were introduced, by fits and starts, into the Mediterranean. The organization was rather ramshackle but in time it worked and the losses fell. The restoration of the through route to the Orient permitted by the success of the convoy system allowed shipping to
be diverted to the Atlantic and represented a gain of 4 million tons in Britain’s vital imports.\textsuperscript{19}

The success of the German underwater campaign forced the Allies to pool their scarce escort resources (the Greek, French, Italian, Portuguese, American, Japanese, British and Commonwealth Navies were involved). The co-ordinating role fell naturally to the British, as the principal mercantile power in the Mediterranean, with the greatest interest in the restoration of the through route, the largest number of anti-submarine craft, and much hard-won experience, as well as possession of the obvious control centre at Malta. The management of anti-submarine warfare provided a channel by which the British resumed a dominant naval role in the middle sea, ‘although it was ironic that predominance was now based on destroyers, sloops and other small craft rather than traditional capital ships’.\textsuperscript{20}

The British, too, harboured suspicions of their allies, one officer reporting in February 1916 that the French ‘are apparently desirous of making the Mediterranean a French lake’.\textsuperscript{21} As Paul Halpern has observed, ‘The Mediterranean was simply too important to be left to the French and Italians, and the Royal Navy was almost forced to devote an increasing amount of attention to it.’\textsuperscript{22} A British officer summed up the Imperial interest in dominating the Mediterranean: ‘In view of the fact that most of the shipping using that sea is ours, that the Mediterranean is a high road to the East, and that Gibraltar, Malta and Egypt are to be found there, we remain the most important factor in these waters.’\textsuperscript{23} At the war’s end, the British government moved swiftly to cement its re-established predominance by excluding the French from the armistice negotiations with the Turks and concentrating a substantial battle fleet in the Sea of Marmara. They founded also a series of protectorates over the former Turkish territories from Palestine eastward to the Persian Gulf and its increasingly vital oil fields; the flag of empire had not been furled.\textsuperscript{24}

It was quite like old times after the Great War as the Royal Navy once again deployed a substantial fleet in the Mediterranean. It could now afford to do so as there was no significant naval force within striking distance of the British Isles. The two most formidable fleets were those of France and Italy, absorbed in mutual rivalry. However, in the 1920s all was sweetness and light as the nations recovered from the ravages of total war, basked in modest prosperity, experimented with democracy, worked together in the League of Nations and achieved a modicum of voluntary disarmament. In this benign atmosphere the great buff-hulled liners steamed serenely through the Mediterranean; the superhighway gave untroubled access once again to the crimson-hued, world wide web. But, if there were no apparent enemies in the region, why go to the expense of keeping a great fleet there? In the first place, ‘the Mediterranean served as a maritime adventure playground’, an admirable training zone, though the
object of the exercises was the defence of the Empire east of Suez. Secondly, there was an incessant round of flag-showing to boost prestige, trade and friendly relations. Thirdly, the Navy hosed down trouble spots in Egypt and Palestine, proving to be ‘an exceedingly efficient emergency imperial gendarmerie’. Finally, the fleet could be despatched quickly to the Far East in the event of a threat to that part of the web.  

This decadent, imperial torpor was rudely disturbed in the summer of 1935 by Mussolini’s invasion of Abyssinia and the shrill public outcry which rattled the British government. Abyssinia, a sovereign state and a member of the League of Nations, was entitled to the protection of international sanctions and collective security. The British government now faced a series of Sphinx-like riddles. In so far as it had a strategy, that was to defend, first, the homeland and the North Atlantic and, secondly, from the Singapore bastion, the eastern empire. It discerned no vital interests in the Mediterranean; in the event of hostilities there the rapid development of airpower seemed likely to close the superhighway from the outset. Britain, in the depths of depression, suffered also from ‘imperial overstretch’, a situation made more ominous by the rise of Hitler, the ongoing Sino-Japanese quasi-war, the Italian, German and Japanese exits from the League, and the collapse of disarmament. Since a Cabinet committee had concluded that ‘we cannot simultaneously fight Japan and the strongest European power’, there was no disposition to challenge Mussolini. The arch-appeasers were the Chiefs of Staff, none more so than the First Sea Lord Admiral Chatfield.  

Public opinion nevertheless forced the imposition of sanctions (except for the crucial one—oil) and an imposing show of naval power. The reinforced Mediterranean fleet was ‘in a high state of morale and efficiency’ and Andrew Cunningham told a friend, ‘I should have liked to have put Mussolini and his boasts to the test.’ The fleet was confident of its ability to defeat the Italians and, indeed, both the British and the Italians expected a British victory. The British problem was twofold: first, any substantial losses would weaken fatally the naval response to a war in the east; second, ‘a war started in any one of these three areas may extend to one or both of the other two’—a nightmare made more likely by the opportunism associated with the dictators and underlined by their mutual pacts. Moreover, in the Abyssinian crisis the British noted ‘the acute anxiety of the French not to become involved in hostilities with Italy’; the Cabinet resolved therefore not ‘to take unilateral action’. As irresolution eased the tension (replaced on the Mediterranean agenda by the Spanish Civil War), the Chiefs of Staff observed that, ‘The events of 1935 have altered Italy’s attitude towards us from one of traditional friendship to one of potential hostility’. They endorsed Chamberlain’s dictum that ‘we should do nothing which could arouse Italian suspicions or be construed as provocative’ and supported his bid to appease and accommodate Italy.
(and detach it from Germany), a policy which persisted up to the eve of war in June 1940. This diplomatic offensive was driven also by a sense of urgency, given alarming developments in the Far East (of Europe, as well as of Asia) and by the perception of Italy’s deepening economic crisis which, it was feared, might prompt Mussolini to commit ‘an act of folly’.

Should appeasement and accommodation fail, the Chiefs of Staff reported gloomily in 1937, ‘We cannot foresee the time when our defence forces will be strong enough to safeguard our territory, trade and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously’. Should a global war break out, ‘If Japan joined our enemies a British Fleet would have to be despatched to the Far East, and only reduced British light forces would remain in the Mediterranean’. As in 1914, ‘We feel that the best solution would be to invite the French to undertake naval responsibility for the whole of the Mediterranean’. Both nations and their navies blew hot and cold over policy towards Italy, though the French Navy under Darlan did develop ‘a coherent and well-formulated Mediterranean strategy’ which was essentially offensive. French attempts to secure British co-operation were continually rebuffed as Chamberlain sought to appease Italy and Chatfield regarded the Far East as the most vital strategic zone after home waters. Albion’s refusal to co-operate led to a feeling of ‘latent resentment’ in the French Navy, still unexpurgated in post-war years. The Mediterranean was thus still among the strategic also-rans—until the arrival in 1938 at the Admiralty, quite fortuitously, of a group of convinced Mediterraneanists: Lord Stanhope (the First Lord), Admiral Backhouse (the First Sea Lord, who commissioned a strategic review from the like-minded Admiral Drax), and Vice-Admiral Andrew Cunningham (the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff). While all hoped that Italy would remain on the sidelines, they believed that Mussolini would join Hitler in a war, should it tend unmistakably in Germany’s favour. This would raise two issues: first, should the British and French stand on the defensive against Hitler and attempt to eliminate Mussolini first? Secondly, should Britain commit substantial forces to the theatre?

The new strategy was formulated by Cunningham in April 1939. Questioning the conventional wisdom which dictated the despatch of the ‘main fleet’ to Singapore, he wondered ‘whether this could be done to the exclusion of our interests in the Mediterranean,’ warning that ‘the effects of the evacuation of the Eastern Mediterranean on Greece, Turkey and on the Arab and Muslem world are political factors which make it essential that no precipitate action should be taken in this direction’. He was supported by Backhouse, who ‘believed that the Mediterranean and Middle East region was an area of growing military and economic importance exceeding that of the Far East’. The whole group ‘felt that at the outset of a European or world war, the Mediterranean would have to be cleared of hostile forces, vital stocks of oil reserves in the Middle East
defended, and British interests in the region preserved before any Far Eastern expedition could be mounted'.
Furthermore, ‘Offensive operations in the Mediterranean against Italy offered the best prospect for speedy results and should not, therefore, be lightly broken off.’ The rationale was shaky, if not specious; the military and the economic significance of the Mediterranean were minimal when compared with those of northwestern Europe or the Orient. Moreover, as Reynolds Salerno has made clear, advocates of a defensive posture in the Mediterranean, carried out by light forces only, continued to emphasize the predominance of the Far East in British strategy. There was ‘an interminable debate over Mediterranean and Far Eastern strategy’. One suspects that a residual horror of another Western Front, coupled with a realization that the Royal Navy, unsupported by effective air and land forces and unaided by allies, could not hold the Japanese, led to the search for a winnable war elsewhere. It was acknowledged, however, that ‘The local strength of Italy’s geographical position and the numerical superiority of her air forces... make it necessary for Allied through shipping to be diverted to the Cape route.’ Nevertheless, in joint talks with the French it was agreed, somewhat glibly, that ‘The objective would be to secure their interests in the Mediterranean and Middle East, and to knock Italy out of the war as soon as possible. This would entail offensive naval action from the outset.’ However, the only offensive weapon to hand was the British Mediterranean fleet, supported by French squadrons, and seapower alone was incapable of defeating Italy. Moreover, the principal bases were virtually undefended and the fleet lacked adequate air cover. Thus, the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Admiral Pound, called for tri-service co-operation, the severance of enemy communications, the seizure of Libyan airfields, the avoidance of attrition by Italian bombers, light craft and submarines, adequate air support, and the proper defence of the bases. Observing that, ‘With present-day communications and longrange aircraft the Mediterranean has become a very small place’, he predicted gloomily that, ‘the movement of a single auxiliary from, say, Malta to Alexandria will become a major operation.’ He expected Italy to exploit to the full its geographical advantages, which would make the Sicilian narrows the epicentre of the maritime war. Given these limitations, it is not surprising that the Joint Planning Staff warned that ‘There are no decisive Military measures that we can take against Italy at the outset.’

Even if military opinion forecast a long haul against Mussolini, the Mediterranean had once again become a strategic entity in its own right, threatening to supplant the Far East in the pecking order; moreover, its traditional role as the Empire’s lifeline was consigned to the dustbin of history. The outbreak of war against Germany forced a more sober assessment of offensive possibilities in the Mediterranean. Aware of grave
deficiencies and enormous burdens everywhere, the Chiefs of Staff were relieved that Mussolini remained on the touchline. ‘It is to our advantage to keep the war out of the Balkans as long as possible’, they advised, ‘and to avoid provoking Italian hostility’.41 They were alarmed at the grandiose plans of the French for Mediterranean expeditions all around the compass and were worried about the northern flank, where the Soviet Union, currently allied with Germany, seemed as great a threat as Italy and Germany. Furthermore, they warned that The effect on our strategic position, were the Balkan Powers to come within the Italian and German orbit without resistance, would be extremely serious’, adding that it was vital that Crete remain in friendly hands.42

As in 1914, so in 1939, Italy remained neutral and hopes persisted that Mussolini could be persuaded to stay that way, though it should have been abundantly clear that the appeasement of Italy since 1935 ‘was a fruitless endeavour’.43 The collapse of France in June 1940, however, precipitated Italy’s hostility. Once again, the Mediterranean script was torn up and Britain had to construct a new strategy on the hoof. Quite apart from the problem of repelling the Luftwaffe, the U-boats and possibly the Wehrmacht at home, the outbreak of war in the Mediterranean posed immense difficulties. Could the Mediterranean be held at all in the wake of the French collapse? If so, should Britain fight a purely defensive war, or resurrect the strategy of knocking Italy out of the war before turning on Germany? Would Spain, newly Fascist, follow Italy into war, with obvious dire implications for Gibraltar? Finally, though France had concluded an armistice, most of its formidable fleet remained in North African ports; would Hitler and Mussolini, despite their pledges, seize it when it suited them? In these circumstances, the First Sea Lord Admiral Pound, affirming that ‘our Atlantic trade must be the first consideration’ and observing that ‘If there were no “Far East” question the loss of a battleship or two in the so-called knocking-out of Italy would not matter much’, cautioned Cunningham, now Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, that his fleet might have to be withdrawn.44 Cunningham opposed it robustly, explaining that the Army alone could not hold Egypt. Moreover, withdrawal ‘would involve such a landslide in territory and prestige’. Malta, Palestine and Cyprus would be lost and ‘the Moslems would regard it as surrender’. Turkey, benevolently neutral, would lose heart and India’s security would be undermined. It was an early illustration of the ‘domino effect’. The relatively limited addition to metropolitan strength of the Mediterranean forces was not worth ‘the complete abandonment of the Eastern Mediterranean and making a gift of it to Italy’. He was confident that ‘if the efforts of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean are properly co-ordinated, I feel we can keep the Italians pretty well engaged’. Relatively small, balanced forces at either end would force the Italians to look over their shoulders whichever way they moved.45
The new Prime Minister Winston Churchill was even more of a Mediterraneanist than his service advisors, and at once committed the Empire to a full-blooded war there. Despite grave threats and alarming shortages at home, new tanks, aircraft and ships were earmarked for early delivery to Alexandria. Moreover, he insisted on a bold, offensive strategy: ‘Risks must be run at this juncture in all theatres’. It is not difficult to see why Churchill adopted such a belligerent strategy in the Mediterranean. He was well aware of Britain’s historic role there and the significance of the superhighway for the eastern empire. More immediately, he needed quick victories to maintain the nation’s will to fight and its international credibility and sensed that they could be won in and around the middle sea. Furthermore, the Army required fighting experience and North Africa offered the only battlefield available after Dunkirk. Churchill also harboured grandiose ideas of a Balkan league, in which ‘Johnny Turk’ would play a key (and belligerent) role. Finally, it was Churchill who insisted on the draconian measures to neutralize the French fleet which gave Force H, based at Gibraltar under Vice-Admiral Somerville, such a bloody baptism and revived the epithet ‘perfidious Albion’. Strategically, Churchillian haste courted disaster, for the butchery was incomplete, the bitterness ran deep, Vichy became hostile and very nearly fully belligerent, the Free French rally was stalled, and the Allies met bloody resistance in North Africa in November 1942. A shade more patience and a little imagination would have paid far better dividends.

Against the real enemy, the three outstanding commanders in the Middle East, Admiral Cunningham, General Wavell and Air Marshal Longmore, who worked smoothly together, pursued an offensive strategy with limited forces but considerable determination and panache. At the outset, Cunningham, who understood the weakness of the other services, acknowledged that ‘our position in the Middle East depends almost entirely on the fleet and I want to keep it active and able to go anywhere with moderate security’. As Longmore’s meagre and largely obsolescent air forces gained the measure of the Regia Aeronautica and Wavell’s army rolled up the map of Libya, so Cunningham and Somerville came to rule the waves in Nelsonian fashion. From Gibraltar, ‘the fulcrum of Empire … a bastion whose influence far outweighed its modest dimensions and extended for a thousand miles in every direction’, a force of a dozen ships and 50 carrier aircraft directed by Somerville, the Navy’s first true ‘air admiral’, with élan and consummate skill, ruled the western basin in a classic display of ‘economy of force’. Cunningham was handicapped by having to operate from Alexandria and called incessantly for the urgent strengthening of Malta’s defences, regarding the island, hitherto considered as indefensible against air attack, as ‘the key to our Mediterranean strategy’. Pound agreed that ‘we must get the fleet back to Malta’ and it was hoped to base it there in April 1941, covered by
formidable antiaircraft and fighter defences. In the meantime, Cunningham could only lament, ‘Was there ever such folly as to allow our Mediterranean fortress to fall into such a state?’ Between them, Force H and the Mediterranean fleet succoured Malta and even ran convoys through to Alexandria. Their success was due principally to maritime air power (as the Italian Navy acknowledged), adroitly handled, in which the crowning glory was the decimation of the Italian fleet at Taranto in November 1940. Three carriers—Ark Royal in Force H, Eagle and Illustrious in the Mediterranean fleet, with no more than 100 obsolescent aircraft between them—struck at a wide variety of targets and, most important, their handful of fighters totally nullified the Italian Air Force’s attacks, feared before the war as the most formidable constraint on the fleet’s freedom of action. By the end of November 1940 ‘our control of the Mediterranean was close on being re-established’. The first six months of the war against Italy had been a string of unbroken triumphs; if for Britain elsewhere 1940 was an annus horribilis, in the Mediterranean it was an annus mirabilis.

It was soon all to end in tears. Churchill had warned his commanders: ‘It is of high importance to strike at the Italians this autumn, because as time passes the Germans will be more likely to lay strong hands on the Italian war machine, and then the picture will be very different.’ Germany entered the fray to shore up Italy but even Italian victories would have prompted a German intervention, at least in the Balkans, in which it was jealous of Italian dominance. The Luftwaffe arrived in Sicily at the end of 1940, its priority the destruction of the carriers, removing Illustrious in January 1941. Cunningham understood at once that the Stukas constituted ‘a potent new factor in the Mediterranean war and will undoubtedly deny us that free access’ to the central Mediterranean so recently gained. When the Panzers and Stukas threatened the Balkans in the spring of 1941, Britain honoured its guarantee to Greece, thereby abandoning the conquest of Tripoli, the diversion of forces to Greece easing Rommel’s task of out-generalling the British and making Cunningham’s burdens and losses very much greater. The one bright spot was the victory off Matapan in March 1941; apart from significant assistance from Ultra decrypts, it was yet another triumph for maritime air power. Formidable’s understrength and outdated air group first rescued the British cruisers from impending disaster (otherwise, it would have been the Italians who returned home with the scalps of three cruisers) and then, in British fleet textbook fashion, delivered their Italian counterparts to Cunningham on a plate. The final act in the Greek tragedy was the loss of Crete in May 1941, an island which, ‘If in enemy hands, the supply of Malta would be most difficult, thereby affecting the Navy’s ability to interrupt the enemy sea traffic to Libya.’ This summation demonstrated the jigsaw puzzle nature of Mediterranean strategy, in which bases, forces
and other resources all interlocked; the movement of one piece affected the stability, viability or functioning of others. In the fighting round Crete, ‘a trial of strength between the Mediterranean Fleet and the German Air Force’, Cunningham acknowledged that ‘the enemy command of the air unchallenged by our own air force in these restricted waters with Mediterranean weather is too great odds for us’. He lost most of his fleet, either sunk or severely damaged, and affirmed ‘in our battles with the German Air Force we have been badly battered’ and ‘they have had much the best of it’. He concluded that, ‘In modern war sea power is compounded of surface force and its essential component in the form of air support’ and pressed for a Mediterranean Coastal Command under his control. Moreover, ‘the battle will be half won if only the Army can push into Cyrenaica and get us back into Benghazi’, from which the convoy route to Malta could be protected, thus permitting the island to ‘sever all communication between Italy and Africa’, which in turn would strangle the Axis armies. There was thus an imperative necessity to integrate the land, sea and air campaigns.59

No sooner were the scarred remnants of Cunningham’s once-proud fleet back in Alexandria, now under threat from Rommel’s blitzkrieg, than it became necessary to bring the Vichy Levant under control to prevent the Germans from seizing the whole of the Middle East and gaining control of the vital oilfields. Even this hard-won struggle against Vichy might have been of no consequence had the Germans not turned to attack their erstwhile friend Stalin. As British strategists acknowledged, it was the subsequent redoubtable resistance of the Russians which saved their Middle Eastern bacon.60

In the second half of 1941, therefore, Cunningham was ‘driven back on a defensive role’, compounded by the needless crippling of Formidable, for which there was no replacement.61 The arrival of German U-boats in the autumn of 1941 emasculated still further British seapower at both ends of the Mediterranean, with the sinking in November of Ark Royal in the west and of Barham in the east, disasters compounded by the gallant Italian human torpedo attack on Alexandria in December which put Cunningham’s last two battleships out of action for many months.62 With the simultaneous catastrophes in the Far East, there were no more capital ships to spare; when they did become available they went to the Indian Ocean, a sign that pre-1935 maritime priorities had reasserted themselves. The Mediterranean fleet and Force H were mere shadows of their former selves in 1942. The Italians regained control of the Mediterranean and, with the Luftwaffe’s assistance, neutralized Malta’s increasingly effective interdiction of Libyan convoys and brought the island to the verge of collapse by the summer of 1942. ‘The Verdun of the maritime war’, the island’s heroic resistance and the perception that it could yet exercise a decisive influence on the desert campaign prompted a series of brave but
horrendously costly convoys to relieve the second great siege in its history. By June, too, the British 8th Army had been swept unceremoniously back to the Egyptian frontier. Little wonder, then, that Corelli Barnett, the foremost critic of Churchill’s ‘blue water’ policy, should write, ‘The end of June 1942 saw the entire Mediterranean strategy pursued by Britain since 1940 dead in the water.’ The situation was dire; it was not inconceivable that the whole of the British position in the Middle East would collapse like a house of cards, enabling the Axis powers to link up in the Indian Ocean, with unthinkable consequences for the surviving threads of the world wide web. Moreover, each success and, even more, each defeat, had prompted the British to pour yet more resources into the Middle East, at the expense, largely, of the Far East. This was in striking contrast to the Germans, who, with two dozen U-boats, under 1,000 aircraft and less than three divisions, together with their Italian allies, had with notable ‘economy of force’ undermined the entire British position, built up over 150 years. However, the Joint Planning Staff, while acknowledging that ‘The security of the Middle East largely depends on the continued resistance of the Southern Russian armies and the staunchness of Turkey’, put the whole Mediterranean venture in its true strategic perspective: ‘The loss of the Middle East would be a disaster, but would not be vital.’

Fortunately for Churchill and the beleaguered forces in the Mediterranean, the modern version of the 7th Cavalry was just over the hill. After months of quasi-war in the North Atlantic and fruitless negotiations on the Far East, the Americans, innocent of that sense of self-preservation which was second nature to European nations, were thrown into the war in December 1941. A relieved Churchill now bent himself to cajole them into bailing out the capsizing Imperial boat in the Mediterranean. The odds against the United States’ buttressing the crumbling Fortress Nile were long indeed. General Marshall had claimed in July 1941 that British ‘strategy in the Middle East was governed by considerations of prestige and was fundamentally unsound’. The British had retorted that prestige ‘could not be discounted’ and that the Germans had to be extended in every direction to wear down their war machine. Traditional American strategy was to go at once for the jugular, applying maximum force. From Admiral Stark’s ‘Plan Dog’ of October 1940, the Americans had identified Germany as the principal foe, the only one which could defeat Britain and Russia. The correct strategy was therefore to concentrate Allied forces, west and east, in an early, direct and decisive strike at the German heartland, in the meantime standing on the strategic defensive against Italy and Japan, regional rather than global threats. The British, on the other hand, though equally desirous of relieving pressure on the Soviet Union and understanding clearly that Hitler’s ultimate defeat required an invasion of northwestern Europe, believed that German military strength
must be ground down to minimize the opposition that invasion would meet and avoid another Dunkirk or Western Front stalemate. In the meantime, the Allies had to win the Battle of the Atlantic and cripple Germany’s war-making capacity by strategic bombing. Otherwise, they would have to chip away at German forces by indirect, peripheral assaults, employing the flexibility of seapower to maximum advantage.68

These opposing strategies clashed following America’s entry into the war. Roosevelt, firmly committed to a ‘Europe First’ strategy, declared ‘It is of the highest importance that United States ground troops be brought into action against the enemy in 1942.’69 The US Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed a cross-Channel invasion in 1942 but the British Chiefs dismissed it as a disaster waiting to happen. By midsummer there was an impasse, broken by Roosevelt, who, against his Chiefs’ advice, accepted the only alternative offered by the British—an invasion of French North Africa. This, argued Churchill, would force the Axis to fight on two fronts in the Mediterranean, undermine Italy and, it was hoped, draw in more German forces from the Eastern Front. It would also reopen the superhighway (thus saving a million tons of shipping), protect the oilfields, relieve Malta, encourage the Vichy regime in North Africa to join the Allied side and deter Franco.70 The Americans suspected that it was rather more a case of the British fearing to meet the main German army in France. They foresaw the wily British tricking the Americans into pulling imperial chestnuts out of the fire and underwriting a projected British hegemony in the region.71 The American interest in North Africa was limited to a somewhat naive diplomatic initiative to persuade the Vichy administration to side with the Allies. However, President Roosevelt (like his cousin Theodore) was fascinated with Morocco, particularly the strategic significance, real and imagined, of Casablanca and Dakar, 1,700 miles from Brazil and hence potential pistols pointed at the Western Hemisphere.72 The consequence of much bitter wrangling and dark insinuations was operation TORCH, a series of landings at Casablanca, Oran and Algiers in November 1942; in conjunction with a renewed British offensive from Egypt, this campaign would gain the entire southern shore for the Allies and recreate the superhighway, thus speeding up supplies to the Indian Ocean. The Americans rejected landings in Tunisia as a beach too far, though the British argued, correctly, that Tunis was the most vital objective; failure to seize it quickly caused the campaign to drag on for six months.73

TORCH was, however, a resounding success, a huge amphibious operation testifying to the underlying strength of Anglo-American military co-operation, despite Cunningham’s report that he saw ‘few signs of enthusiasm’ for TORCH in Washington, while Field Marshal Dill noted that the Americans ‘feel that we have led them down the Mediterranean garden path’.74 Nevertheless, Marshall posted a warning that ‘he was particularly opposed to “dabbling” in the Mediterranean in a wasteful
logistical way’. The Joint Chiefs believed that following the clearance of North Africa, the theatre should be wound down and forces built up for a cross-Channel invasion in 1943. These fond hopes were dashed at the Casablanca Churchill-Roosevelt summit in January 1943. It became evident that a cross-Channel operation was now unlikely before the spring of 1944; what was to be done with the TORCH forces in the meantime? It was desirable to keep them active and the only feasible strategy was an assault on Sicily. The American Chiefs were not opposed to this, feeling that it would fatally undermine Mussolini, provide air bases for strategic bombers to attack southern Germany and make the superhighway absolutely safe. However, they were adamant that it should be launched with forces already in the Mediterranean and believed also that the British had agreed that it should be the last throw of the Mediterranean dice.

The British, better organized for summity at this stage, had, for the last time, outmanoeuvred the Americans, and saw Sicily as only a staging post in the Premier’s grand design, which extended to mainland Italy, the Aegean and the Balkans. In this vision, the superhighway was of secondary account (there was precious little matériel to spare for the Orient at this stage) and the Mediterranean was regarded as a British sphere of influence, a buttress against future Soviet power and an end in itself.

HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily, was accomplished successfully in summer 1943. As expected, it did lead to the overthrow of Mussolini and negotiations for an Italian armistice. Where next? Should Allied forces leave the Mediterranean to wither on the vine and return to Britain to prepare for the cross-Channel invasion? Or would there be another Mediterranean side-show? Following the landings in Sicily, Eisenhower told Marshall that all his commanders agreed ‘that Italian morale is such as to indicate the mainland of Italy as the best area for exploitation with a view to…forcing Italy out of the war and of containing the maximum German forces.’ AVALANCHE, the invasion of Italy, was mounted with astonishing speed, designed to seize power there before the Germans could do so. However, there was no clear strategic objective, no real consideration as to the eventual cost or the desirable extent of Allied penetration. The energetic and skilful German response and the Allies’ want of purpose and imagination condemned the invasion to a draining slog over a long, mountainous peninsula, perfect defensive territory and in the hands of a first-rate enemy. An attempt to exploit superior Allied sea and airpower by leap-frogging up the west coast (the east was even more inhospitable) to Anzio was frustrated by tough opposition and the land forces’ timidity.

Having been thrust into yet another major campaign in the Mediterranean, which demanded yet more shipping, airpower, landing craft and other resources, at the expense of OVERLORD, the American Chiefs, sensing that their country now held the overwhelming strength,
insisted at the Quebec summit in August 1943 on ‘a very frank discussion’ on ‘the value of the Italian campaign to our common war effort against Germany’. They told the President firmly

that operations in the Mediterranean should be strictly subordinate [to OVERLORD] and involve no means that are needed for OVERLORD or for approved undertakings in the Pacific. If the decision be reached at Quebec to make our major effort in the Mediterranean, we will be in effect accepting the role of a besieger of a fortress, with an indefinite prolongation of the war in Europe and a corresponding postponement of decisive measures against Japan... Mediterranean operations should be subject to a clear-cut acceptance by the British that the major effort against Germany is to be made from the United Kingdom.

American weight proved decisive and some forces were withdrawn from the theatre. Ironically, the last major landing carried out in the Mediterranean, ANVIL-DRAGOON, on the southern coast of France in the summer of 1944, was at American insistence, in the teeth of strong British opposition (Churchill, lamenting that he had been dragooned into it, renamed it DRAGOON). Intended as a foil to OVERLORD, a bid to draw German forces from Normandy and to give the Allies an additional supply line through Marseilles, the delay in its execution rendered it somewhat redundant. The British had argued for the forces involved to be committed to a final push in northern Italy. Once again, this raised the question, ‘To what end?’ Churchill and General Brooke had somewhat nebulous ideas of a march on Vienna—a notion which attracted support from both Eisenhower and Stalin but which was logistically infeasible. In spring 1945 the Italian campaign at last petered out, an end in itself, lacking direct connection with any other significant operation.

Meanwhile, Churchill, pursuing his dream of British command of the Mediterranean and his persistent but forlorn hope of bringing Turkey into the war, and to assist the Russian campaign in Rumania, fostered an operation to seize the Italian Dodecanese islands in the autumn of 1943. However, indicative of Britain’s waning power and the Americans’ resolution to cut down Mediterranean commitments, the operation had to do without adequate air support. The American Chiefs viewed it as ‘an eccentric operation as regards Germany, involving enormous resources in an area remote from our bases of supply while holding little promise of prompt and decisive results.’ Churchill, relapsing into Victorian colonial punitive expedition mode, signalled ‘Improvise and dare.’ Not surprisingly, the lessons of Greece and Crete were learned all over again and the British retreated with a bloody nose. The ambition of the Chiefs of Staff had been ‘to turn the Mediterranean as a whole, and Italy in
particular into an immense liability for Germany’; it was Britain which shouldered the liabilities.85

American commentators, understandably, have criticized the Allied Mediterranean strategy as an unforgivable diversion from the main object, the defeat of Germany in Europe. Robert Love declared that ‘Churchill’s opposition to SLEDGEHAMMER, combined with Roosevelt’s vacillation, condemned the Allies to a wasteful, peripheral strategy in the Mediterranean for two years.’ This, he argued, enabled the Russians to overrun central and eastern Europe and gave the Germans two years in which to complete the formidable Atlantic Wall, thus making OVERLORD greatly more hazardous.86 The American Joint Chiefs of Staff suspected that these might be the end results of a ‘Mediterranean First’ strategy. Why, then, did they fail to prevent its implementation, not once but three times (TORCH, HUSKY and AVALANCHE)? In part, it was because the British were already heavily engaged there and this Middle Eastern war machine had a momentum of its own which was difficult to arrest, let alone reverse. Secondly, the British Chiefs of Staff and their supporting planning team were already a polished, experienced, highly professional organization which talked a good war. Thirdly, they were directed by a Prime Minister who carried others along by force of rhetoric and plausible argument and who had a deeply personal, emotional, opportunistic and imperial view of the theatre. Fourthly, a cross-Channel operation would have been a suicidal venture in 1942 and without the diversion of forces to the Mediterranean, doubtful of success even in 1943. There is little evidence to suggest that a successful OVERLORD could have been carried out much before June 1944, even had the Mediterranean remained a strategic backwater. Finally, as Michael Howard has pointed out, ‘allied strategy was a piecemeal affair, in which the military leaders had often simply to do what they could, where they could, with the forces which they had to hand’.87 The Anglo-American Mediterranean strategy of 1942–45 was born of default and sustained by opportunism. The military skill of the Germans, the rise of the superpowers and the parallel decline of Britain led to little gain for it in the Mediterranean at immense cost.

Barnett also sees little point in the costly Mediterranean campaigns of 1940–45. Far from wearing down German forces, they sucked in more and more Allied resources and ultimately tied down far more Allied strength than Axis power. He has asked a fundamental question: ‘Did the swelling British military involvement in the Middle East represent the rational pursuit of strategy or a growing obsession?’88 By the end of 1941, certainly, the rationale, never very sophisticated, profound or wellsubstantiated, was shading into myth. Barnett concludes that ‘this strategy ended in a cul-de-sac…the ultimate victory in the Mediterranean was a mere by-play in the conclusion of a war that had been won in mass battles on the Eastern and Western Fronts.’89 With this conclusion it is hard to disagree; moreover, the
leading political and military figures of the day would have said ‘amen’. Most British leaders, however, would have qualified their acknowledgement that the Germans had finally to be confronted in northwest Europe by arguing that the freeing of the Mediterranean did divert significant German strength from elsewhere, secured the Middle Eastern oilfields, prevented an Axis combination in the Indian Ocean, and reopened the superhighway to the eastern Empire.90

By the end of the Second World War Britain was sinking into a second-class status, her eclipse as a great power confirmed by the Suez debacle of 1956; the canal, once the great umbilical cord uniting the Mother Country and its progeny, was the ironic setting for its departure from the privileged circle of shakers and movers.91 The Mediterranean formed a quick and convenient superhighway to the vast array of trade, investments, possessions and client states which lay ‘somewheres east of Suez’. There was little intrinsic British interest in the Mediterranean until the exploitation of Middle East oil after 1900. Its Mediterranean strategy in the first half of the century was essentially maritime in both form and force, its Mediterranean fleet, often the main body, based whenever possible upon capital ships (both battleships and carriers). From the middle sea that fleet could move with ease and despatch to either home waters or the Far East. In the face of developing threats to the world wide web from several quarters, the Mediterranean waned in importance. It was restored, somewhat incidentally, by the events of 1914–18, when Britain became once again the principal regional power. Apparently unchallenged there, the British position in the Mediterranean was in a strategic limbo between 1918 and 1935 as Japan emerged as the Empire’s bogeyman.

Rising Italian belligerence between 1935 and 1940 was met by a confusing blend of armaments, alliances, accommodation and appeasement. Britain guarded against every eventuality but observed some fundamental principles: a war started by any one of Japan, Germany or Italy would probably spread to the other two; the Empire could not tackle three enemies simultaneously; and Britain perceived no fundamental quarrel with Mussolini. The overriding aim, therefore, was to appease Italy and lull it into an accommodating neutrality. The Mediterranean war which began in June 1940 commenced with an offensive and essentially maritime strategy which was highly successful. However, the impact of German intervention, bringing serious naval losses, the evidence that airpower was the key to survival and the growth of a vast military establishment, transformed the fleet into a small-ship force, the handmaiden of the other services, a role underlined by the subsequent great combined operations. ‘It was in that campaign’, wrote Air Marshal Tedder, ‘that I came to see most clearly the inter-relation between Land, Sea and Air Warfare’.92 Other commanders endorsed the sentiment. The Axis blitzkrieg of 1941–42 rendered Britain’s historic position precarious
and only Hitler’s bizarre decision to attack Russia—and the Red Army’s tenacious defence—saved it. Thereafter American support, reluctant and incredulous, enabled the superhighway to function again and raised prospects of a British hegemony, which, in the era of the superpowers, proved a snare and a delusion.

In the first half of the twentieth century Britain demonstrated ambivalence about the Mediterranean. It conceded that it was not vital to its own survival, nor indeed to that of the world wide web, but it was incapable of letting it go and was constantly seduced, by opportunity, default, history and romance, into pouring into it scarce resources. Indeed, it could be argued that when during the two world wars the superhighway was impassable, Britain found other reasons for undertaking major commitments in the Mediterranean. The resources expended there might have been better employed elsewhere, notably in the Far East, the chief sufferer from Churchill’s love affair with the Mediterranean. Between 1900 and 1945 the superhighway to the world wide web was in grave peril or playing second fiddle to some Mediterranean adventure, or abandoned, as often as it was in full and free flow.

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6 Marder, *Road to War*, pp. 110, 288.

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8. The German battlecruiser SMS Goeben was the most powerful ship in the Mediterranean. Her operations, with HMS Breslau, played a key part in enlisting Turkey’s support for the Central Powers, while Britain and France remained more concerned that she would break out into the Atlantic, harass troop ships en route between France and North Africa, or link up with the Austro-Hungarian fleet.
There are certain inescapable geographical facts that govern French and Italian naval policy in the Mediterranean. France has an extensive coastline outside the Mediterranean and the great bulk of the Iberian peninsula separates French ports on the Atlantic and Channel coasts from those in the Mediterranean. Therefore the French cannot be indifferent to naval developments in northern waters and, however great French interests in the Mediterranean might be, French policy in the middle sea must of necessity be affected by developments outside it. At the beginning of the period under review the French faced the major dilemma in the north of possible enmity with the naval giant Great Britain in the crisis over Fashoda in 1898. The naval forces of France’s major continental ally Russia were also likely to play only a little role in the Mediterranean. Again this is due to geography, the Baltic fleet was distant, obliged to pass the narrow bottle neck of the Sound to get from the Baltic to the North Sea and then obliged to pass the British Isles before beginning the long voyage southward. The Russian Black Sea fleet was also hampered by geography, shut in the Black Sea and precluded by treaties from passing through the Straits. France would probably have to rely on itself in the Mediterranean. The contingency of Great Britain as a friend rather than an enemy came with what must have seemed like startling speed in the early years of the twentieth century, but by this time a new danger appeared in the north with the growth of the German Navy which would soon surpass the French. The French in the Mediterranean could never escape from casting one eye over their shoulder at their dangerous German neighbor. At the same time, their Italian neighbor would grow to be a dangerous rival, at least formally linked to another new threat—the Austro-Hungarian Navy. The latter disappeared forever in 1918 but the Italian Navy remained a
rival, even when formally allied during the World War and in the post-war period, demanded ‘parity’, a demand recognized at the 1921 Washington Naval Conference. Relief from the potential threat of the German Navy also proved to be only temporary. Even before the advent of Hitler, German naval developments under the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty were enough to alarm the French and at the very least had to be answered.

The French Navy in the late nineteenth century suffered from a confusion of doctrine. The arguments surrounding the Jeune École’s policies of guerre de course and the large number of cruisers necessary to bring England to its knees through commerce warfare, torpedo-boats versus conventional large ships, and the constant mixture of politics with questions of naval strategy and tactics have all been studied at length. When the Fashoda crisis came in 1898 the French might be said to have had no real policy in the Mediterranean, or for that matter anywhere else. Uncertainty over whether the main enemy would be England, Germany or Italy, whether operations should be concentrated in the north or in the Mediterranean, whether they should be with battle fleets or commerce-destroying cruisers, and what naval bases should be completed or colonies defended, according to Professor Ropp, ‘leaves one astounded not only at the magnitude of the disorder but at the multiplicity of its causes.’ Incredible as it may seem, the Ministry of Marine apparently had no plan for war against England and could provide the commander of the French Mediterranean fleet only with the vague order to take his whole squadron and cruise off Algiers. French plans were essentially defensive, an active defense of the coast and reliance on commerce raiding supported by the battle fleet as the only hope of harming the far superior British.

The French position vis-à-vis the Italian Navy and the Triple Alliance in the Mediterranean was much more favorable and this was reflected in the war plans. In 1895 the French naval staff had estimated that they enjoyed a 19:17 advantage in battleships over the scattered fleets of the entire Triple Alliance and therefore planned on a defensive attitude in the Channel and an offensive in the Mediterranean. The Instructions de guerre of 27 February 1897 called for the French to concentrate their Mediterranean squadron at Gulf Jouan, while cruisers would bombard the coastal railway between Savona and Ventimiglia. The objective was to force the Italian fleet to sortie for a fleet action and also disrupt the Italian mobilization on France’s southeastern frontier.

The material condition of the French Navy improved with the adoption of the Naval Law of 9 December 1900, the crowning achievement of Jean de Lanessan, Minister of Marine from June 1899 to June 1902. This called for building in homogeneous groups in order to achieve a French fleet of 28 battleships, 24 armored cruisers and 52 destroyers. There were other Naval Laws in 1900 providing funds for what might be termed infrastructure, including bases and harbors and coastal defense. In the
Mediterranean the French envisaged a strategic triangle to be formed by
the major naval bases of Toulon, Bizerte and Rachgoun. The latter,
approximately 50 miles west of Oran, would be started on completion of
Bizerte. However, as this triangle was designed to threaten the British route
to India the Anglo-French *entente* of 1904 made Rachgoun unnecessary
and work was never begun. Between 1900 and 1902, and largely with a
view towards an Anglo-French war, the numerous French torpedo boats
were reorganized with secret, defended anchorages for cruisers and
torpedo-boats established on the flanks of major bases. The objective was
to prevent any potential enemy from blockading both the fleet and the
torpedo-boats. The torpedo-boats were divided into defensive and
offensive flotillas, with the latter supporting the battle fleet when it was
operating in their vicinity. In the Mediterranean these flotillas could be
found at Ajaccio, Bizerte and Oran.7

France’s diplomatic situation improved significantly when the Anglo-
French *entente* changed the Royal Navy from a potential enemy to
potential ally and the Italo-French *entente* of 1902 at least weakened
somewhat Italy’s ties to the Triple Alliance, although until the outbreak of
the war no one could really be sure of the actions of the Italian
government.

The French programs were subject to the vagaries of the legislature, and
during the period when the Radical Camille Pelletan was Minister of
Marine (June 1902–January 1905) the building program received a severe
setback. Moreover, the strategic balance with the Triple Alliance had
altered to the disadvantage of the French. By 1900 the Triple Alliance had
an advantage of 28:13 in battleships, which translated into a slight French
inferiority in the Channel and a manifest inferiority in the Mediterranean.
The French therefore decided in 1900 to concentrate in the north to defeat
the German fleet while remaining on the defensive in the Mediterranean.
In 1901 they returned to their old strategy of concentrating first against
Italy in the Mediterranean before turning to the Germans. This fluctuation
and perennial debate, concentration in the Channel or the Mediterranean,
reflected the French strategic dilemma. They could combine their forces to
achieve superiority over either the German or the Italian fleet but not both
at the same time, and by around 1905 the ability to achieve superiority
over the German fleet by any combination ended. Fortunately for the
French they now had the *entente* with England, although it should be
remembered that an *entente* was not an alliance and there was no firm
guarantee that the British would actually be an ally in the event of a
Franco-German war. Nevertheless, despite considerable debate and the
unpalatable effect of leaving their northern coasts relatively undefended,
the logic of a Mediterranean concentration steadily imposed itself on the
French. The *Conseil Supérieur de la Marine* adopted the principle of a
Mediterranean concentration in February 1906, with the usual escape clause that this could be modified later if circumstances required.

The French had been almost able to disregard completely the Austro-Hungarian Navy in 1897 and 1900. The k.u.k. Kriegsmarine may have belonged to Germany’s most reliable ally but it was essentially a coast defense force with little ability to act outside the Adriatic. This was changing, the Austrians were building larger and more powerful ships, but in 1907 the French were still confident of their ability to handle both the Austrian and the Italian fleet. Their great objective was to force the Italian fleet out of its bases for a decisive battle and avoid the attrition likely to occur if they were forced into a long blockade of an Italian port. They considered seizing some piece of Italian territory as a gage, possibly Cagliari on the island of Sardinia. This idea was abandoned the following year as impracticable; the French would have to rely on less ambitious methods, such as attacks on coastal railway works or dockyards and the destruction of overseas cables to lure the Italians out. In their Instructions de guerre of 1910 and 1911 the French inexplicably and probably unrealistically abandoned the Mediterranean as their area of primary concentration in a war against the Triple Alliance. The French battle fleet would return to the Mediterranean only after the major German naval forces had been destroyed. A squadron of pre-1900 battleships in reserve was transferred back north to Brest in the summer of 1909, ostensibly because of the inability of the base at Toulon to handle the combined French fleet. Without going into the technical details, there seems little chance that the French by this date would have been able to achieve victory over the German fleet and this aberration remains difficult to explain.

Reality returned to French naval planning in 1912 when, largely at the insistence of Vice-Amiral Marie Aubert, Chief of the Naval Staff, the French abandoned the idea of opposing the German fleet in the north and returned to a Mediterranean concentration. In October 1912 the battleship squadron was transferred from Brest back to the Mediterranean because of the danger that the ships would be cut off in a war and perhaps forced by the pressure of public opinion to sortie for an unequal contest. The defense of French northern coasts would be left to a cruiser squadron and light craft and submarines. The fact that these French naval movements took place in the same year that the First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill withdrew the British battleships from Malta caused much public comment about an understanding whereby the British were leaving the guarding of the Mediterranean to the French while they assumed the task of protecting French coasts in the north. Actually there was no prior agreement. The French and British moves were dictated by technical naval considerations but the ensuing debate in Britain obliged Churchill and the Admiralty to compromise and station battle-cruisers in
the Mediterranean. The British objective was a force strong enough to ensure French victory over any Austro-Italian combination.\(^{10}\)

By 1912 the French could no longer take the Mediterranean for granted. From 1908 both the Austrians and the Italians were building dreadnought-type warships and the number of their light craft was also growing. The French were conscious that they had vital interests in the Mediterranean from the very beginning of a war. French mobilization meant the transfer of the XIX\(^{\text{th}}\) Corps from Algeria to metropolitan France and the deployment of territorial troops from France to Algeria to replace it. This meant that for a few weeks there would be constant movement of vulnerable troop transports across the Mediterranean. The ability to protect this movement was challenged by the steady growth of the Austrian and the Italian fleet. In June 1912 the French could count on 28 battleships and armored cruisers compared with 23 for the Italians and the Austrians, but by the end of 1915 the French naval staff estimated that there would be 26 Austrian and Italian battleships to only 24 of their own, and by 1920 the Triple Alliance advantage would be 31 to 28, and even then the French total would include six battleships that were obsolete.\(^{11}\) It was no longer merely a question of the six old battleships of the Brest squadron being cut off and destroyed by the Germans; those ships were now needed in the Mediterranean to counter a possible Austro-Italian combination.

These projections for the future were all the more disturbing because they included the anticipated results of the French Naval Law of 1912. The rapporteur of the budget, Paul Painlevé, made no secret of the objective of the naval program, it was command of the Mediterranean. French resources did not allow them to rival Germany in naval armaments, but they could dominate the western Mediterranean against the combined fleets of Italy and Austria. Mastery of the sea in the Channel and the Atlantic, desirable as it was, was not indispensable but it would be a disaster if it were lost in the western Mediterranean. Italian neutrality might even depend on French power in the Mediterranean. If they were weak, the Italian appetite for Tunisia and the threat of Austria against which the French would be unable to help Italy to protect itself might possibly induce the Italians to intervene against France.\(^{12}\) The Naval Law of 1912 called for a French fleet in 1920 consisting of 28 battleships, ten scouts, 52 destroyers, 94 submarines and ten ships for colonial service as well as specialized types such as minesweepers and gunboats. The Austro-Italian challenge was considered serious enough in June 1913 for the French legislature to authorize the Navy’s acceleration of the battleship program and in June 1914 the Minister of Marine prepared a bill to be brought before Parliament that would, by altering the age at which battleships had to be replaced, create a fleet of 32 capital ships by 1925.\(^{13}\)

In 1912 the threat of decisive Triple Alliance superiority was still in the
future. At the moment French plans were decidedly aggressive. The commander of the French Mediterranean fleet was informed in November 1912 that the Army wanted the Navy to assure before all else and at whatever cost the transport of troops from North Africa to metropolitan France. The transport from Algeria and Tunisia was therefore to be protected indirectly by acquiring sea supremacy as quickly as possible by destroying, blockading and immobilizing enemy forces. All French first-line strength would be assigned to this task and the direct protection of the transports would be left to five second-line cruisers. The French fleet was to be positioned so as to oppose a junction of the enemy fleets, but even if the French were unable to prevent a union of the enemy fleets they were not to hesitate in accepting combat. There was a major inconsistency in these plans that was never really resolved before the outbreak of the war, namely the inability to reconcile the protection of transports with the destruction of enemy naval forces and the determination of which objective had priority. This would have important consequences in 1914, especially when the situation was complicated by the appearance of German forces. Moreover, plans for co-operation with the British in the Mediterranean were extremely vague and could not be successfully improvised at the last minute.

The Italian situation was in a sense simpler than that of the French. By geography Italy was a Mediterranean country and did not have the problem of a division of its naval forces between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. But the Italians did have the problem of having to divide their forces between east and west. Their Austrian ally—and potential enemy—was located in the Adriatic on their east coast, while their rival and potential enemy France could threaten their western coast. The Italians were quite conscious of the vulnerability of their populous cities on the exposed coastline and also that the mountainous spine of the center of the peninsula often required vital rail lines to be located close to the sea where they were exposed to attack. Their naval engineers had acquired a reputation for technical daring in the late nineteenth century, for example, with the introduction of the battleships Dandolo in 1875 and Italia in 1880. Italian naval designers stressed speed so as to give commanders the option of accepting or declining battle with an enemy such as the French who could more easily replace losses. Italian shipbuilding was notoriously slow, due partially to shortages of steel and coal and the necessity to use foreign sources for specialized items such as naval artillery and marine engines. There were sustained attempts to remedy these deficiencies, particularly on the part of Inspector General of Naval Engineering Benedetto Brin, four times Minister of Marine, who at the time he died in office in May 1898 was responsible for ordering 141 of the Navy’s current 202 ships. Brin was also active in striving for Italian naval self-sufficiency by granting orders at high prices to the newly created steel works at Terni.
as well as Italian shipyards and engine manufacturing works, even though they might involve higher costs, and the slower building times meant that ships might be obsolete by the time they entered service. The Italians had for a time in the early 1890s a navy that some ranked third in the world, but the young kingdom could not sustain this and the relative ranking of the Navy declined. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Italian Navy was in a manifestly weaker position than its French rival and would have to design better and fight smarter in order to prevail.

The new century brought relief from French pressure in that the Italo-French accords of 1902 lessened somewhat the danger of war, but as Italy remained a member of the Triple Alliance there was always the risk that she might be dragged into a Franco-German struggle. Moreover, any relief on the French side would be more than counterbalanced by new anxieties about Austria-Hungary. The formation of a real blue-water navy by Austria was one of the most disturbing developments in the Mediterranean. The laying down of the first of the three semi-dreadnought Radetzky class in 1907 and the first of the four Tegetthoff dreadnoughts in 1910 may be taken as benchmarks. The very names would conjure up bad memories for the Italians. The Italians were, of course, building dreadnoughts of their own, the Dante Alighieri laid down in 1909 and the first of three Cavour class in 1910 and one therefore had a naval race between the two nominal allies.

The responsibilities of the Italian Navy grew considerably in 1911 when the government decided to take advantage of French success in Morocco to make good on their own longstanding ambitions in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The Libyan War of 1911–12 was a mismatch at sea, Turkish naval power, such as it was, would be no challenge. The Italians were able to transport their expeditionary corps to North Africa without difficulty, provide a bit of dash with a naval raid into the Dardanelles in an unsuccessful attempt to get at the Turkish fleet, and seize Rhodes and other islands in the Dodecanese. But attempts at using seapower to compel the Turks to end the guerrilla war which developed in the interior of Libya brought the Italians into collision with the interests of neutrals. The most serious of these took place in January 1912 and involved the French steamers Carthage and Manouba. The subsequent French sabre-rattling cast a chill on Franco-Italian relations and nudged Italy back towards its Triple Alliance partners. Moreover, the Italians now had additional lines of communication across the Mediterranean and substantial garrisons to supply, far greater than the Red Sea colonies they had clung to before the war. They were reminded once again of their vulnerability—both to France and to Austria.

It was an article of faith for the Italian Navy that the geographical configuration of the Adriatic gave the Austrians an inherent advantage. While the Italian shore was relatively open, the Austrian shore was full of
bays and inlets and protected by chains of islands that provided perfect places for torpedo-boats to hide. Mere parity would therefore not be enough and in 1908 the Commissione Suprema per la Difesa dello Stato had recommended that the Italian fleet be maintained in a proportion of 2:1 over the Austrian. This was an impossibly high figure for the Italians to reach and their advantage had fallen, according to the naval staff’s calculations, from 1.8:1 in 1908 to 1.5:1 in 1911 and would be only 1.2:1 in 1914 when the Austrian dreadnoughts entered service. Then there was the problem of the French. In 1913 Rear-Admiral Thaon di Revel, the Capo di Stato Maggiore, posed as a fundamental premise that the Italian fleet in 1918 must be maintained at a minimum of 60 per cent of the French fleet and a superiority of 4:3 over the Austrian. Italy’s avowed aim must be to remain the second Mediterranean power. Revel also proposed a large increase in the number of destroyers and large submarines suitable for offensive operations in the western basin of the Mediterranean, as well as smaller craft for coastal operations and the defense of bases. He also wanted to improve the defenses of the base on the island of Maddalena, a likely French objective; its security was indispensable for any struggle against a superior French fleet in the Tyrrhenian Sea or the western Mediterranean.

In 1913 the French nightmare of a combined Austro-Italian fleet became a reality when the Italians and the Austrians succumbed to the logic and the temptation resulting from the fact that their building against each other had raised the potential strength of both fleets to a point where, if they combined, they might succeed in winning control of the sea from the French. Furthermore, as a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 there was now a powerful and permanent German naval presence in the Mediterranean. The Germans had responded to the eastern crisis by sending the new and powerful battle-cruiser Goeben, accompanied by the equally new fast light cruiser Breslau, to Turkish waters. The two ships remained in the Mediterranean as the Mittelmeerdivision. They posed a considerable, potential problem for the French, who had nothing powerful enough to fight the Goeben that had any chance of catching her. There had been an earlier Triple Alliance Naval Convention, concluded in 1900, but this quickly became a dead letter. The Austrians were reluctant to commit their then small force to anything beyond the defense of the Adriatic and the Italians would have been left to face the French alone. In December 1912 General Alberto Pollio, chief of the Italian Army general staff, in apparent agreement with Thaon di Revel, approached the Germans with the prospect of revising the dormant naval convention. The Germans were only too happy to act as midwives in the process and bring the somewhat skeptical Austrians into the picture. The development of their Navy had opened new opportunities for the Austrians, opportunities they could not have dreamed of in the past. Admiral Anton Haus, recently appointed
Austrian Marinekommandant, confided to his diary that when he sat in the privacy of his cabin in his flagship and did the necessary calculations from naval annuals, he realized that they might just be able to outmatch the French and became so excited that he was unable to sleep.25

The Italian naval staff had been so conscious of their vulnerability to the French and, potentially, the British that they had been willing to concede command of the combined fleets—at least initially—to the Austrian admiral in order to induce the Austrians to commit their fleet outside the Adriatic. It was only rational, but based partially on a misapprehension of exactly what the Triple Alliance involved. The Italian Foreign Office refused to provide the text of the treaty, blandly assuring the Minister of War in December 1912 that the treaty contained no military clauses he needed to know and that the government would inform him ‘with priority…whenever the probability of a war presented itself’.26 The attitude of the naval staff if the Austrians refused to commit themselves had been: ‘Either transform the Navy, putting it in relation to policy; or change policy putting it in relation to the Navy.’27

The Triple Alliance Naval Convention went into effect on 1 November 1913 and included a supplementary convention that was really an outline of projected operations in the Mediterranean. In the event of war the Italians and Austrians would concentrate their forces in the vicinity of Messina (Sicily) and be joined by whatever German forces were in the Mediterranean. The objective was to secure naval control in the Mediterranean by defeating the enemy fleets as quickly as possible to forestall any potential intervention by the Russian Black Sea fleet. Italian light warships from Cagliari and later Maddalena would act against the French convoys. Revel and Haus, traveling incognito in mufti, met secretly in Zurich in December 1913 to discuss the ways in which they would co-operate.28 An Austro-Italian victory at sea might also permit the landing of an Italian expeditionary corps on the coast of Provence to be followed by an advance up the Rhône valley to take the French armies, presumably fighting along the Rhine, in the rear. However, a detailed staff study of this project indicated that it would take a considerable time to implement and, as the decisive battle would probably (it was assumed) have already taken place, the Italian Army understandably would have preferred to send troops via rail to join their German allies.29

The Italian decision to remain neutral on the outbreak of the war, based on the strictly defensive nature of the Triple Alliance, relegated these naval plans to the dustbin of history. The situation swiftly evolved to the advantage of the French but the preoccupation of the French commander-in-chief with defending the French convoys may well have contributed to the ability of the Goeben and the Breslau to elude British warships and escape to the Dardanelles where their fictitious sale to the Turks took place. Regardless of their strategic implications in the Black Sea and their
role in helping to engineer the Turkish entry into the war, the ships were now outside the Mediterranean equation. They would only re-enter it briefly in January 1918 and the results were unfavorable. They sank two British monitors but Breslau was sunk and Goeben narrowly escaped destruction. The French, who received command in the Mediterranean in August 1914, were unchallenged masters of the sea and Austrian forces were too weak to challenge them. The Austrian fleet was essentially bottled up in the Adriatic. On the other hand, the French fleet could not get at the Austrians and had to content themselves with a blockade across the entrance of the Adriatic with periodic sweeps to escort ships carrying supplies to Montenegro. The French were hampered initially by the lack of a base at the entrance to the Adriatic and had to make use of distant Malta. Submarines would soon make the entry of large ships into the Adriatic too hazardous.

Italy’s entry into the war in May 1915 made the French fleet essentially a reserve fleet. Moreover, the Italians were adamant that only an Italian admiral could command in the Adriatic. This meant that two battle fleets were employed watching the Austrians: the Italians at Taranto and the French at first at Argostoli and eventually at Corfu. Here successive French commanders-in-chief trained for a fleet action that never occurred. The naval convention accompanying Italy’s agreement to enter the war also specified that a flotilla of French destroyers and submarines would work with the Italians at Brindisi. The actual number varied according to French requirements, especially after the beginning of the Salonika campaign, and the relationship was far from cordial. It was obviously the arrival of German submarines at Austrian bases that presented the most serious challenge to the Allies at sea. The French found that they were ill prepared for this type of warfare and had recourse to Japanese shipyards for a series of 12 destroyers and also purchased over 250 trawlers from allies and neutrals for anti-submarine duties.

The fundamental interests of the French and the British diverged in the Mediterranean. The French were understandably preoccupied with protecting the north-south routes between France and their North African possessions, as well as supporting the Salonika expedition about which the French were more enthusiastic than the British. The British were more concerned about the east-west routes through the Mediterranean to Egypt and the Suez Canal. The fact that the British had such important trade interests in the Mediterranean and far greater numbers of craft suitable for anti-submarine warfare meant that the British, step by step, took over direction of the anti-submarine war in the Mediterranean, although the theoretical French command remained.30

The French found after the war that their situation vis-à-vis the Italians in the Mediterranean had altered to their disadvantage. At least part of the problem stemmed from the cautious policy of the Italians towards their
battle fleet. Even during the period of Italian neutrality the *Capo di Stato Maggiore* Thaon di Revel insisted that, whatever operations were undertaken against the Austrians in the Adriatic, such as support of army operations against Trieste, they should never run the risk of putting their battleships in danger of mines or torpedoes and should seek to cause major damage to the enemy while suffering the minimum. This would be accomplished by the aggressive action of light craft and torpedo-boats while major Italian warships would be preserved for action against their peers. This did not mean the Italian battle fleet would never fight, it would, but only against the Austrian battle fleet if and when the Austrians came out.31 These fundamental lines would not alter, although the Italians certainly considered the possibility of intervention by the fleet in the upper Adriatic. Painful losses to submarines after Italy entered the war imposed further caution. There were plans for the seizure of certain islands off the Dalmatian coast and a landing on the Sabbioncello Peninsula (later taken up again by the US Navy in 1918), but the Italian Army was reluctant to divert forces from the campaign on land. The presence of the Austrian fleet at Pola as a fleet-in-being ready to intervene meant that heavy ships would have to participate and the potential gains never really seemed to equal the potential risks. The Italians did occupy the tiny and barren island of Pelagosa in the mid-Adriatic, only to abandon it in a relatively short time.32

The relationship of the Italian Navy with its British and French allies was frequently a difficult one and seemed to worsen in 1917 and 1918. The Italians seemed constantly to be demanding assistance in ships and matériel yet were reluctant in British and French eyes to take risks or contribute to the anti-submarine effort by providing destroyers for convoys, while they jealously insisted on command in the Adriatic. The Italians, for their part, could argue that their efforts were not really appreciated, that they were the only ally in close proximity to a major enemy fleet since Pola was but a few hours’ steaming distance from the Italian coast. This forced them to divert numbers of light craft for the defense of Venice. Furthermore, it was foolish to risk large ships in the confined waters of the Adriatic where submarines and torpedo-boats could be more effective at less risk. The *MAS* boats—fast motor torpedo-boats—were probably the major Italian naval success of the war. Moreover, the Italians had their own coastal traffic in the Tyrrhenian to defend, as well as their lines of communication to the Italian Army in Albania and Libya. There is no doubt, though, that the Italians bitterly resented their beggar status, the reliance on others for essential items such as coal and the sometimes scarcely veiled aspersions on their courage for failing to do what they considered foolish things. All of this would create a poisonous atmosphere in the aftermath of the war.33

Thaon di Revel had indeed been looking at the situation at the end of the war when he argued in a memorandum of June 1918 against the
appointment of a British admiralissimo in the Mediterranean. The allies might have a common interest ill defeating the enemy, but they also had other interests that were opposed to each other. Revel regarded the French as traditionally ambitious and reluctant to admit the Italians as equals in acquiring political, economic and commercial influence in the Mediterranean. It was therefore indispensable that Italy did not appear at the peace conference too weakened militarily because Italian interests and influence in the Mediterranean required an efficient naval force. Ships required many years to be replaced and the Italian Navy had to win a battle without excessive losses while the French had to be compelled to expose their fleet to the inevitable losses of even a victorious action. Revel regarded the Italians as having been exposed to risk and the French to only minor risks. The Italians could not rely on a non-Italian commander-in-chief to keep these factors in mind and see that naval deployments and potential losses would be equally distributed or that the special nature of Italian ships—better armed and faster but with lighter and less robust hulls and engines—were properly employed, thereby creating the risk that Italian light craft would be immobilized in dockyards after a few months of hard employment.34

The end of the war and the collapse and dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy removed a major burden from the Italian Navy. It is true that the temporary eclipse of the German Navy would be a great relief to the French as well, but the French had not really been able to contest the Germans in the north in the years before the war and there was also the presence of the Royal Navy to act as a restraining force on the Germans. The Austrian fleet, on the other hand, had been the major preoccupation of the Italian Navy ever since unification. The threat of France had been secondary. Now the Austrian menace was gone, and the Italian Navy no longer had to be seriously occupied with the Adriatic. It is true that a bitter rivalry with the new south Slav state that rose from the debris of the Habsburg monarchy in the Adriatic quickly developed, but Yugoslavia lacked the financial resources to develop into a major naval power. During the inter-war period there was sometimes loose talk about a Yugoslav fleet of 30 submarines, but in reality Yugoslavia’s Navy would never consist of more than a handful of destroyers and submarines. Neither the Greeks nor the Turks would develop large naval forces to rival the Italians either. Consequently the Italian Navy was freed from having constantly to look over its shoulder at the Adriatic and could regard the Mediterranean as its major field of action. This brought a new emphasis on naval rivalry with France.

The French had virtually suspended the construction of major war-ships during the war. The hard won Naval Law of 1912 became a dead letter. By 1919 they had a fleet that was ageing with many warships obsolete, in concept if not in actual years. This was particularly true of the numerous
large armored cruisers. The core of the battle fleet had not been touched by the war, the worst loss had been the semi-dreadnought *Danton*, but even the relatively new French dreadnoughts were from the technical point of view inferior to their British and German counterparts. In the period between 1914 and 1922 the French had built only 28,000 tons of generally small vessels compared with 70,000 tons for Italy.\(^{35}\)

The situation was clouded by uncertainty over what a future League of Nations might signify for armaments, and technical questions arising from the lessons of the war. There were those who claimed that the battleship had had its day, and others who recommended concentration on submarines. The French initially responded in 1919 with *Projet de loi 171*. Work on the five *Normandie* class battleships of the 1912 program was suspended. The French would address their most pressing needs by laying down in 1920 six 5,200-ton scouts (*éclaireurs d’escadre*), originally scheduled for 1917–19, as well as 12 1,800–2,000-ton flotilla leaders (*torpilleurs éclaireurs*). This was considered the additional force necessary to ensure French superiority in the western Mediterranean where freedom of communications with North Africa had to be effectively protected and the French and Algerian-Tunisian coasts sheltered from serious danger.\(^{36}\)

Vice-Admiral Salaun, the Chief of Naval Staff, considered *Projet de loi 171* insufficient and in the winter of 1920 sought its modification. A comparison of the French and the Italian fleet revealed French superiority only in terms of battleships and obsolete armored cruisers. In contrast the French had a marked inferiority in light cruisers, a grave inferiority in flotilla leaders and destroyers and a very grave inferiority in submarines. French inferiority was such that they would be incapable of securing freedom of communications in the western Mediterranean in the event of conflict with Italy and the safety of Tunisia might be compromised. The French Navy had to choose vessels solely on military considerations based on the imperious necessity of reconquering mastery of the western Mediterranean as soon as possible, a mastery that Italy had bit by bit and silently taken away from them during the last war by building numerous flotilla leaders, destroyers and submarines while French arsenals and shipyards had dedicated all their efforts on building or repairing patrol craft as well as the manufacture of war matériel for the Army. Salaun argued that in order to regain their pre-war situation in the Mediterranean the French would have to lay down six light cruisers, 12 flotilla leaders, 15 destroyers and 35 submarines and that this would be a minimum program that would presuppose circumstances allowing them to concentrate all their forces in the event of a war with Italy.\(^{37}\)

The *Conseil Supérieur* added to the program, notably torpedo-boats and provision for converting the hull of the *Béam*, one of the unfinished *Normandies*, to an aircraft carrier. There was considerable discussion about a ‘minimum program’ and the *tranches*, or installments, it would be
financially possible and politically expedient to ask Parliament to fund. The French situation was complicated by the fact they also had to consider Germany. The French believed that the Germans were undoubtedly thinking of revenge and would attempt it as soon as they were ready. The Soviets were also hostile to France and might reach an agreement with the Germans, freeing the latter from worry over their eastern frontiers. The French naval staff also regarded the British as liberated from the menace of the powerful German Navy and gradually falling back into their traditional egoism and splendid isolation. Their momentary friendship for France was cooling and they could not count on British aid in another conflict with Germany. Italy had come out of the war more ambitious than ever, blaming France for not getting all it desired from the peace treaties and dreaming of supplanting France as the premier great power in the Mediterranean. The French naval staff regarded the Italians as two-faced, and recent history had indicated that they would not hesitate if their interests were involved to turn against their former allies. Fortunately, Italy’s mediocre industrial resources prohibited it from undertaking a war against France by itself but it might do if supported by an ally such as Germany, especially if Italy were assured of the neutrality of Britain. The sole means of preventing that eventuality would be to give French forces in the Mediterranean superiority over the Italians. But this was not enough. However weak the naval forces left to Germany by the peace treaty, they were far from negligible and capable of threatening French communications in the Channel and the Atlantic, if they did not have the means to oppose them. Therefore, while they required a superior force over the Italians in the Mediterranean, they also needed another naval force in the north sufficiently powerful to dominate and annihilate the German fleet. The ‘Normal Programme’ of the French Navy was therefore to be what was in effect a ‘two-power’ standard.38

Faced with these considerations, the Conseil Supérieur adopted what they called a minimum program for a fleet of: 11 battleships; 15 12,000-ton cruisers; 15 8,000-ton cruisers; 19 destroyers, 92 torpedo-boats and 100 submarines, plus auxiliary vessels. The number of cruisers was determined by the fact that under the Treaty of Versailles Germany was permitted to build eight 10,000-ton cruisers and eight 6,000-ton cruisers. The numbers of other types of warship were determined by the plans for operations against Italy. The entire program was submitted to neither the government nor Parliament, but a first tranche was voted by Parliament on 17 March 1922. However, by this date there were complications. The Washington Naval Treaties limited French global battleship tonnage to 175,000 and global aircraft carrier tonnage to 60,000.39 The French therefore had to revise their plans and the eventual result was the Navy’s plan for a Statut Naval or naval law. The Naval Law of 1924 would not have specified the number of vessels in each category (ships of the line,
aerial carriers, light ships and submarines) but would specify a global tonnage for each category. The objective was the same, a French fleet equal to that of Italy and Germany combined, with a slight margin of superiority, given as 100,000 tons in some studies. In fact, the French Parliament never voted the Naval Law of 1924 and in place of it the French Navy received an annual *tranche*.

The view was, of course, very different on the Italian side. The momentum of wartime construction may have resulted in those light vessels that alarmed the French, but there were losses to make up, hard wear on delicate machinery to be repaired or replaced, added to which many obsolete vessels had been kept in service only because of the war. The finances of the Italian kingdom were even more delicate than those of France and priority was given to an effort to make good the heavy losses in the Italian merchant marine, reduced to about 50 per cent of what it had been before the war. There was consequently a wholesale scrapping of obsolete vessels and during the ministry of Vice-Admiral Giovanni Sechi (June 1919–June 1921) priority was given in whatever construction took place to light vessels. As in France, there was considerable debate over the lessons of the war and the types of vessel to construct in the future. In the political arena it was not surprisingly the right and extreme nationalists who were ardently in favor of the construction of large ships and an aggressive maritime role, asserting Italy’s position in the Mediterranean, or at least the eastern part of it. But the importance of light craft was also enhanced by the lessons of the recent war and the intense preoccupation with the Italian position in the Adriatic and claims on the Dalmatian coast.

The Italians had stopped work during the war on three super dreadnoughts, but while it was in the initial stages a fourth, the *Caracciolo*, was finally launched in May 1920. However, the Italian Navy decided not to finish the expensive ship and the hull was eventually sold. Between the armistice and the beginning of the Washington Naval Conference in the autumn of 1921 the Italians completed seven destroyers and five submarines already under construction and laid down another two scouts (*esploratori leggere*) and ten destroyers. The French, whatever their alarm about the advance of the Italian Navy, were also well aware of the financial difficulties which had curtailed Italian construction.

The Italian naval staff was willing to accept a reduction of naval armaments at the Washington conference but wanted to demand absolute equality with the French. Admiral de Lorenzi, the *Capo di Stato Maggiore*, defended this on the grounds that Italy’s maritime needs were superior to those of the French because of its merchant marine, population and need to maintain contact with the numerous colonies of Italian emigrants. In a subsequent memorandum he went on to emphasize Italy’s geographical position in a closed sea such as the Mediterranean, its density of
population and need to import food and raw materials by sea. These were factors that did not affect the French as much. He also advanced the traditional arguments about Italy’s long, exposed coastline, too extensive to be protected by fixed defenses, and the necessity for communications with Sicily and Sardinia. The French Mediterranean coast, in contrast, was much less extensive and protected by the naval base of Toulon. The civilian Minister of Marine Eugenio Bergamasco and Senator Carlo Schanzer, designated head of the Italian delegation to Washington, found these claims excessive. At the start of the conference, in terms of ships in service or under construction the Italians had only 351,200 tons compared to the French 449,200. Bergamasco instructed the Italian naval delegation to strive for 90 per cent of the French Navy, and, if it were necessary to reach an agreement, the minimum Italian claim would be 80 per cent. In fact, thanks to a complicated series of factors including the careful courting of the Americans on the subject of naval disarmament in general, British suspicions of the French and perhaps an underestimation of the Italians, preoccupation with Japanese naval growth in the Pacific, rather foolish and, in American and British eyes, excessive French claims in regard to submarines, the Italians emerged from the conference with the desired parity in battleships and carriers. Their Navy and the French would be limited to 175,000 tons of battleships and 60,000 tons of carriers.

There was much comment in word and print, both pro and con, expended on the Washington naval treaties and the controversy was often linked to domestic politics. Certainly the French appeared to have suffered a humiliation, they were not included in the ‘big three’ (the United States, Great Britain and Japan) and theoretical parity with Italy meant equality with a navy that in 1914 had little more than half their capital ship tonnage. But the arguments over capital ships and exclusion from the big three should not obscure the fact that the naval limitation treaties put limits only on capital ships, carriers and the size of cruisers. There were no limitations on the numbers of light craft and it was exactly this type of vessel that the French were most interested in building. Battleships were not a major priority for the immediate future. The French Parliament in ratifying the treaty made this clear by adding the express reservation that the global tonnage for capital ships and carriers did not reflect the maritime interests of the powers and could not be extended to classes of warship other than those stipulated. However, the Italians were also bound by no restrictions on the numbers of cruisers, destroyers and submarines and French assumptions that they would retain their actual superiority over Italy, because of their greater financial resources, would be questionable because of Mussolini and the Fascist government’s determination to devote considerable resources to armaments. To be sure, the Italians did not immediately attempt to build capital ships to fill their quota. It would have been too expensive and absorb too much of the naval
Mussolini was firmly convinced that for Italy to be great it must have a powerful navy and in 1927 he (while acting as his own Minister of Marine) informed the Under Secretary of State Rear-Admiral Giuseppe Sirianni: ‘the goal is to construct a navy that will represent for France what the German Navy represented and will represent again for England: a nightmare and a threat’. By the end of the 1930s the Italian Navy appeared to be outspending and outbuilding the French and in the years just before the outbreak of war the French Navy was forced to undertake substantial efforts to regain its advantage. Nevertheless, and despite the spurt in French construction on the eve of war, the Italians had reduced the French lead in total tonnage between the high sea fleets from 1.59:1 in 1931 to 1.25:1 in June 1940, and much of the French advantage now rested on a superior number of older battleships and the tonnage of the characteristically large French destroyers.

The technicalities of subsequent armaments negotiations, whether they were at Geneva in 1927 or London in 1930 and 1935, can be almost overwhelming. The British expended considerable effort in trying to achieve agreements between the French and Italians in 1930 and 1931. One’s eyes tend to glaze over with the voluminous documents on tonnages and categories. The question might be asked: in all of this did the fundamental policies change, for example, the French two-power standard? Unfortunately, the French attempt to maintain a two-power standard over Italy and Germany proved beyond their grasp, despite the fact that the French Parliament, with rare exceptions when the economic crisis was at its worst, on the whole loyally fulfilled its duty of voting the annual tranche, although never committing itself to a naval program in advance.

The German challenge came even before the advent of Hitler and the Nazis with the Weimar Republic’s plans to lay down Panzerschiff ‘A’. The naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles had left the German Navy with only eight obsolete pre-dreadnoughts which it was allowed to replace when 20 years old, provided that replacements were not in excess of 10,000 tons. The intent had been to restrict the Germans to battleships that were in essence mere coast defense ships. The Germans, however, produced a design for an armored ship armed with six 280 mm guns and capable of 28 knots. They were able, while staying within treaty restrictions, to design a ship faster than most existing battleships and far more powerful than the so-called ‘treaty cruisers’. The Germans laid down three in the years 1929–32 and the class became popularly known as ‘pocket battleships’. The French regarded them as a potential threat to their communications in the Atlantic and replied, despite all attempts to restrain them, with two battle-cruisers of the Dunkerque class, larger...
(26,500 tons) and more powerfully armed (8×33 cm guns) than the Germans’. The Italians replied with the four 35,000-ton Littorio class, laid down in 1934–38 and armed with nine 38.1 cm guns and radically modernized four surviving dreadnoughts from the World War. The old Italian dreadnoughts (two Cavours and two Duilios) were far more extensively modernized than their French contemporaries (two Courbets and three Lorraines). The French followed with three Richelieu class, laid down in 1935–39, armed with eight 38cm guns and planned a fourth, improved version. Therefore, with this deferred replacement of old battleships in progress, one had a naval race in capital ships in the second half of the 1930s, although it was not strictly a Mediterranean race. The Italian ships were obviously destined for the Mediterranean, but the French had been initially motivated by factors outside the Mediterranean to resume battleship construction, their actions producing or providing the excuse for counter-actions on the part of the Italians.

It was probably the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 that raised the insurmountable obstacle to French efforts to achieve a two-power naval standard.54 The British, seeking to avoid a repetition of the pre-1914 naval race as well as to appease the new German regime, permitted the Germans to build up to 35 per cent of British naval strength. Unfortunately, this would have represented two-thirds of French tonnage. In 1939 the number of French warships in service or under construction compared with the combined German and Italian total for each class was: capital ships 9:7; 10,000-ton cruisers 7:7; light cruisers 11:15; destroyers 32:15; torpedo-boats 39:45; and submarines (France and Italy alone) 80:50. In terms of heavy and light cruisers (18:17) and torpedo-boats (39:33) the Italians had almost caught up. The French still retained a substantial lead in destroyers and submarines.55

The French Navy continued to regard the Italians as the main potential enemy, and the French fleet has been described as oriented perhaps excessively towards the western Mediterranean, with the intention of fighting a fleet action against the Italian battle fleet in the Toulon-Oran-Bizerte triangle. It seemed as if little had changed since 1914, with anti-submarine and anti-aircraft measures as well as night-fighting being neglected. The preoccupation with the Mediterranean might be seen also in the French torpedo-boats. Their relatively small radius of action made them less suitable for operations in the Atlantic.56 Belatedly, the French also recognized the potential importance of aviation. Two aircraft carriers were under construction by the outbreak of war and a third was planned to replace the old Béarn, considered as essentially experimental and too slow for operations with the fleet.

However hesitant the French might have been about taking aircraft to sea in carriers, they were more advanced than the Italians who made a deliberate decision not to use the 60,000 tons allotted them at Washington
except for a seaplane carrier of relatively limited capacity. There was considerable debate in Italy over the role of aircraft and seapower, clouded by the fact that the technical capacity of aircraft then in service was not all that impressive. Furthermore, Italy’s geographic situation contributed to the idea that carriers were for navies operating in the oceans and a Mediterranean power such as Italy could satisfy its air requirements by the use of bases on land. Italy was the home of General Giulio Douhet whose theories on the strategic use of airpower attracted world-wide attention. Mussolini and the Fascists would be relatively air-minded, a separate Italian air force, the *Regia Aeronautica* was created in March 1923, combining military and naval aviation, but this meant abolishing a separate naval air arm. There were several studies for ships capable of operating aircraft but none was adopted. In parliamentary debates on the 1924–25 budget the Minister of Marine Admiral Thaon di Revel, reportedly a supporter of aviation during the war, argued that a carrier capable of receiving aircraft at sea would require a platform of at least 150m, a 25–35,000-ton ship, would be extremely costly, and at the moment he did not propose to build one. This did not necessarily preclude an aircraft carrier in the future, but even during the rapid buildup before World War II carriers were rejected. In March 1938 the *Capo di Stato Maggiore* Vice-Admiral Domenico Cavagnari, during the discussion of the 1938–39 naval budget, declared that ships of this type were not necessary for a navy destined to operate in a restricted sea such as the Mediterranean. During the war the Italians finally decided to convert two transatlantic liners into carriers but the work was never completed.

The Italian Navy therefore continued along the lines of favoring fast light craft, although also building the large 10,000-ton cruisers permitted under the Washington Treaty. The Navy also tended to overvalue submarines, building large numbers and perhaps not considering the possibility that the French might blunt some of their effectiveness by diverting traffic outside the Mediterranean. This was to a certain extent due to what some have regarded as an over-concentration on the French Navy and the belief France would be the most probable enemy. There was a reluctance to consider the serious possibility of war with the British, although Mussolini’s aggressive policy raised this prospect as early as the Corfu incident of 1923. The Italians grew more confident about the French as their fleet expanded and expected that Italian submarines would be effective against French lines of communication in the Mediterranean. They also deprecated the possibility that Yugoslavia might be an ally of France. The small Yugoslav fleet would be shut up in the Adriatic by a blockade of the Straits of Otranto. The Italian Navy also appears to have neglected the subject of anti-submarine warfare and the protection of their own traffic, surprisingly so in view of the large French submarine force. This is linked to a lingering fascination with the battleship that would lead
to a sizeable expenditure after the mid-1930s on both new construction and extensive modernization. The modernized ships. Admiral Bernotti charged, were still not equal in gun power and armor protection to the old British battleships found in the Mediterranean. By implication, the money might have been better spent on new construction or anti-submarine craft and weapons suitable for the defense of traffic.61

The possibility of war with Great Britain became a real one in 1935–36 as a result of the Ethiopian crisis. Cavagnari was alarmed at the prospect and expected that at first the Italian Navy could do little beyond a maritime guerrilla war and that Italy’s coast would be defenseless, with its ports and naval bases dreadfully exposed. It was reminiscent of the pre-1914 fears. Cavagnari eventually evolved a plan calling for defense of the coast by light craft, raids against the British and the exploitation of favorable opportunities by the Italian battle fleet. The Italians also ordered the construction of substantial numbers of motor-torpedo boats and in October 1935 began the preparation of the mezzi d’assalto, the underwater assault devices and special craft that would prove to be one of their more effective weapons during the war.

In 1936 the Italians developed plans to safeguard their interests in the Mediterranean and communications with their colonies based on the premise that the political situation in the Mediterranean would be at least partially favorable to them in that one of the two great Mediterranean powers, France or England, might be considered an ally or at least benevolently neutral. The naval staff then submitted two six-year building programs, one a ‘minimum program’ that would involve continuing what they had been doing up until then, and a second and much more extensive program to build a flotta d’evasione—literally an ‘escape fleet’—that would permit the Italians to operate outside the Straits of Gibraltar in the oceans. It would include: two battleships; an aircraft carrier, six cruisers; 16 scouts (light cruisers); four destroyers and torpedo-boats; 15 submarines and 58 small torpedo- and anti-submarine craft for a grand total of 321,930 tons. This program had an anti-British edge and was designed to protect from outside the Straits the sea lanes in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. This would be accomplished by protecting the focal points of Italian traffic at the Straits and attacking the focal points of enemy traffic. It would also support the oceanic operations of a potential ally (that is, Germany) and execute overseas operations. The fleet would reach approximately two-thirds of the strength of the British fleet, calculated at double that of the French. The emphasis was on major action outside the Straits of Gibraltar. A subsequent study in September 1937 projected a 50 per cent formula; that is, the combined Italian-German fleet in tonnage would be at least 50 per cent of the combined Anglo-French fleets, the ratio of the Italian Navy to the British falling to two-fifths.62 These projects of 1935 to 1937 generally called for a fleet of
around 700,000 tons, regarded as the maximum for Italy’s industrial and financial capacity. The actual tonnage of the Italian fleet early in the war was, at 670,000, close to this target, although there were no carriers and the realities of the naval war forced a change in the types of ship acquired, with a great increase in the numbers of anti-submarine escorts.63

The idea that the Mediterranean was a prison from which Italy must escape was in various ways expressed by Mussolini during his career. He was an ardent supporter of a big fleet as an expression of Italian and Fascist power and the Navy would benefit from this in its building programs, but would later have to pay a heavy price when he plunged Italy into a disastrous war. But the idea certainly preceded Mussolini, nor did it belong exclusively to Fascist rhetoric. For example, the concept of the Mediterranean as a ‘closed sea’ and the implication that traffic to Italy could easily be cut off at focal points such as Gibraltar and Suez is found in the memoranda prepared by the Stato Maggiore for the Italian delegation to the Washington conference in support of demands for parity with the French.64

The French Navy’s preoccupation with Italy would only increase by the end of the 1930s. The Ethiopian war and its aftermath followed by the Spanish Civil War saw Italy move steadily into the German orbit. The clandestine activities by Italian submarines against shipping bound for Republican Spain and the subsequent Nyon accords and policing duties they involved reinforced this Mediterranean consciousness.65 The fond dreams of some French that Mussolini and the Italians might yet be drawn into an alliance did not materialize. Furthermore, the British seemed prone to appeasement and reluctant to be drawn into staff talks with the French. Admiral François Darlan, who became chief of the French naval staff in 1937, was perhaps the leading exponent of a French Mediterranean strategy and called for an increase in the French building program to meet the Italian threat. Darlan’s preoccupation increased after the Munich crisis and it has been argued that it was French naval preoccupation with the Mediterranean that significantly influenced Anglo-French strategic talks in the winter of 1939.66

Darlan’s plans in the event of war with Italy were aggressive. In addition to the anticipated naval actions against Italian communications with Libya and bombardments of La Spezia, Naples and Pantelleria, he proposed simultaneous French air and land offensives against Tripoli and Italy’s northwestern frontier with France. These proposals were resisted by the French Army and Air Force, preoccupied as they were with the German menace and fearful that the offensives against Italy would weaken French defenses against the Germans and thereby invite a German attack. The Air Force believed that bombing should only be in retaliation for Italian aerial attacks on France, and General Gamelin, chief of the Army general staff, favored nothing more than attempting to stir up domestic political unrest.
in Italy and closing the Suez Canal and Gibraltar, thereby ‘asphyxiating’ Italy in the Mediterranean. Edouard Daladier, the head of the French cabinet, conscious of the fact that the imminent victory of Franco in Spain might represent a danger to France’s Pyrenean frontier, compromised between the two positions by advocating what might be termed a limited Mediterranean offensive. There would be no plan to attack the Italian mainland, but if Italy attacked French possessions in either the Red Sea (Djibouti) or Tunisia, the French would undertake an offensive in Libya. Gamelin, in outlining his general strategic concepts for the British, did leave open the possibility of a simultaneous offensive in the Alps, Libya and Italian East Africa.67

French plans for war against Italy in the Mediterranean were always complicated by the priority the British gave to their interests in the Far East, notably the plan to send a fleet east to Singapore. French naval superiority was now threatened by the new Italian construction, especially the two Littorios and modernized Dorias. Darlan’s aggressive plans continued to meet resistance from the other French services, and in the end the latter and the British view on the necessity of appeasing the Italians in an attempt to keep them neutral prevailed.68 There was a big difference, however, between Italian neutrality in 1914 and in 1939. In 1914 Italian ties with the Triple Alliance had been weakened by the secret accords with France and the natural antagonism of Italy and Austria. The tendency then was for Italy to slide into an alliance and belligerency on the side of the entente. In 1939 the Italian tilt was clearly in the direction of Germany.

The fact that Italy was neutral between September 1939 and June 1940 meant that there were no real operations in the Mediterranean beyond the enforcement of contraband control and the protection of certain high-value transports, although convoys were not introduced. In December 1939 the French dissolved the Mediterranean fleet and replaced it with three squadrons directly under the Admiralty. One squadron consisted of the three old Lorraines, another of four 10,000-ton cruisers and four divisions of destroyers and another of three 7,000-ton light cruisers. In addition, there was PATMOC, the acronym for Patrouilleurs de la Méditerranée Occidentale, consisting of four divisions of torpedo-boats and an escadille of patrol craft. The organization has been described as conforming to the tendency during the Second World War to create ad hoc units akin to the American-style ‘Task Forces’ or ‘Task Groups’. There were also some 45 submarines divided between Toulon (20), Bizerte (17) and Oran (8). The only two modern battle-cruisers, the Dunkerques, were in the Atlantic where they joined in the hunt for German pocket battleships such as the Graf Spee that had broken out as raiders, exactly what they had been built to do. In April 1940 the French created Force X: the battleship Lorraine, four cruisers, and three destroyers. Force X, under the command of Vice-Amiral Godfroy, joined British forces at Alexandria and,
when the Italians entered the war on 10 June, French ships joined the British in bombardments of Bardia and Tobruk. As Mussolini had attacked only when France was in extremis, there were relatively few days of actual hostilities in the Mediterranean. The only operation of note, Operation VADO on the night of 13/14 June, consisted of a bombardment by French destroyers and cruisers of factories, coastal batteries and yards at Savona and Genoa. The objectives were similar to those in French plans of 1897. The damage inflicted was slight. The trials of the French Navy in the Mediterranean after the armistice were much greater. The most spectacular was the British attack on the French forces at Mers el-Kébir to prevent, in Churchill’s mind, the French ships falling into German hands. Fortunately, the British were able to reach an agreement with Admiral Godfroy and Force X at Alexandria. The ships were demobilized with the breechblocks of guns and firing pins of torpedoes stored at the French consulate on shore. The ships were effectively out of the war, spectators to the bitter conflict for three years. There would be worse to come for the French Navy in the Mediterranean as it fulfilled Vichy France’s policy of defending the French Empire and serving as a bargaining chip in relations with the Germans. There was sporadic combat against the British, notably off Syria and Lebanon in 1941, more losses against the British and Americans during the Allied landings in North Africa in November 1942 and, finally, the greatest disaster of all and the negation of a naval policy, the scuttling of the fleet at Toulon on 27 November. As German forces closed in on the port the French scuttled 77 warships, including three battleships and battle-cruisers, seven cruisers, 32 destroyers and 16 submarines.

Cavagnari and the Italian Navy were presented with a great opportunity after the fall of France for their forces heavily outnumbered the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean at a moment when the very existence of Great Britain seemed in question. Cavagnari appears to have reverted to old habits of thinking concerning a ‘fleet-in-being’ reminiscent of Thaon di Revel’s arguments over a generation before. Even before Italy’s entrance into the war he had argued against a rash offensive lest losses weaken Italy’s position at a peace conference. Now he avoided a major encounter because the prospect that Britain would soon be compelled to seek peace made it foolish to risk expensive losses, and such encounters as took place, for example, off Calabria on 9 July when the battleship Cavour was damaged by a British shell, only reinforced his convictions. He was also reluctant to face the possible losses inherent in an attack on the strategic island of Malta, preferring to reduce it by air raids. Cavagnari was replaced by Admiral Arturo Riccardi after the successful British air attack on Taranto in November, but in March 1941 the Italians paid the price for their lack of radar and training in night-fighting when they lost three cruisers in the battle of Cape Matapan. Among the fleet’s many
deficiencies, Italian naval writers stress the fact that war broke out three
years before they had planned, the lack of naval aviation and insufficient
fuel reserves.

In 1941 Italian priorities changed for, with the development of the
campaign in North Africa, the Italian Navy was locked into a grueling
effort to protect supplies carried across the Mediterranean to Libya for the
Italian Army and its ferocious German ally. There was a crash building
program for escort vessels, the type of warfare neglected before 1940. The
Italians had some success with the use of unorthodox methods associated
with the *mezzi d’assalto*, notably the *maiali*—torpedoes guided
underwater by frogmen—in an attack against the British fleet at
Alexandria.⁷² One might say that in supporting the desert campaign the
Italian Navy performed creditably, taking heavy losses to ensure supplies
for a German ally inclined to scorn them. According to Italian statistics,
they ran 896 convoys with 1,789 ships to Libya with a loss of 8.4 per cent
and 378 convoys with 1,279 ships to Tunisia with a loss of 16 per cent.⁷³

By 1942 the fleet was also suffering severely from fuel shortages and by the
end of the year there was a powerful new enemy in the Mediterranean in
the form of the United States Navy. This situation had been described by
another well-known Italian naval writer as being so absurd and
catastrophic that it had not merited being taken into consideration.⁷⁴

It was not easy for the Italians to escape from their German ally: in
September 1943 they lost the battleship *Roma* to a radio-controlled glider
bomb as the fleet attempted to reach Malta and other ships were seized by
the Germans and most eventually sunk. The Italian Navy would later lose
still more ships in the peace treaties. The Italians attempted to carry on the
war as co-belligerents; their reception was understandably somewhat cool.
The French, and those French warships that survived, fared much better in
1943. Many of them were refitted in American yards, receiving new radar
and increased anti-aircraft protection and joining other Allied ships in
covering the invasion of southern France. The French Navy also carried
troops for the liberation of Corsica—an all-French operation—and it
would be the French Navy that, despite the intermittent hostilities of the
1940–42 Vichy period, emerged on the side of the victorious powers.
Nevertheless, both the French and the Italian Navy would face a
monumental task of reconstruction in a very changed Mediterranean.

NOTES

1 There is a classic statement of these factors in the works of the French naval
theorist Admiral Castex. For an English version see: Admiral Raoul Castex,
*Strategic Theories*, trans, and ed. Eugenia C.Kiesling (Annapolis, MD: Naval

2 The most thorough work remains Theodore Ropp, *The Development of a
POLICY AND STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN


3 Ropp, *Development of a Modern Navy*, p. 292. At the time of the crisis the naval base at Bizerte had not yet been completed.

4 Ibid., p. 274.

5 Ibid., p. 307.

6 Paul G. Halpern, *The Mediterranean Naval Situation, 1908–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 61–2. The situation in regard to cruisers was less favorable, the French were at a 13:17 disadvantage but the German and Italian fleets were widely separated.


8 Minutes, Section Permanent, Conseil Supérieur de la Marine, 16 February 1906, Service Historique de la Marine [hereafter cited as SHM], Carton BB1-1813.


14 Delcassé [Minister of Marine] to Lapeyrère [C.-in-C., 1er Armée Navale], 11 November 1912, SHM, carton Ed-38.


18 Mariano Gabriele and Giuliano Friz, *La politica navale italiana dal 1885 al
FRENCH AND ITALIAN NAVAL POLICY


23 Ibid., pp. 198–204. 


34 Revel to Orlando [Prime Minister], 7 June 1918, USM, cartella 1192. The
proposal to appoint Admiral Jellicoe as Mediterranean admiralissimo—a project also opposed by French diplomats—is discussed at length in Halpern, *Naval War in the Mediterranean*, Chs 11 and 12.


37 Ibid., pp. 30–2.


39 Cabinet du Ministre, ‘Analyse du projet de programme naval présenté par l’État-major général au Conseil Supérieur de la Marine’, n.d., p. 2., SHM, Carton 1BB 217. Battleships were limited to 35,000 tons and 406mm guns and cruisers to 10,000 tons and 203mm guns.


43 Giovanni Bernardi, *Il Disarmo navale fra le due guerre mondiali* (1919–39) (Rome: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1975), pp. 32–3. The Italians also received three German and two Austrian light cruisers and five Austrian destroyers. The French received similar numbers as well as ten German U-boats; see Salaun, *La Marine Française*, pp. 369–70.


52 Masson, ‘La “belle marine” de 1939’, pp. 449–51. Masson also makes the point that deviations from the program were essentially the work of the government, not the two chambers.


66 These points are forcibly argued in the important article by Reynolds M. Salerno, ‘The French Navy and the Appeasement of Italy, 1937–39’, English Historical Review, 112 (February 1997):73–9, 87–90.


71 Italian plans against Malta are covered in great detail in Mariano Gabriele, *Operazioni C3: Malta* (Rome: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1965).


9. *Raimondo Montecuccoli*, one of the super-fast and graceful Italian 6-inch-gun cruisers known as the *Condottiere* types, 1934. Italy, unable to match the resources of its neighbours, developed a succession of ingenious warships, which were unusually fast and capable.
Italy and the Mediterranean in the Power-Political Calculations of German Naval Leaders, 1919–45

Gerhard Schreiber

Like many studies on aspects of German and European history in the period between the end of World War I and the disaster of 1945, an analysis of the long-term objectives formulated by the German naval leaders\(^1\) corroborates the precise—though shortened—thesis by Fritz Fischer that, in the end, it was the non-acceptance of the defeat suffered in 1918 that led to the disaster of World War II.\(^2\) One could even say that the Navy surpassed most of the other conservative elites in Germany in not only working for a revision of the results of the war but also in fostering the will to repeat the attempt\(^3\) which had failed in World War I: to secure the position of a world power for the German Reich.\(^4\)

Immediately after the armistice the ideological disposition and the power-political ambition of the naval leaders showed in a printed memorandum by the peace commission\(^5\) in the *Reichs-Marine-Amt*\(^6\) dealing with the formation and development of the German *Wehrmacht* at sea. Like other attempts of both a theoretical and a practical nature made before the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of 28 June 1919, the memorandum was intended to disprove the thesis of German war guilt. The arguments put forward in this context contain neither new nor original ideas, so that they need not be reviewed here. However, considering the power-political objectives pursued by naval leaders in the long term, the official opinion of the *Reichs-Marine-Amt* documented in this memorandum is important, saying that Germany’s political and military calculations would have to be based in the future on the assumption—shown to be an irrefutable fact—that Great Britain would hold down by force any economic rival appearing to be dangerous to it. Since, at the same time, the naval leaders stated that the German return to a position of world economic power would take place almost
automatically, which according to their very own military-political
document implied the development of adequate seapower, they believed—
and Admiral Wegener clearly formulated that in the second half of the
1920s—that a new conflict between the German Reich and Great Britain
was, in a way, inevitable.

Without attempting at this point a more thorough interpretation of the
development of German-British relations, which, of course, has to be
observed continuously with particular regard to naval policy, the following
should be noted at the very beginning—and, at the same time, as a résumé:
with regard to relations with London, German naval leaders had been
supporting a tranquilizing policy since the end of World War I. This meant
that they advocated political tactics which excluded a conflict with the
British for the foreseeable future. However, this approach to the power-
political conditions in the immediate post-war period was intended to be
temporary from the very beginning and contrasted with Germany’s long-
term ‘real’ objectives mentioned above. Within the Navy’s framework of
understanding, Britain remained the decisive adversary, as it would have to
be in a second German attempt to become an oceanic naval and world
power.

This background should be kept in mind when fitting the basic political
course pursued by naval leaders into German foreign policy up until 1933.
Indeed, there appears to have been a kind of navy-specific, westward
orientation which was intended to achieve, on the one hand, the
politico-military, short-term objective aimed at overcoming the provisions
of the Treaty of Versailles and, on the other, a long-term objective aimed at
encircling France by establishing especially good relations with Great Britain,
Italy and Spain. Until about 1937 Paris continued to be the main adversary
within the revisionist calculations of the naval leaders, whose true aims
were, in general, camouflaged by so-called ‘national security’ interests. In
the context of both short-term and long-term objectives, Italy and the
Mediterranean became particularly significant for German naval policy.

To clarify the terms before considering this it is important to point out
that the short-term political objectives of all German naval leaders were of
a revisionist character and, from their point of view, they were basically
achieved by 1938. Accordingly, the naval leaders concluded at that time
that Greater Germany came into being in that year. Furthermore, they
believed that the Wehrmacht should now prepare for conflict with the
world powers in consequence of the Third Reich’s ‘assertion of worldwide
interests and trans-oceanic claims’. Thus, from that point forward, the
naval leaders devoted their attention to those long-term objectives which
they had propagated internally within the Navy since 1919, and whose
achievement meant more than recapturing the powerful position Germany
had held before World War I. The year 1938 marked the beginning of the
actual preparations for the second attempt ‘to seize world power’.
Although the substance of phrases such as ‘world power’, ‘claims to world power’, or ‘aspirations to seize world power’ may possibly be described in terms of very different ideological and power-political ideas, German naval leaders had clear criteria with which to define them. The sum of them illustrates an appreciation of world power whose central requirement was to remove Great Britain from the international position which the German Reich was supposed to occupy in Britain’s place. In order to create the appropriate prerequisites, Germany had both to rise to the status of unchallenged hegemonic power in Europe and to break British predominance at sea. One of the ideas which ruled the worldpower concept held by German naval leaders was that German interests were permanently threatened by other powers. In fact, there is concrete evidence that the claims by these leaders for permanent expansion of power would not have been satisfied after Germany had taken the place of Great Britain, but only after the German Reich had achieved worldwide predominance in the true sense of the word.10

The present status of research concerning these topics within the framework of German naval history is characterized by the fact that most studies focus on Anglo-German relations. Undoubtedly there are many convincing reasons for this concentration, since Great Britain was the central point of German politics in every respect until World War II.11 However, this sometimes seems to conceal the fact that the policy pursued by the German naval leaders was directed at more than one addressee. This applies to the time both before and after 1918. For instance, the objectives that naval leaders had set themselves in World War I affected the interests of nearly all European states, including the neutral powers. Direct reference was made to the Mediterranean region by German naval staff in their memoranda of 26 November and 24 December 1916, which established their ideas on the scope of future German seapower. Among other things, the permanent presence of the Navy in the Mediterranean was demanded at that time, a claim which was again put forward during World War II. In 1916 Valona in Albania seemed to be the ideal location for a German naval base. For this purpose the town, which was connected with the Reich by land lines of communication through Austria-Hungary, was to become German.12

Two points should be stressed as characteristic of German naval policy at this point: first, the naval leaders made a threat analysis that led to a claim for global hegemony—paradoxically based on the need for defense—which implied opportunities for identification with the National Socialist regime in the field of power politics. In order to prevent a distorted perspective, it should be added that this opportunity also existed in the field of domestic policy, particularly in the context of the ideological elements subsumed under the catchword ‘anti-Bolshevism’. Second, it should be pointed out that a comparison of the objectives of overseas
expansion formulated in 1916 with the plans which German naval leaders prepared before and during World War II shows that the essential elements for positioning the Reich as an oceanic world power were maintained: free access to the Atlantic; a system of bases which permitted both the interruption of British and French communications with overseas areas and the maintenance of the German ones; naval bases in order to disturb sea traffic in the Indian and the Pacific Ocean; and a mighty colonial empire in Central Africa, which would become, so to speak, the core of German world power.13

Irrespective of the fate France and Great Britain were to meet within the framework of these intentions, such considerations also raised the question of the status of Italy in these power-political calculations. Research has paid little attention to this issue since, among other things, German-Italian relations after 1933 have been mainly studied as a personal relationship between Hitler and Mussolini. Concepts deviating from the basic line of official foreign policy were hardly noticed, although the requirements resulting from the hegemonic and colonial claims of the German Reich—which were also supported by others and not just German naval leaders alone—had to press Berlin to maintain German economic, political and military presence in the Mediterranean area. Although politicians on both the German and the Italian side clearly realized this, the appropriate questions were postponed for the political leaders in Berlin and Rome. This also held true from the point of view of the German naval leaders. In their opinion, which at that time totally corresponded with the view taken by Hitler, Italy was still supposed to help Germany rise to the position of a European hegemonic power in 1939. Regarding the rivalry between Germany and Italy which found its paradigmatic expression in the antagonism between the two navies in 1941–42, it should be pointed out that, already within the framework of these introductory remarks, this was not a result of a more or less surprising change of the situation but the logical consequence of the German world-power concept.

Considering the chronological development of German naval policy towards Italy, it becomes obvious that, in spite of the differing intensity, several earlier memoranda dealing with the maritime renascence of Germany14 until about 1924–25, the naval leaders also subordinated their interest in German-Italian rapprochement to the need for internal consolidation of the Navy.15 Because of their experience of the naval riots during World War I,16 the revolution and the convulsions caused by the Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch,17 naval officials felt that they could not do without a period of self-examination. During that earlier period they had exercised relative restraint with regard to foreign policy. Naval leaders reacted in a rather indifferent way,18 even to the strain put on the German-Italian relationship after the occupation of the Ruhr district in 1923. And when, in conjunction with the Fiume crisis, there were unexpected contacts
between representatives of the Italian embassy in Berlin and the German Army Command, naval leaders remained indifferent, although the Italian naval attaché became involved in the matter.\textsuperscript{19}

The year 1925 seems to mark the renunciation of abstinence in the field of foreign policy and naval leaders regarded the process of consolidation as having been largely completed.\textsuperscript{20} In the 1925 wargaming exercise\textsuperscript{21} naval leaders made an assessment for the first time of the benefits to be obtained for German naval operations by Italy’s benevolently neutral attitude toward Germany. The scenario included two elements relevant to the future: the cautious attempt to extend operational planning to the Atlantic and the diversionary strategy in which naval leaders calculated that Italy would be of central significance.\textsuperscript{22} Simply speaking, the objective was to have the Italian Navy contain French forces in the Mediterranean without the German Navy directly engaging in events. This would multiply both the defensive and the offensive capabilities of German units. In addition, such behavior by the Italians would help the Germans on the Western Front, inasmuch as French troop transports from Africa to Europe would have been hindered or at least delayed. From the point of view of general strategy, the indirect integration of Italy into German warfare also suggested itself for another reason. There were no adequate alternatives to imports from overseas,\textsuperscript{23} as confirmed by a 1926 study on German supply possibilities in war. In this context the problem of British neutrality almost inevitably became a subject of discussion.

After the Locarno Conference British neutrality was as equally certain as Italian neutrality, unless the Reich violated the arrangements negotiated in October 1925.\textsuperscript{24} So, in 1926 the naval leaders could have been expected to take these changed foreign policy circumstances into consideration. However, that happened neither at that time nor in the following years. The Navy’s leaders were not only skeptical about the Locarno agreements but simply ignored them.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, they requested Italian co-operation in the field of diversionary strategy in an especially intensive way, just at the moment when it would have been unnecessary within a concept aimed exclusively at defense. The wargaming exercise in the winter of 1925–26 confirmed that naval leaders were interested in more than national defense.\textsuperscript{26} Since the main results of the exercise were submitted to the Army command as a list of operational objectives,\textsuperscript{27} it was not merely an internal exercise for the Navy. Referring to Italy, the results of the exercise—which already required the German Navy to control the seas between the Shetland Islands and Norway and which assumed the employment of German auxiliary cruisers in the Mediterranean and on the west coast of Africa—recognized only the significance of its operational aspects. In July 1926, on the occasion of the naval staff conference on the guidelines and objectives of German naval policy, the politico-ideological aspects of Italy’s value to German naval strategy were discussed.\textsuperscript{28} These
discussions clearly showed the Navy’s requirement that foreign-policy interests had to orient themselves to naval interests, and not vice versa. Only those passages of this extraordinarily revealing discussion about the assessment of the international political situation which are relevant to the views of the Marineleitung on the German-Italian relationship are considered below.

German naval leaders clearly sympathized with the Fascist regime in Italy, which seemed to have implemented that militarization of society which the naval leaders themselves were striving for and which, as an authoritarian governmental system, was an alternative that they preferred to parliamentary democracy. The attending officers apparently appreciated Mussolini not only as a declared adversary of France, but also as a destroyer of Italian social democracy, as a gravedigger of Jewish freemasonry and generally as an enemy of German democrats. At least for some naval leaders Mussolini was a power-political figure who could be assessed in a relatively reliable way. In spite of that, naval officials made reservations against having too close ties with Italy. But typically enough, the reservations were not based on political conditions. What caused relative skepticism were the military circumstances in Italy in 1926. Even memories of 1915 were evoked and, of course, there was a fair share of German arrogance towards Italy. Typical of that was that the chief of the Marineleitung, Admiral Zenker, was worried that the Germans would, in the end, have to pull Italian chestnuts out of the fire without receiving any service in return. So, for the time being, the Marineleitung’s overall intention was to support a policy which would ensure benevolent neutrality and general support by Italy without any commitment by the German side. This attitude was completely compatible with the requirements of the earlier diversionary strategy.

In the following years the naval leaders continued to maintain this attitude. It was only in September 1926 that Zenker deviated from the usual position, assuming that both Great Britain and Italy would sympathize with France and Poland in a war between Germany on the one side and those countries on the other. It is possible that naval leaders at that time reacted to the British irritations caused by the German-Soviet friendship treaty of April 1926 and—though delayed also in this case—to the tensions in the German-Italian relationship once again resulting from the unsolved South Tyrol problem. But not much later there was no longer any doubt that the Marineleitung adhered to its operational and strategic concept. In February 1927 its chief—encouraged by the positive experience with the British during the Geneva arms reduction talks—demanded Germany’s naval parity with France. This also suggests the determination with which the Navy pursued its course to the oceans. Although foreign and domestic policy factors delayed the government’s implementation of internal naval planning during the time of the Weimar
Republic, they could at no time cause any change in the Navy’s long-term objectives. The applicability of this thesis is proved by, among other things, the wargames conducted in the winter of 1927–28, which were the first ones to be attended by representatives of the Foreign Ministry as observers. The exercise scenario as a whole followed the pattern which had been applied since 1925, but the course of the exercise was designed purposely to prove how Italy would be an enormous relief to Germany’s naval operations in the case of a real coalition war. Thus the Navy officially investigated the possibilities which would arise from an alliance with Italy. That was something new. However, unlike the question of an alliance, the studies on the usability of armored ships and the analysis of the operational readiness of the means of naval warfare in a conflict without a preceding period of tension were operational rather than strategic. They deserve attention primarily as indicators of the consequent incorporation of the Atlantic area in the German naval warfare plans in late 1927.

In their comments on the exercise, the leaders tried to play the matter down in an effort to make relative the expressiveness inherent in such a situation. Referring to the traditional German-French enmity, requesting co-operation with dictatorial Spain, and making—even theoretical—preparations for a military coalition with Fascist Italy were policies that were not in line with the German government at that time. However, in analysing the arguments of the naval leaders one can see that there is really no convincing evidence that the initial situation chosen for the exercise was considered politically impracticable. On the contrary, Vice-Admiral Zenker stressed that the improbability of the wargame in terms of time should not be taken to mean an improbability of the operational plans or their outcome. With regard to the latter, the wargame might definitely be rated as a potential image of reality. How could these operations possibly proceed in the assumed way if they did not develop within the framework of an alliance with its specific influence on the military, economic and political factors of warfare? Thus in 1927 the German-Italian coalition—together with the benevolent neutrality of Great Britain and Spain—was one of the demands made by naval leaders in preparation for war against France and Poland.

As mentioned above, representatives of the Foreign Ministry took part in the post-mortem session on this wargame. After Zenker’s summary they tried to explain that it was improbable that an international conflict would break out unexpectedly because of the complex European situation and the effects of the Geneva and the Locarno agreement. In addition, the diplomats unmistakably rejected any offensive or even aggressive preparations for war, saying that German military thought should not focus on war as such, but on the possibilities of protecting Germany from a European crisis and avoiding as long as possible an armed conflict. The
representatives of the Foreign Ministry conveyed the general impression that the naval leaders assessed Germany’s importance as a maritime power too optimistically, overestimating Italy as a comrade-in-arms and considering France a predefined enemy in a rather undifferentiated way. Apart from the long-term, power-political objectives of naval leaders, the Foreign Ministry also questioned the Navy’s short-term ideological objective. After all, Zenker and his staff just at that moment were directing the considerations of the naval officers away from the narrowness of the post-war conditions to a large European conflict again.

In view of such an ideological disposition, it is not surprising that the naval leaders recommended in November 1928 that Reichswehrminister Groener should declare in a public speech that the several international agreements and contacts in conjunction with the efforts to achieve comprehensive arms control were not to be interpreted as sincere endeavors to reach disarmament, but as part of a struggle by different means for maritime—that is, world—power. If this suggestion is correct, the leaders clearly saw the entire development since 1918 under the exclusive aspect of preparation for war. From this point of view it was obvious, indeed, to request naval parity with France.39

This was also the intellectual basis of the arguments used by the chief of the Flottenabteilung40 in a speech on war tasks to staff officers in January 1929.41 Captain Boehm, who was later promoted to the rank of General-Admiral under Hitler, preceded his remarks with two premises of overriding importance: the alleged threat of war due to the international constellation of forces and the impossibility of Germany’s revising the Treaty of Versailles by political means. A peaceful solution of that central problem was out of the question from this point of view. Furthermore, it was a matter of fact that an independent war by Germany against its oppressors was inconceivable. Therefore the only hope for liberation Boehm saw was within the framework of a coalition war. Cleverly referring to the wargaming exercise of 1927, he stressed that the only ally available was Italy, which was in sharp opposition to France. Unfortunately, the attitude of the left-wing parties precluded a German-Italian alliance. The situation was similar regarding the desirable rapprochement between Germany and Spain, he added. The naval leaders for whom Boehm spoke could not in the end understand that domestic policy considerations would prevent the government from joining the natural friends of the Reich. To the naval leaders, this idea seemed to be all the more astonishing, as they assumed that the policy of rapprochement with France and England, pursued by all means up to and including selfbasement, had failed definitely. Nevertheless, the chief of the Flottenabteilung insinuated that the French—together with their vassals—aspired to annihilate Germany. Using his office to exercise purposeful
political indoctrination, Boehm ensured that the image of the traditional enemy was not to fade.

What was surprising in this lecture was the markedly skeptical interpretation of German-British relations. In a sense, it is reminiscent of Zenker’s summary of 1926, as far as Britain was concerned. As at that time, the current political situation in 1929 also offered some explanation. For example, the naval compromise negotiated between London and Paris in 1928 might have played a role, in particular accounting for the sudden restraint that the naval leaders exercised toward the British. Something else should be noted in this context: there is some evidence that a certain group of influential officers emphatically referred to Italy as an ally, whenever they somehow imagined Germany to be internationally isolated. They were, however, opposed by another group which subordinated everything to a tranquilizing policy dominating relations with London, that is, a policy which tried to avoid any, even indirect, provocation of Great Britain. Such different attitudes became obvious, above all, during the Spanish Civil War.

In order to avoid fallacies, it should be pointed out that no different opinions manifested themselves within this framework of the long-term objectives of the naval leaders. The objectives were generally agreed upon and the existing sources do not permit any doubt on this point. What was disputed, now and then, was merely the appropriate way of reaching them. Moreover, the Italian option was questioned also for totally different reasons. For instance, Italy’s armed forces could not conceal their material shortcomings, which made many officers warn of an overestimation of the generally favored ally. In addition, psycho-political resentments sometimes seemed to influence the estimation of the situation. The government in Rome was regarded as open to bribery. From this point of view ‘faithfulness until death’ was not a virtue of the Italians. Thus it was assumed that Mussolini would stop supporting Germany as soon as France made certain concessions in North Africa. Even if the French should break or violate the arrangements made in Locarno, the skeptics believed that the Reich could not expect a serious intervention from the guarantor powers.

However, all these concerns were nothing other than questions about Italy’s value as a true ally. They did not jeopardize Italy’s role in the calculations of the naval leaders for a diversionary strategy, since there was no alternative to counterbalance the French Navy within this field. In this context the Germans already assumed that a benevolent attitude from the Italians, even below the level of an alliance, could, with luck, serve to contain the most dangerous units of the French Navy in the Mediterranean.

Of course, such considerations related essentially only to interim or transitional solutions. They did not refer to any condition intended to be a
permanent solution. This held true also for the German-Italian relationship. What naval leaders really pressed for could once again be seen in early 1932. When parity with the French or the Italian Navy, that is, with the second largest European naval powers, was again demanded from the perspective of extensive security requirements, naval leaders no longer concealed their opinion that this claim was modest when compared with the real requirement. Going further, they argued that World War I had shown that German supplies could be protected in case of a conflict only if Germany had, at the least, naval parity with Great Britain. This implied an intellectual approach to strategic demands which included London as a potential adversary. In addition, it signals that naval parity with the Royal Navy was not a maximum requirement. Both points stand as the leitmotifs in the development of German naval policy between 1918 and 1919, when the above-mentioned memorandum of the Reichs-Marine-Amt was prepared, and 1940 and 1941, when naval leaders officially formulated their ideas on Germany as a world power. Early in 1932 the objective was even more modest though. At that time naval equality with France would have been regarded as a breakthrough in the field of armaments policy. Although such a breakthrough could not yet be achieved, the Navy had long ago adopted a self-confident tone in public, which may be taken generally as characteristic of the atmosphere in conservative circles. For instance, Admiral Zenker, who had retired in the meantime, demanded equal rights for all. In his speech, broadcast by all German radio stations, he dealt with the German and French naval armaments at some length. In clear text, this meant that, if the other powers did not disarm, Germany would rearm.

The year 1932 also gained importance in another way for the internal development of the Navy. Initiated by Mussolini, the contacts between the two navies were intensified in the summer of that year, but were kept top-secret. The findings made during those contacts were judged extraordinarily positive by naval leaders. The Italians were assumed to be highly interested in co-operation too. It became clear also that the Germans no longer felt like petitioners. It could not be ignored that the future would be theirs as they saw it. Besides, they realized, of course, the great advantages that co-operation with Italy had to offer, at a time when the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were still in force. So the officers suggested that the Foreign Ministry’s attention be directed, through the Reichswehr High Command, to the great importance of the German-Italian relationship in the preparations for war. With this in mind, they managed to interest government circles in a report by the naval officers on their participation in the Italian naval maneuvers.

All in all, Italy thus constituted an important factor within German naval strategy even before the Nazis seized power. For the diversionary strategy effect to be produced, the Seekriegsleitung regarded it as a
conditio sine qua non of a promising pattern of naval warfare that Italy be associated to, but not necessarily allied with, the German Reich. That, too, did not change much by 1939. Accordingly, the wargames of 1932 and 1934, in which a conflict in 1938 served as the initial scenario (as well as other wargames in the winters of 1936–37, 1937–38 and 1938–39), were conducted on the basis of co-operation with Italy. Throughout, it should be noted, the Foreign Ministry’s reservations were disregarded in the Navy’s operational and strategic considerations after 1927.48 When the Nazi party provided the Chancellor of the German Reich from January 1933 on, this change in political conditions was undoubtedly welcomed by naval leaders. For, on the one hand, Hitler’s ideas on foreign policy and, above all, on alliance policy, were quite in line with those which the Navy’s strategic concept was based upon at that time. On the other, while the change in power seemed to jeopardize many other things, it did not rule out the rearming of the nation, as naval leaders had so emphatically demanded.49 In fact, several sources, mainly lectures, indicated long before 1933 that the Navy was aware of the fact that its objectives could be achieved only in the context of a change in the country’s internal political system. In this connection, hopes were placed on the National Socialists. Further, it was Raeder, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy since 1928, who confirmed this in 1943, when he said good-bye to his staff. There is no doubt that the Admiral of the Fleet was firmly convinced and did not just adapt opportunistically to the situation when he declared,

I feel you will agree with me that I succeeded in leading the Navy effectively and smoothly into the Führer’s Third Reich in 1933. That this could be done without any pressure was due to the fact that the entire education in the Navy during the system period was aimed at an inner attitude…which naturally resulted in truly national socialist views. That is why we did not have to change, but could become true supporters of the Führer with all our hearts right from the beginning.50

Both Hitler himself and his propaganda minister saw it the same way. On 6 January 1945 Goebbels wrote in his diary that the fact that the Navy did not participate in the assassination attempt of 20 July 1944 must ‘be attributed to the effects of Raeder’s good work in political education’. And on 28 February 1945 Hitler stressed that Raeder ‘had great character’. The Grand Admiral had ‘manifested a blind faith in him and had imbued a spirit into his service, of which it is today capable, to make good the mistakes of the German Navy during the World War’ (meaning, mutiny and revolution). At the same time, the Führer stressed that he ‘had always had only the most pleasant experience with the Navy’. Indeed, the indoctrination of the naval officer corps, which began in 1919 with
revisionist and revanchist ideas, was intensified during Raeder’s term of office. Within this framework, remarks made by the chief of the Flottenabteilung in May 1930 may be quoted paradigmatically, asserting again that the great decisions in the struggle of world powers are essentially made in the expanses of the oceans. As a young nation, we Germans did not realize that before 1914—where it was realized we failed to draw the appropriate conclusions: to be strong enough on land to gain Lebensraum across the sea. The two of us, the Army and the Navy—after the painful lessons learnt from the lost war—are now preparing together to push the gate to the world open with both arms and to keep it open, because the two of us are convinced that Germany can only vegetate, but not live in the moldy narrowness of Europe.

Ideas such as these were consistently sustained and, when political conditions in Germany had changed fundamentally in May 1933, naval leaders talked about the consolidation of the German position on the continent that they expected under Hitler, about the naval and worldwide power to strive for afterwards, and about the resulting security of the newly emerged Bismarck Reich. In this context the naval staff consistently preserved the concepts of both its exterior and its domestic enemy. Nothing had changed since 1926 concerning the hostility toward the Social Democrats. Under the Nazi regime those forces in the Navy were set free, which, for the preceding 14 years ‘fragmented as a result of struggles in Parliament, had been bound by the efforts to overcome or to avoid all the infamous attempts of sabotage made by Social Democratic doctrinarians and pacifists’. It was not at all uncommon to hear political declarations of that kind by naval officers who had been in leading positions before 1933. On the contrary, they may be regarded as typical. The relationship between the naval leaders and one of the big democratic parties of the Weimar Republic is, indeed, worth considering in determining the role which Fascist Italy played in the strategic calculations of the Navy. The esteem which Mussolini’s regime enjoyed among naval leaders was not only based on military considerations. Among other things, naval policy orientated itself by diversionary strategy categories. And, of course, it was for this reason alone that Italy gained its described function in the naval staff’s operational conception. However, such naval-oriented motives for German-Italian co-operation were accompanied by an explicit affinity with Fascism. This manifested itself not least in the opposition of naval leaders to the so-called German Democrats in general and to left-wing parties in particular. From the naval leaders’ point of view, the latter formed the core of the resistance against the rearmament of the nation.
which—in the sense of total mobilization discussed since World War I—played a central part in the thinking of all those circles which considered military revision. Pointedly, it was not only the overcoming of the harsh provisions of Versailles but also the replacement of the democratic by an authoritarian system that was one of the aims of German naval policy between 1919 and 1933. Italian Fascism was the alternative to the democracy of Weimar.53

From this point of view, the National Socialist seizure of power54 meant that the naval leaders had achieved a major objective. However, relations between the German and the Italian Navy did not undergo any qualitative change for the time being, which was primarily due to the reserve of the Italians. The German side quickly interpreted this as an indication of the fact that the Italian naval staff lacked Fascist ideas.55 Nevertheless, this did not change the role which the Italians played in the calculations of naval leaders, as evidenced by the headquarters war-gaming exercise in 1934, which dealt with operational issues of German naval warfare in the Atlantic and which, in politico-ideological terms, continued to focus on France as the most stubborn and malevolent of all the World War enemies.56

Early in 1934 the Navy still regarded Italy as a pro-German power in its preparations for war. A few months later this changed temporarily. That was caused by the critical worsening of the German-Italian relationship following the assassination of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss in July 1934 on the one hand,57 and the anti-German Stresa agreement of April 1935 on the other. In the latter, Italy, France and Great Britain, reacting to Hitler’s introduction of compulsory military service in mid-March 1935—although it was prohibited by the Treaty of Versailles—agreed to take joint measures in case of any further unilateral cancellation of the Treaty by National Socialist Germany.58 Late in March 1935 military circles in Italy considered an attack by the Wehrmacht on north Italy possible,59 and Mussolini is said to have considered a future German-Italian armed conflict as unavoidable at that time.60 Among the German military, too, the impression spread that Italy would hardly support Germany in a German-French war. Rather, the opposite was to be expected: a French-Italian attack on the German Reich. Appropriate preparations were made.61 The discrediting of the Stresa agreement through the German-British naval treaty signed in June 1935,62 the unexpected tensions between London and Rome,63 as well as the reorientation of Italian foreign policy vis-à-vis Paris as a consequence of the French-Soviet treaty of assistance of 193564 were, against the background of the Italian policy with regard to Abyssinia, elements of rapprochement with Germany.65

In May 1936 the relations between Berlin and Rome had returned to normal. In the meantime the Marinekommandoamt (Naval Staff) were trying to determine Italy’s value for naval politics within the framework of
the general situation. The outcome of this stocktaking and of all considerations made so far of the German-Italian relationship, from the point of view of naval strategy, was a challenge to foreign policy. The Navy requested that the Army and the Air Force also prepare similar studies. However, an alliance as such still did not come to the fore, because the study made by the Marinekommandoamt, in the end, supported only a relationship which would guarantee that Italy assumed an uncertain or threatening attitude towards France in a conflict between Berlin and Paris. In the sense of the diversionary strategy such an attitude would be of decisive influence on Germany’s naval warfare operations in wartime.

Agreeing fully with such objectives, the Naval High Command’s planning staff, which had been ordered by Reichsminister of War von Blomberg on 26 June 1936 to deal with the naval aspects of the coordinated preparations for war of the three services of the Wehrmacht, recommended conducting a kind of parallel war at sea, if the Spanish Civil War should develop into an open conflict between Italy, Germany and Franco-Spain, on the one hand, and France, the USSR and Red Spain, on the other. A shred of skepticism that had existed the previous February and had led naval leaders to state that Italy’s participation in the war, which once seemed not unlikely and now should no longer be expected, had now vanished. In November 1936 the Marinekommandoamt even opted for a military alliance between Germany, Italy and Spain, which, irrespective of the potential reservations of Great Britain against a coalition of Fascist states, should continue to exist after the end of the Spanish Civil War.

Although this last suggestion was rejected in 1936, it was not at all as extraordinary as it seemed to be at first glance. For in contrast to an opinion spread in naval historiography, naval leaders did not make the implementation of their own intentions contingent, without qualification, upon Great Britain’s goodwill. This is proved not only by the construction plans of the year 1934 but above all by the remark Raeder made to Hitler in June 1934 that the fleet would have to be developed against England. The Navy’s assessment of the Naval Treaty of June 1935 also supports this thesis in a convincing way. This Treaty primarily served the purpose of gaining as much time as possible for extensive and undisturbed rearmament, until a point was reached where the limitations on German naval strength, initially accepted for tactical reasons, could be safely revoked. As a matter of fact, neither the political nor the military leadership in National Socialist Germany considered this treaty to be final. Moreover, Raeder’s remarks at the beginning of the war in 1939 confirmed the fact that he too thought of definitely clarifying the German-British relationship by forming a global anti-British bloc comprising Berlin, Rome and Tokyo. Looking back on the long-term policy he had pursued, he said, ‘in particular, with Japan and Italy co-operating and
containing part of the English fleet, this would have opened up good prospects of defeating the English fleet and cutting off English supplies, that is, finding the final solution of the English question.\textsuperscript{72} However, that anticipated the actual development. In fact, some of the naval leaders, not least as a result of experiences gathered in the Spanish Civil War, even in mid-1937 were still skeptical about an alliance-like cooperation with Italy even though, in the meantime, it had become an Axis partner. Although under military auspices, they did not want to go beyond the scope of a diversionary strategy,\textsuperscript{73} such voices admittedly should not be overestimated—nor should Raeder’s restraint with regard to a provocation of Great Britain early that year.

In May 1937 the \textit{Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine} (Naval High Command) completed its study on the tasks of naval warfare in 1937–38, dealing with the conflict situations of both Germany against France and the Soviet Union and of Germany against France, Great Britain and the USSR. Although some representatives of the \textit{Oberkommando} wanted as the initial situation of a future European conflict to make plans only for a two-front war excluding Britain, there were other voices among the naval leaders who regarded this as an unrealistic assumption.\textsuperscript{74} This reservation was all the more serious, as the Reichsminister of War in his directive of 24 June 1937 on co-ordinated preparations for war by the \textit{Wehrmacht} no longer excluded the possibility of a confrontation with the British during a German-French war, in spite of all the efforts taken by the political leadership to avoid it.\textsuperscript{75}

After all that was said, the Navy still hesitated to take a decision on the German-Italian military alliance after the summer of 1937. For instance, when the political leadership asked the appropriate questions during the preparations for Hitler’s visit to Italy in May 1938, the \textit{Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine} strongly advised them against even touching on questions of mutual commitments to render military assistance in case of war. At that time Italy’s active participation in armed conflicts between Germany and other powers was not desired. The Navy was worried that anything exceeding co-operation for diversionary strategy might lead to an undesirable commitment to Italian politics. In addition, there was the conviction that the Italians as direct allies would only be a burden to German warfare.\textsuperscript{76} All these arguments were, of course, products of a specific time and did not at all imply basic disapproval of the military alliance as may be seen from Raeder’s comments in September 1939.

By July 1938 at the latest, naval leaders had clearly come out against Great Britain, without any ifs or buts. The assessment of Italy by the \textit{Seekriegsleitung} (the naval war staff since April 1938) was gradually corrected, although different opinions were expressed time and again, particularly with regard to the issue of direct or indirect military co-operation.\textsuperscript{77} Nevertheless, the change showed particularly in future
contingency planning. While Italy, for example, played the role only of a benevolently neutral power in the traditional sense in an Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine war-gaming exercise in April 1938, it was designated, like Japan, a German ally in a world-wide coalition war against the Western democracies as early as the autumn of the same year. Concerning that war, even the smallest technical details of military co-operation were to be agreed in peacetime.

The assessment of Italy’s potential military value for Germany changed in proportion to the worsening of the German-British relationship. Late in October 1938 the Germans, immensely overrating its real capabilities, even considered Italy as able not only to eliminate the supremacy of the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean, but also to destroy the British position in the Middle East, and afterwards to threaten India. Italy’s increasing military importance for Germany showed also in the Seekriegsleitung’s memorandum on warfare against England and the resultant requirements for the strategy and the development of the Navy. This paper, prepared by Commander Heye, was a key document in the context of the preparations for the conflict with Great Britain. With regard to Rome and Tokyo, its author first suggested obtaining the utilization of Italian and Japanese bases. Beyond that, the memorandum read:

Adequate utilization of those bases will be possible only if the friendly countries take an active part in the war, although the question shall remain undecided whether this is advantageous for the overall German warfare in any case and therefore should be sought by Germany. Active participation is most likely to be expected from Italy. Military discussions about shared objectives in a war against England and England-France might lead to the Italians consolidating appropriate bases in the oceanic area (Italian East Africa) which would ensure longer German and Italian cruiser operations in case of combined warfare. Italy’s active participation will improve the prospects of oceanic cruiser warfare since the English sea routes in the Mediterranean can no longer be used, and ships will have to take the route round Africa.

For such objectives to be realized naval leaders could no longer rely only on the diversionary strategy effect a benevolently neutral Italy would have. That means that the dimension of a world war—and that was what the ideas of the German naval staff always amounted to in the end—would require Italy’s direct commitment together with Germany. Consequently, the war-gaming exercises conducted in 1938–39 were based on such an initial situation. Within the scope of the review of world politics mentioned above, 1938 was the starting point for the preparations for conflict with the world powers. It was maintained that it had been possible to turn
against Great Britain not least for the reason that Germany established particularly close political relations with Italy, Japan and Spain in that year. The change in attitude towards London became necessary because the British and the French formed a close power bloc, for which 1938 also served as evidence.\textsuperscript{81}

Just a few weeks before the outbreak of war in 1939, the German-Italian naval talks conducted in Friedrichshafen in June provided the opportunity for the first comprehensive exchange of ideas between the Admiralties on their operational intentions for a future war. At that time Raeder already expected the next major conflict to lead to a confrontation between Italy and Germany, which had been in military alliance since the conclusion of the Pact of Steel in May 1939, and the coalition of France-Great Britain, perhaps also even involving the United States and the Soviet Union. In doing so, he anticipated the later so-called ‘Anti-Hitler’ coalition. With regard to a war which was reckoned to begin in 1943, a date which also corresponded with Italian ideas presented during the Pact of Steel negotiations, the German Navy’s High Command expected its Axis partner to extend its naval operations to the Indian and the Atlantic Ocean.\textsuperscript{82}

In view of such hopes, it is not surprising that German naval leaders, together with Hitler, staunchly supported Italy’s entry into the war in September 1939.\textsuperscript{83} In general, the \textit{Seekriegsleitung} was interested in the direct and the indirect impact of this step on land and naval warfare as a whole. As to the situation of the German Navy in particular, Raeder felt so dependent on Mussolini’s engagement in the war that in November 1939 he made further surface warfare against commercial vessels contingent on it. He believed that only Italy’s entry into the war would force Great Britain to redeploy units from the oceanic waters to the Mediterranean.

Mussolini, for good reasons, was not willing to engage in the war. In addition, it turned out that Italy was afraid of the risks involved in directly supporting submarine warfare in the Mediterranean, as the Germans intended. With the Finnish-Soviet winter war, the German-Italian difficulties relating to the South Tyrol question and resulting from the cooperation between Berlin and Moscow—the tactical character of which sometimes seems to have been misinterpreted in Rome—disagreement between the Axis powers became evident in the field of foreign policy. Even the naval leaders no longer believed that Italy would soon enter into the war.\textsuperscript{84}

Nevertheless, the existing sources leave no doubt that the Navy had not abandoned its ideas. In fact, the \textit{Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine} planned again to request that Mussolini enter the war, if victory in the west, as was confidently expected for the spring of 1940, was not followed by a compromise peace with London. This would give Hitler a free hand for the campaign against the USSR\textsuperscript{85} that was then under discussion, even
before an armistice with France. For then there would be exactly those operational and strategic conditions which seemed to make Italy’s participation in the war indispensable in 1939 and which could not be abolished by victory over France, but only by Great Britain’s withdrawal from the war.

Remarks, made in the Seekriegsleitung in May-June 1940, which seem superficially to stand in the way of this interpretation, lose their hypothetical contradictoriness upon consideration of the reasons why naval leaders recommended that Italy should keep away from war in the last stage of the western campaign. They did so, on the one hand, because Italy’s entry into the war was no longer necessary in the battle for France and, on the other, because they wanted their Axis partner to use every day before intervening in the conflict to establish operational readiness under optimum conditions. From the Seekriegsleitung’s point of view, this moment would have come, at the latest, when Great Britain decided to continue the struggle even though having been defeated on the continent, that is, after the rejection of Hitler’s peace offer on 19 July. This means, however, that Italy simply entered the war some weeks early. Of course, it should be borne in mind also that the naval leaders saw positive aspects in Mussolini’s decision. This occurred as early as 14 June, which additionally relativizes the alleged reservations against his participation in the war. In the Seekriegsleitung officers assumed, at that time, that Spain would follow Italy’s example, thinking there would be something like a domino effect. Such a development, they believed, would increase the general pressure on the British, thus contributing to the ultimate achievement of a German-British agreement.

However, disillusionment soon followed. A few weeks after 10 June the Navy noted that an alarmingly defensive attitude was prevailing in the Supermarina, the Italian Naval High Command. Clearly pejorative opinions were expressed on Italy. Surprisingly early, the relationship between the Seekriegsleitung and Italy experienced that peripeteia in the following months which was always inherent in the long-term objectives of that leading elite, but could actually be expected only after the end of the war. With regard to the German claim to leadership of Italy, Mussolini’s military failures undoubtedly accelerated this process, although it was not the failures, but the world-power concept of the German Navy that was the force behind this development. For a variety of military, economic, power-political and irrational racial motives, the Seekriegsleitung also demanded the predominance of National Socialist Germany also in the Mediterranean-African area.

In fact, the Navy did not recognize Italy as an equal ally, even in those years when they still felt totally dependent on its, at least indirect, support. On a long-term basis, the future Axis partner played the role of a power dependent on Germany from the very beginning. Not least for this reason,
an official Navy paper of June 1940 took it for granted that Italy’s future naval force would have to be in line with relevant German ideas. The same held true for the other European major powers. Accordingly, Rome was to gain naval parity with London, which meant that the Italian Navy would be twice as large as the French, while the German Navy was planned to be about four times as strong. What was also revealing was the wording that Italy should be granted only those colonial possessions needed to maintain its existence and the level of power desired by the Germans. This principle was to be applied also to France and Great Britain, with future peace arrangements to be designed, if possible, in such a way as to ensure permanent latent tensions between Rome, Paris and London. Another indicator of the German-Italian relationship planned for the post-war period was the Navy’s internal claim that all rights in the Persian Gulf and to the Persian-British oil-production facilities would have to be ceded to Germany. The Seekriegsleitung clearly realized the conflict potential accumulating within this framework. Time and again, the Seekriegsleitung questioned their considerations in order to refer to the fact that they were not informed of Hitler’s latest decisions. At the same time, they made definitely clear that their demands resulted from factual requirements which the political leadership should satisfy.92

The assumption that the Mediterranean area could not be excluded from a general assessment of Germany’s position as a world power was also the basis of considerations made outside the Seekriegsleitung. For example, as early as September 1940 the Department of Commerce of the Reich unofficially indicated that Germany’s geographic position and its natural preconditions would have to reduce Italy’s present claims even in the Mediterranean. The northern area, dominated by the Germans, would inevitably obtain a political and economic outlet in the Mediterranean, with Italy, on the whole, continuing to be dependent on Germany for a variety of reasons.93

Accordingly, in November 1940, when Italy’s military weakness already was an undisputed fact as a result of the Italian attack on Greece, the Seekriegsleitung demanded the conquest of the African area as a primary objective. This was designed to bring a large economic area comprising Europe and Africa under German control.94 Late in July 1941, while the Wehrmacht was achieving its big initial successes against the Red Army, they declared that, ‘having emerged victorious from the present war, Germany will still have enemies in Europe, but no serious opponents any longer. Under its control, Europe, including the Mediterranean states and the European east, will be a nearly self-sufficient power bloc, although with the British Islands still offshore in miserable condition.’95

With regard to maritime implications, it was concluded for the European area: ‘The Baltic Sea can be regarded as a pacified inland water lacking serious possibility of enemy action. The same applies to the
Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Absolutely corresponding with such ideas, the fleet plans made for the following two decades in August 1941 comprised units which were earmarked for permanent employment in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The circle was completed, the Seekriegsleitung had re-entered on its list of war objectives—although with enormously extended demands—the penetration of the Mediterranean area, originally striven for during World War I.

The year 1941 provided many indications of this development. Particularly during the preparation for German intervention in the Balkans, it became clear that the purpose of the relevant demands made by the Germans was not just a temporary claim for leadership but a lasting establishment of German power in this region. When Mussolini, in October 1941, described Italy’s future status in Europe dominated by National Socialist Germany to be that of a confederate province, he quite exactly worded the expectations of several German elites, in particular those in by the Navy. At that same time, naval leaders demanded nothing less than having the higher and the intermediate level of command of the Italian Navy pass into German hands. At first glance, this demand could be assumed to be purely a technical measure of command and control, but in reality it reflected the subordinate role which Italy was intended to play from then on.

The year 1942 did not bring any change in this respect. On the contrary, German efforts to destroy the political and military independence of its ally escalated in that year. This became apparent already in the first quarter during discussions about an advance by the Axis powers to the Suez Canal. The naval headquarters involved clearly agreed that this operation would have to be conducted under German control and consideration of the primacy of German interests. The basic arrangements of the Axis alliance, according to which the Mediterranean area was a purely Italian zone of influence, had long ago lost their relevance from the Seekriegsleitung’s point of view. Of course, the Navy’s claim to a permanent presence in the Mediterranean area showed also outside the operational sphere.

For instance, when an official representative of the Seekriegsleitung gave a lecture before the 5th Command and General Staff Officer course of the War Academy late in March 1942, he said that it was no accident that the medieval German Empire ‘at the height of its power, was also the Master of the Mediterranean’. This situation, he maintained, had been caused ‘by geopolitical conditions’ which would ‘remain in effect with absolute necessity at all times’. From this conviction he concluded that the ‘definite possession of the Mediterranean was a vital question’ for the future European hegemonic power of Germany.
Mediterranean area was justified once again by means of those lessons learnt from history, which were said to be as simple as natural laws and of great regularity. Naval leaders had used the lessons earlier to justify their policy between the wars, which had aimed at a new major conflict in Europe. Furthermore, the remarkable fact should be noted that the terms ‘European’ and ‘German’ interests were increasingly used as synonyms during the course of the war. This may also be regarded as a sign of the hegemonic self-image in the members of this elite.

Other reflections by the Seekriegsleitung during the spring of 1942 revealed equally definite demands which were substantiated in an extraordinary way, deprecating the Italians. For instance, an allegedly totally different attitude owing to race was used to explain the so-called different war efforts. The Italians were said to be less interested in warfare than in taking personal advantage and profiting from the war.

Apart from national character, the economic interests of Italy served as a second field of reference for interpreting the precarious state of the Axis alliance. The whole concept of the mare clausum was said to support economic interests which competed with those of the German Reich. Rome was striving for the position once occupied by Venice, making efforts to take the first place in the distribution of the resources from south Russia and east Asia. Only for this reason, it was said, did the Italians, for instance, participate in the battles in the Black Sea. Only for this reason, did they press for the occupation of Crete. Moreover, the economic strategy of the Axis partner, oriented to the post-war period, was said to be the only explanation for the fact that he employed his merchant vessels so carefully in the transportation of supplies.

Nevertheless, there were said to be still other objectives in Mussolini’s strategy. With this remark, the Seekriegsleitung referred to oil supply after the war. Particularly in this field it might come to a confrontation between Germany and Italy either of which would try to achieve the greatest influence in the oil-producing countries. So, a third field of conflict was to be kept in mind besides the Black Sea and Crete: the oil fields of the Middle East.

All in all, the German concept for the eastern Mediterranean developed along the way points of the Black Sea, the Balkans, Crete, the Suez Canal, the colonial empire of Central Africa and the Persian Gulf. Since sea lines of communication and bases required military protection, it was eventually declared without any restraint that the German flag should fly ‘not only on merchant vessels, but also on warships in the Mediterranean as the center of the future greater (German) area’. Incidentally, the Axis alliance would be stronger, the better Germany’s bases in the Mediterranean were developed. Apart from that, it would be necessary to be especially alert ‘in order to prevent others who have more time because they are less committed’ from profiting from German efforts. In order to
preclude that, purely German and purely Italian bases should be agreed on as soon as possible in the Mediterranean.

Within the framework of these considerations about a lasting establishment of the German Reich in the Mediterranean area, in which Raeder took part, it was pointed out that the Italians invading the positions in the Mediterranean held by German soldiers had become possible only because the Wehrmacht was forced to concentrate on other theaters of war. There was no remedy for that in 1942. Nevertheless, the Seekriegsleitung took the precaution to collect all the background directives existing for the areas of the Aegean Sea, the Adriatic and the Asia Minor coasts and dealing with the delineation of the German and the Italian sphere of influence. It was intended to involve also the Foreign Ministry to clarify this matter. As early as the preparations for the conquest of Egypt, which was generally expected to take place in June 1942, there occurred a confrontation between German and Italian interests with regard to the regulation of future possessions in that area. Although the German Navy had to give up its original objectives, due to a decision taken by the political leadership, the Naval High Command did not at all perceive it as a basic arrangement. It assumed that conditions could change quickly during the course of the war.

Almost simultaneously with the dispute about the predominant influence in the Egyptian area, there emerged a discussion about the further fate of Crete. The Wehrmacht High Command (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) expected in those weeks that the forthcoming seizure of Egypt by the Axis powers would force Great Britain to withdraw from the eastern Mediterranean and argued that the island could be placed in Italian hands, since any serious threat to Crete would have been eliminated by that time at the latest. All in all, this view followed Hitler’s appreciation of the situation—who obviously showed only minor interest in Crete at that time:

A German base on Crete would require our own German Mediterranean fleet and produce the risk of permanent conflict with Turkey, because if the Isle of Crete was in German hands, this would be considered by the Turks as nothing else but the onset of a conflict between Germany and Turkey about the Dardanelles. Therefore, the only result of our Crete mission could only be the establishment of a KdF [Kraft durch Freude, or Strength through Joy] station on that island.

The Navy, of course, strongly opposed such an opinion. In its view, both the current military and politico-military motives and the postvictory political, economic and military objectives of the German Reich spoke against the ceding of Crete to Italy. In the opinion of the Seekriegsleitung
it was to be borne in mind whether keeping German bases in Salonika and Piraeus could still be justified convincingly after giving up the island. However, both ports were, from the naval point of view, of outstanding significance as continental end-points of Germany’s military lines of force not only in war. So Salonika and Piraeus, which could guarantee the Reich a coast in the Mediterranean and influence in Greece, must not be given up, whatever in the end might happen to Crete. Although suggesting itself, the idea of entrusting the Axis partner with looking after German interests could not be accepted in this context, because there was good reason to believe that the Italians would neither respect nor protect them. Or, as the Commander of the German Naval Command in Italy put it, ‘there is no guarantee whatsoever’ for Rome’s seeing to German interests ‘in a loyal way’, because of Italian character traits. The Italian is not only ‘purely egoistic from the political point of view’, but basically unreliable, so if Berlin wants its interests to be safeguarded effectively it, should not waive ‘German presence based on military power’.114

Since the arguments put forward by the Seekriegsleitung in this memorandum of 28 July 1942 clearly revealed the real objectives pursued by the Navy in the Mediterranean and since this document at the same time showed the apex of the Seekriegsleitung’s power-political claims vis-à-vis Italy—and it must be added that this development did not start only in 1941 or 1942 but was an inherent part of maritime aspirations for world power as such—its content will be discussed at some length.115

For the duration of the war the Navy justified the German presence and leadership in the eastern Mediterranean by the need to protect the lines of communication with German forces employed in North Africa and—as it was assumed—later in Syria and Arabia. The lines of communication with those areas of operations would have to remain under unrestricted German control after the Italians had frequently demonstrated their technical inability and general unreliability. For safeguarding supplies, the Navy needed the bases of Salonika, Piraeus and Crete, whose surrender would undoubtedly result in considerable drawbacks for the realization of military intentions in the Middle East.

From the politico-military point of view, the Navy saw the greatest danger in the possibility that the surrendering of Crete would increase Italian influence in the Aegean Sea. Consequently, Germany would have to expect that political order and stability would falter throughout the southeast area in the worst case, as evidenced for a long time by the problems provoked by Italy’s presence in Croatia, Serbia and Greece. Eventually, the Navy did not miss out an argument put forward also in the quarrel about the dominance of German or Italian interests in French possessions in North Africa, namely, that the peoples also in the southeast area were prepared to accept the Germans but not the Italians as their masters. Furthermore, Crete remained an integral part for the
Seekriegsleitung in the overall perspective of the security of the European continent. The German Reich as the supreme power in Europe was responsible for this security, which could not be ensured by heavily protected coasts and land borders alone. Even if Europe became autarkic, which was regarded by the Navy as highly improbable, Germany would have to dominate a glacis as large as possible in order to be able to perform its tasks. And with regard to the southeast area, Crete was the key position per se in this context.

Moreover, the rivalry became evident once again which characterized relations between the German Reich and Italy, not only in the eyes of the Seekriegsleitung. Typically, they feared at Tirpitzufer, the headquarters of the Naval High Command, that the political and military penetration of the Aegean area by the Axis partner might imply the danger of Italian control of the Dardanelles. Such a development was not to be accepted from the German point of view, because Germany intended to control the Black Sea after the end of the war. If Rome controlled the sea off the Straits of the Dardanelles and could seal them off under certain conditions, the geo-strategic position Germany aimed at in the southeastern area would lose much of its original importance within the framework of the Navy’s global objectives. The memorandum on Crete prepared by the Seekriegsleitung shows that Italy—at least in the naval plans—was to have just the sovereignty of a German satellite in the period after the war. It read, for instance, that Rome should be made unable to bring about dangerous changes in a political and a military respect. Also the Navy’s striving for German predominance in the Aegean Sea showed that Italy would have been downgraded in the field of power politics.

Starting in July 1941,116 as already mentioned and much more urgently in 1942, the Seekriegsleitung demand the deployment of both a German merchant and a naval fleet in the Black Sea, the latter, of course, also in order to protect the vital sea routes to this area, the first for the purpose of using them. Directly referring to these ideas, the memorandum then read: ‘These sea routes lead from the Black Sea through the Dardanelles’ which will be ‘completely open for Germany after the end of the war into the Aegean Sea and into the Mediterranean. In addition, there are further important sea lines of communication from the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea to France, Africa-Egypt, the Suez Canal as well as Syria and Palestine.’ So the Aegean Sea, this extremely important ‘economic and trade route’, would have to be protected by the Navy. Not least for this reason, the Seekriegsleitung demanded ‘bases and ports in the eastern Mediterranean’ both for merchant vessels and warships. It was not considered enough to be represented by some ally in this important area. Germany would have to protect its vital interests itself. And particularly referring to Crete’s role in the post-war period: ‘For this purpose,
continued German possession of the Isle of Crete..., complementing German bases in the Black Sea, will be of outstanding importance.’

In addition, the Seekriegsleitung, in order to justify the necessity for German control of this region, even referred to aspects of the relationship with the Soviet Union and the states to the southwest of it. For example, ‘providing a shield against the Russian-Asian power projection’ was considered ‘to remain one of the main tasks to be performed by Germany’ in the near future. The ‘key for the establishment and fortification of the German defensive front to the south’ was the Dardanelles. Because Crete was ‘the dominant interdictory position controlling access to the Dardanelles and the whole Aegean Sea’, possessing the island guaranteed military security in this area on the one hand, while it demonstrated ‘the political power of Greater Germany’, vis-à-vis the Balkan countries and Turkey.

There is no doubt that the memorandum of 28 July 1942 is a significant document. On 26 August the Commander in Chief of the Navy personally explained to Hitler ‘the reasons why Crete must remain in German hands in both war and peace’. If the impression of the Admiral was right, and nothing speaks against it, Hitler ‘made no secret of his increasingly unfavorable assessment of Italy’. Moreover, he is said to have indicated certain intentions ‘which he did not yet want to talk about’, but which probably corresponded with the ideas of the Seekriegsleitung. In any case, it was now regarded as certain that Crete would be reinforced by German forces, but the further development of the war in the Mediterranean soon meant that discussions about the possession of Crete were no longer relevant.

Only a few months after those considerations, which were still characterized by the expectation of victory, Rommel’s offensive in North Africa, which had been accompanied by ambitious hopes, was halted. On 23 October Montgomery for the first time tested the strength of German and Italian units at El Alamein. That was the beginning of the end in North Africa. About ten months later, when the Axis powers were clearly fighting with their backs to the wall and Italy’s withdrawal from the war was just a matter of days, the Seekriegsleitung summarized with resignation: ‘Regarding grand strategy, Germany, since the previous year, has become the anvil instead of the hammer.’

Thus, the continent-encompassing dreams of the Navy had become unrealistic by 1943 at the latest. The Seekriegsleitung now exercised restraint in their official assessments of the situation. Out of necessity, a defensive concept replaced the earlier discussion about the objectives and scope of German global expansion. However, this did not mean that there were no remnants left among naval leaders of the megalomaniac striving for world power which characterized the ideology of this elite. In the middle of the inferno of the German breakdown in 1944–45, Admiral
Saalwächter prepared a comprehensive memorandum on the subject—a last manifestation of the plans and aspirations harbored by naval leaders for decades: ‘What bases does Greater Germany need for its naval warfare?’ Although the genesis of this paper is not entirely clear, it is certain that it was prepared with the help of the military science division of the Navy. The Admiral copied the text of the official documents available to him nearly word for word. With regard to Italy and the Mediterranean, he followed, *cum grano salts*, the attitude taken by the *Seekriegsleitung* in 1941–42. Italy, the paper read, is ‘obviously no longer able to play the role of a major power’. Its interests should be taken into account only where they ‘are in line with the interests of Greater Germany’. In case Germany intended to control the Mediterranean permanently—a merely rhetorical doubt after Italy had been termed ‘a traitor nation’—Crete and Cyprus would be required as ‘bases particularly suited for light naval forces and aircraft’. In what was not a new demand, Saalwächter additionally insisted on ‘Haifa, which would help to obtain control of Mediterranean oil’.

Attempting a short characterization of Italy’s role in the powerpolitical calculations of the naval leaders would result in the following précis: the attitude of the *Seekriegsleitung* towards Italy, at the height of World War II, followed ideas which dated back to 1916. For tactical reasons, naval leaders considered Italy, between 1925 and 1938, as a power benevolently allied with the German *Reich* within the framework of their concept of diversionary strategy. The Navy’s reticence about an alliance with Italy during the revisionist phase of German great-power policy was not undisputed, although it can be explained, on the one hand, by its fear that Mussolini might go his own way and, on the other, by a tranquilizing policy that the Navy supported toward Great Britain. From the very moment when a German-British conflict was regarded as almost unavoidable, that is, when it was no longer necessary to worry about an untimely strain on the relationship between Berlin and London as a result of the ties with Italian politics, German naval leaders expected Italy to assist the Third Reich in rising to the position of hegemonic power in Europe. As soon as this objective seemed to be achieved, it turned out that the *Seekriegsleitung’s* power-political concept was not reconcilable with a purely Italian sphere of influence in the Mediterranean. Thus, at the peak of the German war effort, the Navy sought to demolish, rather than to consolidate, the Italian position in the Mediterranean and within the alliance.

NOTES

This essay is a translation, with additions, of one that first appeared under the title ‘Italien im machtpolitischen Kalkül der deutschen Marineführung 1919 bis 1945’, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 62 (1982): 222–69. Published by permission of the Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rome.
In the following essay, the term ‘naval leaders’ should be construed to mean, not an institution or the staff of the highest command authority (Admiralität, Marineleitung, Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine) of the Navy (Reichsmarine, Kriegsmarine) as a service of the Wehrmacht, but the entirety of those naval officers who can be proved to have influenced the political and strategic military thinking within the Navy.


For the development of the Marineabordnung (Navy delegation)—code word ‘Friko’—within the framework of the German peace commission, see bulletin M 7699, Berlin, 23 November 1918, in Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau (BA-MA): RM 20/409, Reichs-Marine-Amt, Friedensverhandlungen, p. 3. The ‘Friko’ was first subordinate to the secretary of state of the Reichsmarine-Amt and, later, to the Chief of the Admiralty.

‘Entstehung und Ausbau der Deutschen Wehrmacht zur See’, Reichs-Marine-Amt, BA-MA RM 6/233. The memorandum has 61 pages and must have been prepared between 23 November 1918 and 1919, the date when the new regime ordered the Reichs-Marine-Amt, i.e., the former highest military administration of the Imperial Navy, to take charge of the Navy. The Reichs-Marine-Amt was renamed the Admiralität on 20 March 1919.

Wolfgang Wegener, *Die Seestrategie des Weltkriegs*, 2nd revised and extended edition (Berlin, 1941). As early as 1926, Wegener said: ‘When the Germans are fit again as a nation and a state, the demand for naval prestige will reappear and with it the Anglo-Saxons as adversaries’ (ibid., pp. 80–4, on this issue as a whole). See also, the English translation of this work: Wegener, *The Sea Strategy of the World War*, trans, and with an introduction and notes Holger H. Herwig, Classics of Sea Power series (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989).

On this issue see Schreiber, ‘Rolle Frankreichs’ (see n. 4), pp. 169ff.

BA MA RM 6/57: Schlußbesprechung des Kriegsspiels des Oberkommandos der Kriegsmarine, Februar/März 1939.

Schreiber, ‘Reichsmarine’ (see n. 4), pp. 174ff, and idem, ‘Kontinuität’ (see n. 4), pp. 111–30.

Regarding the national socialist foreign policy, see mainly Josef Henke, *England
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12 Fischer, Griff (see n. 3), pp. 262f.


22 In this context, it is to be stated that the war-gaming exercises had a direct function within the scope of the preparations for war. Admiral of the Fleet Raeder, but not only he, repeatedly stressed this. Cf. Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Raeder, Hitler und Skandinavien. Der Kampf für einen maritimen Operationsplan*, Bibliotheca Historica Ludensis, Vol. 16 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1965), pp. 28–31.


27 Hubatsch, *Admiralstab* (see n. 21), p. 188.

28 BA-MA Faszikel 7897, A I c, 1–1 Admiralität: Marinekommandoamt
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29 Post, Weimar (see n. 21), p. 256.

30 ‘Marineleitung’ was the designation of the German Admiralty from 19 September 1920 until 20 May 1935.

31 As far as is known, it was only assumed at this post-mortem session following the ‘strategic maneuver’ of 13–15 September 1926 that the ‘benevolent attitude of England and Italy’ toward France permitted the latter to ‘withdraw all the heavy armed forces from the Mediterranean’, cp. BA-MA MBox 2, PG 34048, Reichswehrministerium, Marineleitung, Akten betr. Strategisches Manöver, 1.1.1926 bis 31.12.1926, A II a-III-H.3. It should be noted that the above remarks by Zenker significantly deviated from the original initial situation, in which a pro-German attitude by Italy was assumed. Moreover, what was new was that Germany again acted as an ‘attacker against the re-supply lines of the adversary’ in 1926.


33 See Petersen, Hitler (see n. 19), pp. 18f.

34 Cf. Dülffer, Weimar (see n. 17), pp. 141ff, regarding naval planning and construction policy.


36 BA-MA MBox 1660, PG 31039 (see n. 26), pp. 44f.

37 Quoted from BA-MA MBox 1815 (see n. 35).


40 The Flottenabteilung was a department of operations within the Marinekommandoamt that functioned as a camouflaged naval staff.

41 BA-MA II M 57/58, Reichswehrministerium, Vortragssammlung Flottenabteilung, lecture No. 58 (Boehm), given in January 1929.

42 Dülffer, Weimar (see note 18), p. 135.

43 BA-MA CASE GE 553, PG 33611, 1 Skl. Unterlagen I C 1 and I c, Marineleitung AIc 1642/30 g.Kdos of 29 October 1930: ‘Aussenpolitischer Beitrag zum Vortrag bei der Frontvertreter-Besprechung’. The future Vice-Admiral Joachim Lietzmann spoke as the representative of the Navy.

44 BA-MA CASE GE 553 (see note 44), A II c 58/31 g.Kdos of 9 January 1931, lecture given by Lietzmann at the Truppenamt.
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49 Schreiber, *Kontinuität* (see n. 4), pp. 120ff.


55 Schreiber, *Revisionisms* (see n. 4), pp. 75f.

56 BA-MA II M 100/43, Marineleitung A I a-II-29 g: Schlussbeprechung Kommandoamtskriegsspiel (12.5.–15.5.1934), control number 1, assumed time of the exercise play: 1938.


58 Stresa, cf. Manfred Funke, *Sanktionen und Kanonen. Hitler, Mussolini und...


BA-MA PG 48830, Berichte des Marineattaches Italian, 4 January–19 December 1935, Bericht Nr. 12, dated 29 March 1935.

Ibid., Doc. 568 of 30 March 1935, pp. 1085f.


Petersen, Hitler (see n. 19), pp. 406–10.

Funke, Sanktionen (see n. 58), pp. 35–40.

Schreiber, Revisionismus (see n. 4), pp. 65–85.


Cf. Gemzell, Raeder (see n. 22), pp. 45–9.


BA-MA PG 31769, Sammlung Raeder 8, prepared by Marinekommandoamt section A, submitted to the Commander in Chief on 28 November 1936.

Cf. Schreiber, Kontinuität (see n. 4), pp. 121ff.


Schreiber, Revisionismus (see n. 4), pp. 103–6.

Geheime Kommandosache Chefsache, 4 May 1937, pp. 132f. The study was then passed under Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine A I a 33/37 Geheime Kommandosache vom 18.6.1937 to the Flottenkommando and the Navy stations in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea after having been submitted to Raeder for review. For the individual comments see ibid., pp. 136–41. See Schreiber, *Rolle Frankreichs* (see n. 4), pp. 202–5.


82 Re: the peace offer of 19 July 1940, see particularly Bernd Martin, *Friedensinitiativen und Machtpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939–1942*, Geschichtliche Studien zu Politik und Gesellschaft, Vol. 6 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1974), pp. 301–36. On German strategic plans and the Wehrmacht leaders’ reactions to the British refusal of the so-called peace-offer, and with special reference to the war in the Mediterranean, compare *Germany in the Second World War* (see n. 83), pp. 180–277. See also the counter-factual concept of Klaus Schmider, ‘The Mediterranean in 1940–41: Crossroads or Lost Opportunities?’, *War and Society*, 15 (October 1997): 19–41. Even without allowing speculation, one can plainly observe that a decisive war in the Mediterranean and Near East regions was not possible, due to the strategic
situations and the actual goals of the opposing forces. This was true on both the British and the German side and one cannot seriously discuss this as a ‘lost opportunity’.


92 BA-MA RM 7/262, KTB 1. Skl. Teil Cb: Stützpunktabsichten, Kolonien Juni 1940–Juli 1943, here: annex to OKM I op 941/40 g.Kdos. Chefs., nur durch Offizier! This memorandum, prepared by Generaladmiral Carls (pp. 8–20), has no cover sheet. It must have been prepared before 14 June 1940, because RearAdmiral Fricke, Chief of the 1st department of the Seekriegsleitung, signed it on that day.


96 Ibid., p. 132.

97 Schreiber, Kontinuität (see n. 4), pp. 147f.


102 BA-MA PG 39972/2, Handakte Admiral Gladisch, lecture given by Lieutenant Commander Gerlach on 31 March 1942.

103 According to Wegener, Seestrategie (see n. 7), pp. 80ff.
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105 However, this attitude already showed in the July 1926 Admiralty memorandum mentioned, printed in: *Die ungeliebte Republik* (see n. 28).

106 For the following see BA-MA RM 7/235, KTB 1. Skl. Teil C, Heft XIV: Deutsche Kriegführung im Mittelmeer Januar-Dezember 1942, here: B. No. 1. Skl. I opa 852/42 g.Kdos. Chefs., of 30 April 1942: ‘Vermerk’. ‘1 Skl. I opa’ in the *Seekriegsleitung* was the assistant chief of staff for operations, i.e., the officer responsible for operational planning. At that time, he was Commander Hansfrieder Rost.


109 The Italian Navy very well realized the German intention to establish control of the eastern Mediterranean. So it intended to counter the consolidation of the German position on Crete and in Greece by establishing positions on the Egyptian coast. Cf.: Archivio Ufficio Storico della Marina Italiana, Promemoria 1942, here No. 42 of 10 July 1942. Italian headquarters were to be established in Alexandria, Port Said and Suez.


111 Ibid., Covering letter by the liaison officer to the OKH, Captain Weygold, referring to B.No. 1381/42 (see n. 110). This letter indicates that the ceding of Crete to Italy was discussed in the *Führerhauptquartier* as late as 2 July 1942.


113 Re: the following remarks see memorandum of 28 July 1942 (see n. 110).

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115 Following text in accordance with the memorandum of 28 July (see n. 110).
117 See n. 110, above. Here: pp. 7ff; cf. also, Kriegstagebuch der Seekriegsleitung 1939–1945, Teil A, Vol. 36, August 1942 (see n. 94), p. 261, 14.8.1942. On 14 August Admiral Krancke reported to Hitler on this issue. Raeder decided to take action himself because Hitler did not indicate that anything had changed in his intention to cede Crete to Italy.
118 Lagevorträge (see n. 72), p. 409, 26.8.1942. After Italy’s withdrawal from the war on 8.9.1943, it became clear what Hitler meant by his remarks. This can be seen in Goebbels’s diary for 11.9.1943: ‘We must…not only get back the South Tyrol in our hands, but I imagine a line drawn south of Venice. All, which was once under Austrian occupation, must be put back in our hands. The Italians, through their disloyalty and betrayal, have lost any right to have a modern national state. They must, as the law of history demands, come under the hardest punishment.’ Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Im Auftrag des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte und mit Unterstützung des Staatlichen Archivdienstes Russlands herausgegeben von Elke Fröhlich. Teil II: Diktate 1941–1945, Vol. 9, June–September 1943, bearbeitet von Manfred Kittel (München, New Providence, London and Paris: K.G.Saur, 1993), p. 485. Compare with Schreiber, Militärinternierte (see n. 91), pp. 34ff. and passim.
122 The memorandum is printed in Schreiber, Kontinuität (see n. 4), there also critical discussion of sources, pp. 129f and pp. 149–57.
123 Ibid., p. 152.
124 Ibid., p. 154.
10. **USS Daniel Webster** was commissioned in 1964, powered by nuclear reactors and carried ballistic missiles. She represents the most deadly and elusive naval weapon of the twentieth century.
PART III

THE MEDITERRANEAN
SINCE 1945
In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the American naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea consisted of only three ships: one light cruiser and two destroyers. These three were a remnant of World War II's Naval Forces North African Waters and were organized into Task Force 125. This decidedly modest force reflected Washington's judgment that at that time the United States had relatively limited direct national interests in the Mediterranean. Task Force 125 was, nevertheless, the seed that sprouted in a few years into the US 6th Fleet which would dominate the security architecture in the Mediterranean for the next five decades.

In June 1948 Task Force 125 was renamed Task Force Six and in 1950 the name was changed again to the United States 6th Fleet.1 Within three years of the end of the war, the US naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea was expanded from three to 16 ships, one carrier and as many as 15 escort and support vessels.2 Later, as Cold War tensions escalated and other crises developed, the American naval contingent in the Mediterranean would increase again. In fact, throughout most of the Cold War the United States maintained a fleet in the Mediterranean that ranged in size from 40 to 70 ships and that was more powerful than any of the other navies indigenous to the Mediterranean.

The surge in the size of the 6th Fleet resulted from events in the late 1940s and early 1950s that raised serious concerns in the United States about stability in Europe and the world-wide balance of power between the Soviet and the Western blocs. Chief among these developments were the Communist takeovers of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary during the late 1940s; a Communist insurgency in Greece in 1946–47; the 1948 Soviet blockade of Western ground transport into Berlin which was at the time divided into Western and Soviet sectors; the successful testing by the Soviets in 1949 of an atom bomb and the subsequent development of a
more advanced Soviet nuclear arsenal; the declaration of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 (which was then generally regarded as both a ‘loss’ for the West and a substantial accession to the Soviet bloc); and the 1950 invasion of South Korea by communist North Korea.

The net effect of these events was that the United States adopted security policies designed to prevent the further expansion of the Soviet Union’s influence in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. One of these policies was to increase the size and capabilities of the 6th Fleet. Another effect of the events in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the adoption by the United States of economic policies designed to promote reconstruction in West Germany, Greece and other countries. The intent was to eliminate pockets of social instability that were being exploited by Soviet propaganda and by domestic communist and socialist groups. At the same time, economic reconstruction was seen as a way of hastening the day when West Germany, in particular, would be able to afford to contribute military assets to the defense of western Europe.

Defense investments in other parts of Europe increased even more sharply than in the Mediterranean. The possibly inevitable consequence was that the Mediterranean assumed a secondary priority in American Cold War policy relative to north-central Europe. There were several reasons. One was that, at least with respect to their economic and military potential, the non-Mediterranean members of NATO (principally Great Britain and West Germany, but also France which was both an Atlantic and a Mediterranean country) simply had more to contribute to the NATO alliance and to the world economy than NATO’s Mediterranean members. The countries in North Africa and the Middle East that were outside NATO had even less to offer as prospective military allies in the Western crusade against Soviet expansionism. Moreover, in the 1950s and the 1960s the North African and Middle Eastern countries were insignificant economically. It was not until the 1970s when the international oil market changed from a buyers’ to a sellers’ market that the Middle East and North Africa assumed economic importance for the West. Even then, the most important oil producers were outside the Mediterranean, in the Persian Gulf.

Another reason for the secondary status of the Mediterranean theater was that the primary fault-line between the Soviet and the American sphere of influence ran north-south through central Europe, not east-west through the Mediterranean. That is, the flash point of American-Soviet tension in Europe was along the border between East and West Germany. Not only were the balance of power stakes greater in the non-Mediterranean region of Europe, but from the American perspective the economic and political prospects for success were greater there than in the Mediterranean. Great Britain and France had traditions of democracy and reasonably warm relations with the United States. Both countries had been
among the most economically advanced countries before the devastation of World War II and thus seemed to have met more of the preconditions for economic growth (for instance, relatively well educated populations, traditions of private capital formation and social stability) than the Mediterranean countries. West Germany had less of a democratic tradition, but had been an advanced economic power throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In contrast, the industrial infrastructures of Italy, Turkey and Greece had never been as well developed as those of the countries in northern Europe. Moreover, Spain and Portugal, which eventually joined NATO in the 1980s, were in the 1950s and the 1960s among the most backward European states economically and were ruled by the authoritarian Franco and Salazar regimes, respectively.

There were three consistent themes in US Mediterranean strategy during the Cold War. As indicated above, the principal theme was containment. The fundamental reason why the United States stationed naval forces in the Mediterranean was to prevent the Soviet bloc from using military force or the threat of it to undermine NATO interests in the region. Two additional, but initially subsidiary themes immediately developed: crisis management and peacetime engagement. For the sake of clarity, crisis management is here defined to refer to measures that are taken to prevent a crisis from worsening or evolving into war. It also includes measures that are taken to demonstrate support for an ally that is under intense diplomatic or military pressure. Crisis management measures could include the direct involvement of the US military as a third party to a conflict situation; for example to evacuate American citizens or to perform peacekeeping functions. Peacetime engagement, on the other hand, refers to the actions that are taken during non-crisis periods to maintain sound relations with allies, improve the interoperability of allied military forces, enhance diplomatic relations with non-allied nations, reduce the possibility of accidents or inadvertent incidents between military forces of different countries, and maintain open sea lanes for commerce.

During the Cold War crisis management and peacetime engagement were related to and frequently overlapped with containment. To the extent that peacetime engagement actions actually strengthened the ties among NATO allies, containment obviously benefited. To the extent that other peacetime engagement actions promoted a pro-Western or non-aligned orientation among potential Soviet clients, Soviet influence in the region was contained. With regard to crisis management, the United States could and did intervene militarily as a third party in conflicts in the region at least in part because of its concern that the conflict might provide an opportunity for Soviet expansion or weaken the anti-Soviet bloc.

Although crisis management, peacetime engagement and containment are related, they should be thought of as also being separate. Peacetime
engagement and crisis management have continued to be important missions even after the Soviet Union and Cold War-vintage containment joined the ash heap of history. Indeed, they have evolved into the 6th Fleet’s principal post-Cold War missions. Further, crisis-management functions are often qualitatively different from (and may occasionally be at odds with) peacetime engagement functions.

CONTAINMENT

Early Cold War planning envisioned an important containment role for the nascent 6th Fleet, deterring a Soviet attack by threatening retaliation. Under the PINCHER plan, the American naval force in the Mediterranean was envisioned as one of the two main arms of a response in the event of a Soviet thrust into western Europe. The other retaliatory arm consisted of the air forces based in Great Britain. The scenario upon which PINCHER was based was a general war with the Soviet Union focused on the industrial heartland of western Europe and the Middle East. PINCHER was written in 1946, when the US naval presence was plainly too small to offer a credible deterrent. Thus the plan initially envisioned the shifting of naval assets into the Mediterranean during the early stages of a crisis. The long-range objective of the plan was a more powerful naval presence permanently stationed in there.

In 1945 and 1946, while there were only a handful of naval vessels permanently stationed in the Mediterranean, there were several crises involving the Soviet Union and Turkey that caused the United States to increase the size of the fleet temporarily. The Soviet Union wanted Turkey to grant it bases in the Dardanelles Straits in return for a non-aggression pact. Units of the Red Army were massed along the Soviet-Turkish border as a show of force to demonstrate the value to Ankara of a non-aggression pact. The United States and its western European allies responded by demonstrating strong support for Turkey. The battleship Missouri was used to transport the ashes of the deceased Turkish ambassador to the United States to Istanbul, instead of a smaller cruiser that would have been required by normal protocol. This signal of resolve was reinforced in April 1946 when the Missouri and several escorts visited both Istanbul and Athens amid great public fanfare. After the visit of the Missouri, Soviet pressure on Turkey temporarily relented and the Red Army units were withdrawn from the border region. However, in August 1946 Soviet pressure on Turkey was reasserted and President Truman again used naval assets as a tool in crisis management. This time the aircraft carrier Franklin D.Roosevelt and a group of destroyers conducted a series of port visits in the eastern Mediterranean to convey a strong US interest in the region and, in so doing, deter more direct Soviet intervention. The Roosevelt deployment initiated the policy of rotating at least one American carrier
into the Mediterranean for a substantial part of the year. The carrier deployment policy would continue for the entire Cold War period and beyond.

The United States government soon thereafter formalized its policy of deterring Soviet expansion in the eastern Mediterranean when it adopted the Truman Doctrine, which committed the United States to the defense of both Turkey and Greece, which was itself facing a bitter communist insurgency. Washington also negotiated a mutual defense arrangement—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO—with Canada and several of the states of western Europe that shared its apprehensions about the Soviet Union’s policies in the Mediterranean and in central Europe. In 1952 NATO formally endorsed the 6th Fleet’s role as the core of the alliance’s Naval Striking and Support Forces, South Europe. British, French and Italian naval assets were also part of the NATO strike force. The 6th Fleet was thus integrated into the NATO command structure for wartime operational purposes, but during peacetime remained under national control. Also at this time the United States agreed to commit two carrier task forces to the 6th Fleet to enable it to fulfill its NATO mission.\(^5\) Later in the 1950s the fleet was further enhanced through the addition of nuclear submarines.

The United States maintained its two-carrier commitment to the Mediterranean until the 1980s. During the Vietnam War when the US naval presence in the Pacific was significantly increased, the two-carrier commitment to the Mediterranean put a great strain on the Navy’s force structure. To reduce this, the Navy proposed to down-size the 6th Fleet by one aircraft carrier and a number of other surface combatants. The European members of NATO, however, opposed the reduction in the size of the 6th Fleet and the change was not implemented. Indeed, it was not until the early 1980s that the two-carrier commitment policy was abandoned. The occasion for the change was the war between Iran and Iraq. Because this threatened to disrupt oil exports from the oil-rich Persian Gulf region, destabilize the entire region and perhaps invite Soviet intervention, one of the 6th Fleet’s carrier task forces was transferred to the 5th Fleet where it could help to stabilize the situation in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

Notwithstanding the decisions of the 1950s to increase the capabilities of the 6th Fleet to retaliate against a Soviet attack on a NATO member, there were no Soviet naval vessels in the Mediterranean, apart from several submarines based in Albania during the 1958–61 period.\(^6\) This changed after the Cyprus crisis of 1964. Moscow saw the Cyprus crisis as the first of what it hoped would be numerous opportunities to drive wedges between NATO allies and thus weaken if not fracture the Western alliance. The Soviets viewed a naval presence in the Mediterranean as an influential
tool for improving Soviet relations with NATO allies that were dissatisfied with the resolution of intra-NATO disputes.\footnote{7}

Later, as the West’s economic reliance upon oil from the Middle East grew, new opportunities for driving wedges between NATO allies and between the United States and Israel developed. Before the end of the 1960s there had been a buyers’ market for oil, but by the early 1970s demand in the West had grown so much that sellers dominated.\footnote{8} In the new sellers’ market the most important exporters of oil were Middle Eastern states whose strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean were at variance with the US bilateral alliance with Israel. The Soviet Union took advantage of this divergence by improving its diplomatic and economic ties with Egypt and other Middle Eastern nations. In furtherance of its cultivation of its Middle Eastern clients, the Soviet Union increased its naval presence during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. During that war the Soviet armada grew to about 70 ships\footnote{9} and the Soviet Union acquired naval basing rights at Alexandria and Port Said. The rights lasted until 1975 when Egypt withdrew permission for basing at its ports and airfields.\footnote{10}

During the 25 years of substantial Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean, the 6th Fleet and the Soviet Navy engaged in a \textit{pas de deux} ritual of over-flights, electronic observation and shadow deployments. Both sides saw this as part of a long-term process of maintaining and increasing influence on the Mediterranean states and as a way of carefully assessing each other’s operational capabilities. Since both sides also recognized that minor incidents at sea between the two navies could escalate out of control into unwanted conflict, incident-at-sea protocols gradually evolved and were formalized into bilateral agreements.

In the late 1980s, under intense internal economic and political pressure, the Soviet Union reduced its presence in the Mediterranean and adopted a more co-operative foreign policy towards the West. Reform in the Soviet Union ultimately led to the dissolution first of the Soviet empire in eastern Europe and a reduction in the Soviet Union’s Mediterranean presence and then to the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself. As the Soviet threat receded, the United States reduced its permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean. By the mid-1990s, the 6th Fleet comprised 20 to 30 naval ships,\footnote{11} with a carrier in the region for only about six months a year.

\section*{CRISIS MANAGEMENT}

Almost from its very beginning, the 6th Fleet’s crisis-management activities have tended to concentrate in a particularly volatile sub-region of the Mediterranean—the Levant, in particular Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. Ironically, during the Cold War these operations did not directly involve
NATO, even though the preservation and strengthening of the NATO alliance—as a vehicle for containing the Soviet Union—was the *raison d’être* for the 6th Fleet’s being there. A further irony is that after the Cold War ended and NATO became relatively less important strategically to the United States, most of the 6th Fleet’s crisis-management operations have taken place in Europe, not the Middle East, and directly involve NATO allies.

In 1946 Task Force 125, the Fleet’s predecessor organization, undertook a crisis-management operation in Trieste in deploying there to discourage Tito’s Yugoslavia from using military force against Trieste which was then under Italian control. The deployments of the *Missouri* and the *Roosevelt* to Turkey and then Greece in 1945 and 1946 may be viewed as crisis management as well as containment actions.

After these early Cold War operations, the 6th Fleet’s first major operation involved the evacuation of American citizens during the Suez crisis in 1956. The crisis erupted after President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal and established a system of tolls which would be used to finance construction of the Aswan Dam. Great Britain, which had only recently turned over the Canal to Egypt, France and Israel attempted to reverse Nasser’s action militarily, despite diplomatic opposition from the United States. After the invasion occurred, Washington ordered an evacuation of all Americans from the Middle East. The job fell largely to the 6th Fleet. The fleet evacuated about 3,000 people from Israel and Egypt, including UN and foreign embassy personnel and tourists. Some of the evacuations, in particular those from the Gaza Strip, took place under combat conditions, but no Americans were harmed. Eventually, American and international pressure caused the British, the French and the Israelis to withdraw and the canal remained under Egyptian control.

The next crisis requiring 6th Fleet operational support took place only two years later (1958) in Lebanon which was engulfed in a civil war between Christian and Moslem factions. Concern about Syria and Egypt supporting the Moslems (and the Soviet Union in turn supporting Syria and Egypt) caused the United States to agree to Lebanon’s request for Western intervention to prevent a pro-Syria/Egypt coup and to stabilize the region. Eventually 15,000 American servicemen were deployed into Lebanon; many were Marines from 6th Fleet ships. The Fleet also maintained a large number of ships in the vicinity of the Lebanese capital to deter intervention. After several months, the crisis passed with the election of a new president and the formation of a coalition cabinet.

In May 1967 President Nasser provoked another confrontation by closing the Gulf of Aqaba, a narrow body of water on the eastern side of Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula. The Gulf provided Israel with access to the Red Sea—with the Gulf closed, Israeli ships bound for the Red Sea, the Persian
Gulf or the Indian Ocean had to either transit the Suez Canal through Egyptian territory or circumnavigate the entire continent of Africa. Within two weeks of the closing war had broken out in the region. Israel launched simultaneous, pre-emptive strikes on Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Although the war lasted only six days, the results were profound. Israel acquired new territory along the West Bank of the Jordan, the Golan Heights and the entire Sinai Peninsula. The defeated Arab states became increasingly dependent upon the Soviet Union for military assistance, thus worsening American relations with Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

During the 1967 Six Day War two carrier battle groups from the 6th Fleet were deployed into the eastern Mediterranean to discourage intervention by the Soviet Union or one of its client states. The Soviets responded by sending ten additional ships into the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, thereby doubling the size of their fleet. Although the Soviet and the American Navy stood each other off without serious incident, the deployment near the war zone was not without risk. Indeed, the United States was almost drawn into the conflict when the Israelis accidentally attacked a communications ship, the Liberty, killing 34 people. It was initially assumed that the attack was Egyptian and a retaliatory strike was planned. Fortunately, Israel accepted responsibility in time to call off an air strike against Egypt.14 Three years later the American and the Soviet fleet conducted a similar mutual stand-off—this time without incident—during the civil war in Jordan.15

In some respects the most important crisis-management operation of the Cold War era occurred during the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. The war erupted when Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in an attempt to recapture territory lost during the Six Day War. In this war both the 6th Fleet and its Soviet counterpart were actively engaged in providing logistical support to the Israelis and the Egyptians/Syrians, respectively. American cargo planes flying to Israel from the United States had to transit 2,000 miles of potentially hostile Arab coastline, so the 6th Fleet established a picket line of surface ships to provide air-defense support. Fleet carriers and aircraft were used for aerial refueling and the carriers served as landing platforms for aircraft that were being shipped to Israel to replace combat losses. As Israel gained the upper hand on the ground by encircling Egypt’s 3rd Army on the western side of the Suez Canal (nearer the Egyptian mainland), tension between the United States and the Soviet Union sharply increased. The Soviets threatened unilateral intervention to prevent the destruction of the Egyptian Army, the United States put its nuclear forces on heightened alert (the 6th Fleet’s carrier battle groups were already in position to resist Soviet intervention) and urged Israel to cease fighting. As a result, the fighting stopped and a United Nations peacekeeping force was established to maintain stability in the Sinai Peninsula.
Several other crisis-management operations by the 6th Fleet took place in the 1980s. In 1983 its ships were used as artillery to shell militia positions in the mountains overlooking Beirut during another of Lebanon’s periodic civil wars. The shelling was in support of the Lebanese Army. Later in that same year, 6th Fleet aircraft flew a mission against Syrian anti-aircraft emplacements in Lebanon and the battleship New Jersey conducted naval gunfire operations against militia positions in retaliation for the terrorist bombing in October 1983 of the US Marine Corps compound at the Beirut airport. American citizens were also evacuated from Beirut to 6th Fleet ships offshore. In 1985 6th Fleet aircraft intercepted an aircraft carrying Palestine Liberation Organization terrorists who had hijacked the Italian cruise liner Achille Lauro and killed an American tourist. The aircraft was forced to land in Sicily. (The terrorists were turned over to the Italian authorities but were later released.) In March 1986 6th Fleet carriers conducted a freedom-of-navigation exercise off Libya in the Gulf of Sidra. After being fired at from Libyan missile installations, US aircraft attacked and destroyed some Libyan radar sites and sank a couple of Libyan coastal patrol boats. In April 1986 Libyan-sponsored terrorists bombed a discotheque in Berlin filled with American soldiers. Three people were killed and hundreds wounded. In retaliation two carrier air wings from the 6th Fleet and Air Force F-111s based in England conducted a night-time air strike on 14 April against Libyan terrorist training activities and command and control centers.

As noted above, since the end of the Cold War, the Fleet’s major crisis-management operations have occurred in Europe—specifically southeastern Europe, rather than in the Middle East. For example, starting in 1992 the 6th Fleet has been involved in a variety of crisis-management operations in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia and in 1997 the Fleet assisted in the evacuation of American and other foreign nationals from Albania.

From mid-1992 through early 1996 the Fleet provided air-defense and search and rescue support for United Nations humanitarian relief flights into Bosnia. Over roughly the same period, the 6th Fleet helped to enforce UN embargoes against certain shipping in Yugoslav waters. From early 1993 through 1995 6th Fleet ships participated in NATO efforts to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia—an attempt to prevent Serbian aircraft from bombing civilian targets in Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns. In August and September 1995 6th Fleet assets conducted NATO air strikes against Serbian positions in Bosnia in retaliation for Serbian provocation. As of early 1998 the Fleet was assisting in command and control for NATO peacekeeping operations inside Bosnia and providing surveillance of the Adriatic.
PEACETIME ENGAGEMENT

During the Cold War, peacetime engagement was primarily thought of as a complement to containment. The most important exercises that the Fleet conducted during that period were designed to improve NATO capabilities to conduct operations against Soviet bloc forces. Port visits and flag visits to NATO countries and prospective NATO allies such as Spain and Portugal were designed for similar purposes—to enhance ties within the alliance, to add to alliance capabilities, or at least to promote co-operative relations with nations that could provide support to NATO. Such peacetime engagement activities may have contributed to Spain’s agreement in 1953 to accord naval basing rights to the United States. Numerous peacetime engagement operations were also conducted to communicate support for Israel.

With the end of the Cold War at the beginning of the 1990s, peacetime engagement has become a more prominent function for the Fleet. As the military threat posed by the former Soviet Union receded, opportunities were created for restructuring the security architecture in the region and for promoting economic and political reform in both the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Although the Black Sea is outside the direct scope of this chapter, it has important indirect effects on developments in the Mediterranean. During the Cold War the Black Sea was virtually a Soviet lake. At that time there were four nation-states on the Black Sea; three were in the Soviet bloc (the Soviet Union, Romania and Bulgaria). The fourth state, Turkey, has been a member of NATO since 1952. But Turkey is also a Mediterranean country, and from NATO’s naval perspective, Turkey’s Mediterranean orientation was more important than its Black Sea orientation. There were several general reasons for this. One was that the principal deterrent force in Turkey comprised NATO air forces and land-based missiles, not naval forces. Another was that Turkey has had important foreign policy interests in the Mediterranean, for instance, its disputes with Greece, its entanglement in the division of Cyprus and its desire to become more integrated economically with western Europe. As long as the Black Sea was a Soviet lake, its primary influence on the Mediterranean was that it was a potential staging area and avenue for the Soviet Navy. Once the Cold War ended this situation changed dramatically. Instead of four states, the Black Sea boasted six. The territory once occupied by the Soviet Union now belonged to three successor states: Russia, Ukraine and Georgia.

Starting in 1991, the 6th Fleet initiated peacetime engagement activities in the former Soviet bloc states in the Black Sea as part of United States strategy of engagement and enlargement, that is, co-operatively working with former adversaries and neutrals to promote democratization and economic reform. The principal military element of the American strategy
has been the Partnership for Peace Program under which nations learn to inter-operate with NATO forces in various peacekeeping and other pacific military operations. As of 1998 the Partnership for Peace participants in the 6th Fleet’s area of responsibility are the Black Sea nations of Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia, as well as the three Mediterranean states of Albania, Slovenia and Malta. During the Cold War Albania and Slovenia were also part of the Soviet bloc; Malta was a non-aligned state which obtained independence from Great Britain in the 1960s. In terms of their relative geopolitical importance, Albania, Slovenia and Malta pale in comparison to the Black Sea Partnership for Peace participants. Thus it is reasonable to expect that in this important peacetime engagement program, a greater emphasis will be placed on the Black Sea rather than on the Mediterranean participants.

In addition to the eight states in the 6th Fleet’s area of responsibility, there are another 19 European states that are participating in the Partnership for Peace Program and several of these have advanced far enough in terms of political and economic reform that they were invited to join NATO in 1997. The fact that all of the invitees are from central and northern Europe has been of interest to NATO’s Mediterranean members, who are concerned that the alliance deliberations may become too heavily dominated by non-Mediterranean matters. A reduction in the priority that NATO and the United States ascribe to Mediterranean affairs is a serious, long-term issue, particularly as it affects US naval strategy and resources in the Mediterranean. There are several reasons why the Mediterranean may become less important in US national security strategy and consequently why the United States may gradually trim back its direct participation in Mediterranean affairs.

NATO expansion is surely one reason. As NATO expands, some defense resources will gradually be reallocated to military-to-military relations with the new NATO members, however many they ultimately are. Without an increase in the United States defense budget, which seems highly unlikely at present, increasingly scarce resources will have to be stretched thinner to harmonize the military doctrine of the new members with NATO doctrine, build communications interoperability and hold military exercises. Investment in infrastructure in each of the new member states will also be required. Another claim on scarce resources will be exercises and other military-to-military activities with the non-Mediterranean Partnership for Peace nations that apparently do not want to join NATO, or that want to join but have not yet been invited to. Resources will also be required on a continuing basis for peacetime engagement activities with Russia. These investments in exercises, planning, interoperability and infrastructure are unlikely by themselves to require a sudden or dramatic shift in investment away from peacetime engagement activities in the Mediterranean. However, as long as there is
no top-line growth in US defense spending, the financial and manpower resources necessary to make NATO membership mean something more than mere words—and the resources needed to continue Partnership for Peace engagement with non-NATO nations—can only come from elsewhere, such as peacetime engagement programs in the Mediterranean.

Economic trends could reinforce the trend toward a reduced US involvement in the affairs of the Mediterranean basin. While it may be true, as Geoffrey Till points out in Chapter 10 of this book, that Mediterranean shipping routes are as important as ever, that may be true only for European, Near Eastern and North African nations. In relation to other regions, the nations of the Mediterranean have been becoming collectively less economically important to the United States.

In 1970 the total value of all US exports to and imports from Mediterranean nations was about $8,500 million; by 1995 the US-Mediterranean trade had increased to $97,000 million. Clearly, a significant increase. However, it is actually relatively small—as a percentage—in comparison with US trade volumes in other regions of the world. For example, US exports to and imports from nations in the Western Hemisphere were approximately $10,800 million in 1970; in 1995 they were $203,470 million—more than twice as large a dollar volume as in the Mediterranean. Moreover, in recent years the difference between trade with the Mediterranean and trade with other regions has been increasing. Between 1989 and 1995, US trade with other Western Hemisphere countries grew by 86 per cent, while trade with Mediterranean countries grew by only 33 per cent and US trade with the Pacific Rim (excluding Japan) grew almost three times as fast as trade with the Mediterranean.17

The net effect is that, in terms of trade, the Mediterranean is becoming relatively less important economically to the United States. In 1970 the Mediterranean nations collectively accounted for almost 10 per cent of the total value of US exports and imports; in 1995 the percentage declined to 7.2 per cent (see Figure 6.1).

The same trend pertains with respect to the southern European nations—France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Malta—and most of the US Mediterranean trade is with southern Europe. US exports to and imports from these nations declined as a percentage of world trade from 8.0 in 1970 to 5.3 in 1995. US trade with North African nations—Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco—has never been substantial. In 1970 US trade with these nations was only 0.4 per cent of total US trade. From the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s the proportion increased to nearly 2.0 per cent; starting in late 1980s the proportion began to decline and in 1995 reached roughly the same level as in 1970. US trade with the nations of the eastern Mediterranean—Turkey, Syria, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Cyprus—was 1.5 per cent of world values in 1970 and 1.3 per cent in 1995. Approximately three-fifths of US trade in the eastern Mediterranean
has traditionally been with Israel and the percentage has remained constant in the 1990s. Overall, Israel accounts for less than 1.0 per cent of the total US trade volume (see Figure 6.2).

Another way of assessing the diminishing relative economic importance of the Mediterranean to the United States is to compare trade statistics for individual countries. In 1989 Japan and Korea were the only Pacific Rim nations that had a larger dollar volume of exports and imports with the United States than France and Italy. Six years later France and Italy were still our largest Mediterranean trading partners, but there were five Pacific Rim nations with larger bilateral trade volumes with the United States. The five were Japan, China, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. A sixth Pacific Rim nation, Malaysia, had a slightly greater trading volume with the United States in 1995 than Italy (see Table 6.1).

If current trends continue—and they may accelerate as the Chinese economy grows and becomes more engaged with the United States—by 2002 the direction of US trade will be even more heavily oriented towards the Pacific Rim and the Western Hemisphere. In but a few years only about $1 out of every $20 of US exports and imports may have any direct connection with the nations on the Mediterranean littoral.
Statistics on US foreign direct investment (FDI) provide a more mixed picture than do the trade statistics. FDI is the book value of the equity positions that private-sector investors—corporations, individual investors and mutual fund managers—collectively have in the business enterprises of another country. Viewed over a 25-year timeframe, US investment in the Mediterranean has increased as a percentage of all US FDI, from 5.4 in 1970 to 9.29 per cent in 1995. However, since 1990 the percentage of US FDI that goes into the Mediterranean has been declining. In 1990 10.44 per cent of all US FDI was in the Mediterranean, in 1995 the figure was 9.29 per cent. During that same period US FDI in northern Europe increased from 40.06 per cent of all US FDI to 42.48 per cent.

Plainly, individual investment decisions reflect many factors, for example, investor judgments about the profit opportunities for a particular business or investor apprehension about possible increases in capital gains tax rates in a particular country. Other factors include predictions by private sector investors about the political stability of a target country, the fluctuations in that country’s currency and the stringency of that country’s environmental regulations in comparison with those of other countries. Regardless of the reasons why individual American companies and citizens invest in one place instead of another, the cumulative total of their investments in a country or region is a useful measure of the relative size of the US economic stake in a particular country or region. The measure may confirm the implication of the statistics on trade that the Mediterranean is becoming less important economically to the United States, relative not only to the Pacific Rim and the western Hemisphere, but also to Northern Europe.

What difference does it make whether the Mediterranean region accounts for 10 or 5 per cent of the aggregate US trade flow? For 10 per cent of all US foreign investment or 9? The exact percentage is less important than the fact that the trend is negative. In the post-Cold War world the flag is more likely than ever before to follow economic interests. Indeed, nations are increasingly defining their national interests in economic terms. All other things being equal, a region that accounts for a

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Table 6.1: Ranking in Bilateral Trade Volume
small percentage of a nation’s trade and investment will eventually be accorded a lower foreign-policy priority than regions with greater trading volumes and higher investment values.

Trade and investment create vested interests. The corporations and smaller enterprises that succeed in buying or selling overseas, that co-produce goods with foreign manufacturers, or that own foreign real estate or businesses understandably have stakes in protecting their access to their chosen markets. The investors who buy real property overseas or establish ownership positions in foreign business have obvious stakes in preserving the value of their investments. Under US-style democracy, organizations and individuals with stakes are entitled—in fact, are virtually encouraged—to express themselves politically: to advocate publicly and privately foreign policies that protect their interests. When a region accounts for only $1 out of $20 of US trade and only $1 out of every $11 in overseas investments, eventually the chorus of vested interests which advocate engagement in that region will diminish in size and influence relative to the chorus of advocates for other regions. Obviously the United States has and will continue to have many political and cultural ties with the Mediterranean. These ties obviously support its continued engagement in the region. But the urge to increase or even maintain at current levels an American military engagement in the Mediterranean will be confronted by a growing set of vested economic interests calling for the United States to shift some of its attention and assets away from the Mediterranean towards other regions.

SUMMARY

During the Cold War US naval strategy in the Mediterranean revolved around the containment of the Soviet Union. Very early in the Cold War it was decided that containment required a substantial, permanent, naval presence in the Mediterranean, rather than simply having the ability to dispatch a large naval expeditionary force to the area during a crisis. This was because a sizeable, permanent presence:

- discouraged Soviet adventurism;
- communicated tangible commitment to allies who during much of the period were being encouraged to increase their own defense investments;
- provided assets that could be used for managing crises not directly involving the Soviet Union; and
- provided assets that could be routinely employed in ongoing peacetime engagement activities to improve interoperability with other NATO navies and to enhance relations with non-allied countries.
Crisis management and peacetime engagement were originally aspects of, or adjuncts to the overall containment strategy, but have since evolved into the principal post-Cold War missions of the smaller US naval presence in the Mediterranean.

If current economic and political trends continue, it is likely that the United States will further reduce its permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean and increasingly rely instead upon expeditionary naval forces to honor its alliance commitments to NATO and Israel and to protect its limited national interests in the region. This might change if the Mediterranean becomes a major route for dramatically increased volumes of oil shipments to the United States from Russia, the Caucasus or Central Asia. If this were to happen, the Straits of Gibraltar and other Mediterranean locations could become even more important as strategic and economical choke-points and a larger naval presence in the Mediterranean might then be warranted.

NOTES

2 Ordinarily the individual ships rotated in and out of the Task Force on six-monthly cycles, six months in the Mediterranean and the rest of the time traveling to and operating out of home ports in the United States.
3 As noted in the chapter by Reynolds Salerno, France decided in the late 1980s and early 1990s to maintain its Atlantic naval assets while at the same time reducing its Mediterranean naval assets. This seems to indicate that at least with respect to naval policy, France thinks of itself as more of an Atlantic than a Mediterranean country.
16 A flag visit is a semi-diplomatic event that occurs when a flag officer (e.g., the admiral commanding the 6th Fleet) visits a national capital or major naval facility. Port visits take place when one of the 6th Fleet’s ships stops at a port, for example, to replenish supplies or undergo minor repairs. Provisioning and repairs are often scheduled to take place in countries that have been identified as priorities in the peacetime engagement plan.
17 The statistics on trade used here and in the following paragraphs were calculated by Major Walter H. Leach (USAF) based on data from the International Monetary Fund, Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbooks. Leach conducted his analysis while he was a student at the US Naval War College in 1997.
18 The statistics on FDI were derived from the US Commerce Department’s Survey of Current Business (Washington DC, September 1996), Vol. 76, No. 9, pp. 124–5; and the Statistical Abstract of the United States 1996, which is also published by the Commerce Department (Washington DC: October 1996), p. 791. The data were compiled and the summary statistics calculated by Major Walter H. Leach.
Soviet and Russian Strategy in the Mediterranean since 1945

Milan Vego

The Russians seem to me to be more interested in taking Ports in the Mediterranean than destroying Buonaparte in Egypt.

Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson to the Earl of St Vincent, 6 December 1798

Russia is a huge and resource-rich country, stretching over two continents and 11 time zones. Until 1991 the former USSR controlled about 20,000 miles of coastline. However, that geography dictated that the former Imperial Navy, the Soviet Navy and the Russian Navy today must be divided among four separate maritime theaters. Because of unfavorable geography and the distances involved, none of these fleets can expect the help of another in a war. This was one of the principal reasons why Russia was in the past and still remains essentially a land power. However, one of the constants of Russia’s rulers from the tsars to the commissars and beyond was to obtain secure and unhindered access to the warm waters of the ocean or to a large sea connected with an ocean. Therefore it is not surprising that the Mediterranean played a prominent place in Russia’s policy and strategy in the modern era. The Soviets used diverse political, economic, military and propagandist means to accomplish their strategic objectives in the area. Since 1945 Moscow has alternated between highly active and not so active pursuit of these objectives. The Soviets were more successful when their policy and strategy were backed by a strong show of force. Nevertheless, the Soviets were never able to accomplish their stated strategic objectives in the Mediterranean, owing to their inability to compete with the West, both economically and militarily. Perhaps the single biggest obstacle for both the Soviets and the Russians was the homeland’s highly unfavorable geo-strategic position to project power into the Mediterranean.
Russia emerged as a seapower in the Black Sea in the late eighteenth century. It is because of its position within that sea that Russians had the potential to become also a Mediterranean power. Russian rulers made concerted and sometimes intensive efforts to influence political and military, and indirectly economic development in the Mediterranean. However, the principal problem for Russia was its inability to obtain control of the sea’s only exit, the Bosporus and the Dardanelles (or the Turkish Straits), from Turkey. Between 1766 and 1914 Russia and Turkey went to war 13 times\(^1\) over which power was to control the straits. Also, for most of the nineteenth century, Great Britain and Russia were in conflict for control of the Turkish Straits. Russia usually obtained preferential treatment for the transit of its warships following wars with Turkey (treaties in 1805, 1833 and 1877). However, Britain often nullified these treaties through diplomacy or war.\(^2\) The Convention of London in 1841 laid down the basic rules for the international control of the Straits. Adjustments to this treaty were made in the aftermath of the Crimean War in 1856 and again in 1871, 1876 and 1915.

After the end of World War I Turkey, as one of the defeated powers, was forced to accept changes in the straits that infringed its sovereignty. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 gave Turkey some degree of control, but the straits were to be demilitarized and put under the control of an international commission.\(^3\) However, by the mid-1930s the Turks considered the continuing demilitarized status of the straits to be detrimental to their country’s security. Ironically, in the view of later events, Moscow was initially supportive of Turkey’s request to change the international regime in the straits. The result was the Conference of Montreux held in June-July 1936 that gave control of the straits to Turkey, but recognized Russian pre-eminence in the Black Sea. Despite some restrictions on the riparian states, the new regime was highly favorable to the Soviets because it greatly strengthened Moscow’s potential role in the Mediterranean, provided that Turkey remained friendly and neutral.\(^4\) Moscow tried unsuccessfully to entice Turkey in the late summer of 1939 to sign a mutual assistance pact. Among Moscow’s demands was joint control over the straits. Instead, Turkey signed a treaty of mutual assistance with Great Britain and France on 19 October 1939.\(^5\)

The Soviets continued to seek changes in the straits’ regime during World War II. The Nazis and the Soviets discussed a deal on the straits during the conversation that led to the secret discussions in Berlin during November 1939. Germany offered a revision of the Montreux Convention to give Moscow greater control.\(^6\) During the visit of the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov to Berlin on 12–13 November 1940, the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop expressed Berlin’s readiness to support Moscow to modify the Convention to allow, among other things, the unrestricted passage of Soviet ships through the straits.
However, the German proposal did not go far enough for Moscow. Thus, Molotov submitted a proposal to obtain a long-term lease for a base for the Soviet light naval and land forces on the Bosporus and the Dardanelles. However, nothing came of Molotov’s initiative because Nazi Germany attacked Soviet Russia in June 1941.

MOSCOW FAILS TO OBTAIN CONTROL OF THE Straits, 1945–53

The Soviet dictator Josef Stalin raised the issue of revision of the Montreux Convention at the Allied Conference in Teheran in 1943. He demanded unrestricted transit for Soviet warships and limitations on the operations of other warship in the Black Sea. Soviet policy toward Turkey began to change after 1943 as victory over Nazi Germany became more and more certain. Moscow informed Turkey on 19 March 1945 that it did not intend to extend the treaty of neutrality and non-aggression of 1925 (due to expire in 1946) unless appropriate changes were made to reflect the new post-war realities. Molotov hinted to the Turkish ambassador in June 1945 that Moscow wanted bases in the straits as well as the return of the provinces of Kars and Ardahan. However, other Soviet officials asserted that Moscow was not really interested in obtaining bases in the straits just to ensure the defense of the Black Sea. The Soviets apparently had even larger designs on Turkey, including the annexation of a large stretch of the Turkish Black Sea coast.

At the Yalta Conference in 1945 Stalin requested that what he called ‘this outmoded treaty’ be changed, while Molotov denounced the Montreux Treaty at the Potsdam Conference. He proposed instead the establishment of a joint Soviet-Turkish control regime to protect the Black Sea powers from external threats. President Harry Truman countered with a proposal that the straits be ‘opened to all and guaranteed by all of us’. As a result of the subsequent deterioration of the relations between Moscow and the West no further discussion on the subject took place.

Moscow began its diplomatic offensive to change the regime in the straits in August 1946. In a diplomatic note it claimed that the existing agreement did not meet the security interests of the Black Sea powers. The Soviets proposed instead that control of the right of passage through the strait should come under the competence of Turkey and the other Black Sea powers. Moscow eventually dropped its demands, after realizing that the United States and Great Britain would never accede to such changes in the straits regime.

Soviet influence in the eastern Mediterranean was considerably strengthened with the defeat of Nazi Germany and the establishment of communist-led and pro-Soviet regimes in Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria, and the prospect of a communist victory in the civil war in Greece. Turkey became more exposed to Moscow’s pressure because its
closest ally Bulgaria shared a 175-mile-long border with Turkish Thrace, one of the most densely populated and economically developed parts of Turkey. Soviet troops crossing the Turkish-Bulgarian border had only about 100 miles to traverse before reaching Istanbul. Nevertheless, despite these gains, Moscow’s primary focus was on the concurrence of the Western allies to obtain control of the straits. The United States considered Soviet demands to revise the Montreux Treaty as but the opening salvos by Moscow to obtain a foothold in the Mediterranean. The US Secretary of State Dean Acheson warned that giving in to Stalin’s demands would create an obvious threat to British sea lines of communication to India. President Truman sent an aircraft carrier and nine other warships to Greece in 1947 as a sign of US resolve. This act signified the birth of the US 6th Fleet, even though US warships had been deployed in the Mediterranean before that time.11

Moscow’s influence was also seen behind the plans of the victorious communists to become a major naval power in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. In December 1946 the Federal Parliament in Belgrade approved a huge naval construction program, which envisaged the building of 140 submarines. The program was so out of touch with reality that it was never carried out.12 Further, Belgrade’s break with Moscow in June 1948 ended Soviet hopes to use Yugoslavia directly or indirectly for its policies and strategy in the Mediterranean. The Soviet-Yugoslav dispute also had another major consequence: the defeat of the communist rebellion in Greece in 1949, because the Yugoslavs closed their border sanctuaries and ceased to help the rebels. Greece allied with the US, and later the NATO alliance, posed a formidable physical barrier to the projection of Soviet power in the Mediterranean, even if Moscow could have obtained direct or indirect control of the straits. The 3,000 islands in the Aegean proved a further barrier for the Soviets, since no ship transiting the Aegean can avoid passing repeatedly within ten miles of land.13

MOSCOW BEGINS TO SEARCH FOR ALLIES, 1954–61

The death of Stalin in March 1953 led to an almost immediate reevaluation and changes in Soviet domestic and foreign policies and military strategy. By May 1953 Moscow had formally withdrawn its territorial claims against Turkey and suggested than any eventual changes of the straits regime must be acceptable to both countries.14 The new collective leadership in Moscow also had a more flexible approach in dealing with Third World countries in general and the so-called ‘progressive’ (socialist-leaning) Arab regimes in the Middle East and the Mediterranean in particular. Moscow cleverly exploited Western mistakes involving Arab countries to secure a foothold in the Middle East, chiefly by providing economic aid and arms deliveries.15 The first breakthrough for
Moscow came in September 1955 when the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the purchase of Soviet arms through communist-rulled Czechoslovakia. This opened up prospects for increased Soviet influence in the region. During the Suez Crisis in October 1956 Soviet threats against the UK and France led many Egyptians to believe that the West was no longer free to exercise traditional gunboat diplomacy as it had in the past. The crisis in retrospect helped Moscow to enhance its influence in the region greatly.

The first visit of Soviet warships to a Mediterranean country occurred in May-June 1954, when one cruiser and two destroyers called at Vlorë (Valona), Albania. The next visit took place in late June 1956, when two Soviet destroyers and a tanker from the Black Sea Fleet began a southbound transit through the Suez Canal, the first Soviet ships to transit the waterway since 1924. The vessels did not make any port call in the Mediterranean. One Soviet cruiser and a destroyer each paid a port visit to Latakia in September 1957, during Turkish-Syrian border tensions. The Soviet ships left there just after the crisis appeared to have abated, even if only temporarily.

The crisis in Lebanon in May 1958 was another opportunity for the Soviets to show their support for the Arab cause. The US and the Royal Navy deployed relatively large forces off Lebanon’s coast, and the US landed about 1,800 Marines in Lebanon in July. The Soviet naval response during the crisis was minimal. However, the Lebanon crisis served as a powerful reminder to Moscow concerning the value of a naval presence in such an area and also how inadequate its naval strength really was. US resolve and the Soviet failure to act effectively reportedly left a lasting impression on President Nasser, which seriously undermined Soviet credibility in the area.

Despite their setback in Lebanon, the Soviets began a large-scale supply of arms to Egypt, technicians were sent to Syria and Yemen 1958, and Moscow signed an agreement to construct a shipyard at Alexandria in January 1959. However, Soviet-Egyptian relations began to deteriorate because of the persecution of Egyptian and Syrian Communists. In return, Moscow suspended its arms sales to Egypt.

By late August 1958 the Soviets had deployed four submarines and a submarine tender from the Northern Fleet at Albania’s port of Vlorë. Eventually, 12 submarines and two submarine tenders were stationed there. Shortly afterward, the Soviets regularly began to operate intelligence-gathering ships (AGIs) in the Mediterranean. The Soviets also increased the use of the straits for their naval auxiliaries ferrying supplies to Soviet submarines in Vlorë.

The Soviets conducted their first large naval exercise in the Mediterranean in 1960 with 20 ships, including ten submarines (eight based in Vlorë and two from the Black Sea Fleet). The exercise was held in
the Aegean and its scenario focused on an attack on the NATO sea-lift to Turkey in the case of a major war.\textsuperscript{24} The Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean abruptly ended in 1961 because of the ideological dispute between Moscow and Tirana. In the process, the Albanians forcibly seized four submarines and one submarine tender and large quantities of Soviet naval equipment ashore.\textsuperscript{25} The loss of bases in Albania had an immediate and negative effect on the Soviet ability to maintain a sizeable presence in the area. After mid-1961 and for the next two years the Soviets greatly reduced their naval activities there. Moreover, no Soviet warships were deployed in the Mediterranean. However, the Soviets began their quest to obtain access for their ships to naval facilities in the friendly Arab countries, and at the same time tried to woo and cajole Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{26} Moscow’s success between 1961 and 1963 in effecting a \textit{rapprochement} with Belgrade and repairing relations with Cairo appears in retrospect as a remarkable diplomatic feat that laid the groundwork for a more assertive Soviet role in the Middle East and the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{27}

The Soviet Navy’s Commander, Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, made several visits to Egypt between 1961 and 1965 with the apparent aim of securing access for Soviet warships to that country’s facilities.\textsuperscript{28} He reportedly used the prospects of naval arms deliveries as a tool to entice the Egyptians to closer naval co-operation. Egypt thus became one of the largest recipients of Soviet naval deliveries among Third World countries.\textsuperscript{29} The Soviets expanded their military assistance program to Egypt in June 1963, when the largest arms agreement was signed between the two countries.\textsuperscript{30} After 1965 the Soviets also began increasingly to use Egyptian ports for naval visits. However, the Egyptians rejected a Soviet request to obtain permanent access to their naval facilities.\textsuperscript{31}

**PERMANENT DEPLOYMENT OF NAVAL FORCES BEGINS**

The US deployment of \textit{Polaris} submarines in March 1963 had a profound influence on Soviet strategy and naval policy in the Mediterranean. Some Western observers alleged that the Soviets, in an attempt to counter the threat of the submarines, decided to initiate a forward presence in the eastern Mediterranean following the visit of a group of Soviet warships to Cattaro (Kotor), in Yugoslavia in June 1964. Initially, the Soviets deployed 15 warships in the area.\textsuperscript{32}

The reasons for the permanent deployment of Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean were both political and military. By having a credible naval strength, Moscow’s political objectives were to: (1) enhance Soviet prestige and influence among Arab countries, by demonstrating both the capabilities and the will to act as a patron to clients and potential clients in the area; (2) show that the Mediterranean could no longer be regarded as
an exclusive US and Western European preserve; (3) complicate US policy and strategy in the Middle East and the Mediterranean; (4) exploit latent hostilities between Greece and Turkey, and induce either one or both to de facto non-alignment; (5) stimulate neutralist tendencies in other NATO countries in the area; and (6) strengthen the Soviet claim to be considered in legal terms as one of the Mediterranean powers. One of the possible Soviet aims was to outflank Turkey and Greece and thereby raise the political and economic costs for NATO members to gain access to Middle East Oil.33

Soviet key military objectives in the Mediterranean in the 1960s were probably to: (1) enhance their capabilities to deter possible US nuclear strikes from carriers and submarines deployed in the eastern Mediterranean; (2) deter any pre-emptive military action by Israel against its Arab neighbors; (3) enhance their leverage over possible rash moves by a client Arab state; (4) inhibit intervention by the 6th Fleet against the Arab ‘progressive’ regimes; (5) provide protection for the Soviet flag ships sailing between the Black Sea and the Far East via the Suez Canal; (6) collect intelligence about the 6th Fleet; and (7) rehearse naval tactical procedures under real conditions.34 Free transit through the Suez Canal was extremely important for the Soviets because a considerable volume of trade from the Black Sea ports to their Far Eastern ports went via the Indian Ocean rather than across the much less favorable route overland. The sea route from Soviet Black Sea ports to Vladivostok via the Canal was about 11,000 miles long, in contrast to the alternative 17,000-mile-long route around the Cape of Good Hope. Moreover, through their influence over Egypt, the Soviets wanted to obtain more power over the Suez Canal and thereby be able potentially to threaten Western interests along the periphery of the Indian Ocean.35 The ultimate Soviet strategic objective was to force the withdrawal of the US 6th fleet from the Mediterranean and thereby acquire a strategic position similar to that enjoyed by the United States before 1958—one of absolute strategic control through the deployment of naval power.36

In order to accomplish these politico-military objectives, the Soviets were required to deploy permanently a core force of surface combatants and submarines capable of neutralizing the 6th Fleet. The Soviets also needed to develop an adequate surge capability to establish a preponderance in naval strength over the Fleet in a major crisis, maximize their forces’ political impact by making goodwill, operational visits to Mediterranean ports, and carry out diverse missions in support of the country’s political objectives. However, the permanent presence of Soviet naval forces was possible only if adequate logistical support and sustainment capabilities were available locally. This accounts for Moscow’s relentless quest to obtain routine access for their surface
combatants and submarines to major ports and ship-repair facilities in the Mediterranean.

Between 1964 and 1967 the Soviets considerably increased their presence in the eastern part of the Mediterranean. The appearance of a Soviet cruiser and destroyer coincided with the Cyprus crisis in 1964. Turkey, in return for a favorable trade agreement with Moscow, relaxed restrictions on the passage of the Soviet ships through the straits.37

Moscow’s quest for access to naval facilities in Egypt and Yugoslavia intensified in the spring of 1967. In March a five-ship Soviet squadron paid a four-day informal visit to Split. Admiral Gorshkov made a weeklong visit to the former Yugoslav Navy on 18 April 1967, touring the main base Lora-Split and some other naval installations. He requested from his hosts access for Soviet ships to naval facilities, specifically those in the Bay of Cattaro. Reportedly, Belgrade rejected Gorshkov’s request.38 Despite the substantial economic and military assistance provided to these two countries, the Soviets were not successful in their efforts to gain the use of naval facilities in Egypt and Syria before the outbreak of war.

As tension between Egypt and Israel rose in May 1967, the Soviets started the surge deployment of their naval forces into the area.39 Moreover, early in the crisis they also began to shadow US and British carriers with destroyers and intelligence-collecting vessels. At the peak of the crisis in mid-October, the Soviets had deployed two cruisers, 15 destroyers, 12 or more submarines and several amphibious ships in the conflict zone. The Soviet warships also made calls at Port Said and Alexandria to ‘deter’ Israel from attacking these ports.40

In the aftermath of the war Belgrade allowed the Soviets to use its air space and airfields to resupply the defeated Arab states. The Soviet airlift of heavy arms and equipment to Egypt and Syria started in mid-June and continued at a high rate throughout the summer of 1967. A total of 350 flights of An-12s were recorded. A major part of this resupply effort was directed to the airfields at Cairo, Damascus and Algiers, while some aircraft flew to Baghdad after over-flying Iranian airspace. Belgrade gave permission for over-flights and refueling stops for the An-12s flying from Budapest.41

In retrospect, the Six Day War represented a watershed in the evolution of the Soviet diplomacy of force in the Third World. It was the first occasion on which the Soviets employed a significant naval strength in the Mediterranean. The 5th Eskadra (as the Soviet naval squadron in the Mediterranean had become known in June 1967) was sufficiently strong to act as a major restraint on US actions in a crisis. In fact, the fleets neutralized each other, thereby leaving other smaller states some freedom of action. They were fairly certain that their patron would, at least, guarantee that the other superpower would not intervene. However, both the USSR and the USA found it to be in their interest to employ naval
forces to contain the crises in the area, rather than to give support to their clients.42

Soviet naval activities in support of the defeated Arabs had considerable propagandist value for Moscow in portraying the USSR as a true ‘champion’ of the Arab countries’ sovereignty and independence from the West. Another result of the Six Day War was that both Egypt and Syria became much weaker, making them more vulnerable to eventual Soviet pressure to provide access to their naval facilities. The Soviets finally obtained regular access to Egyptian facilities, a goal that had eluded them for several years.43 In the aftermath of the Six Day War Alexandria became the hub of Soviet naval activities in the Mediterranean. The basing facilities allowed the Soviets, for the first time, year-round deployments and more ships were kept on station. The first operational deployment of Tu-16 Soviet naval bombers began in April or May 1968. These aircraft (with Egyptian markings) used airfields at Cairo West and Mersa Matruh for reconnaissance flights over US naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean. Some Tu-16s were reportedly armed with anti-ship missiles (ASMs).44

In the aftermath of the Six Day War Moscow wanted to demonstrate that the Mediterranean could no longer be considered a Western preserve. It claimed that Soviet naval forces played a decisive role in frustrating the ‘adventurous’ plans of the Israeli ‘aggressors’. Moscow also intervened in the Yemeni civil war, sending transport and combat aircraft, flown by Soviet pilots, to help the republican regime against the royalists. Moreover, Moscow helped to rebuild the Arab armies and made its presence felt in the Middle East. Politically, Moscow’s efforts in the aftermath of the Six Day War were limited to rallying international support for the Arab cause. The Soviet dilemma was whether to offer the Arab states unconditional support and thereby risk the continuation of high tension or to advise them to be more flexible and thereby reduce the danger of new conflict in the Middle East.45

MOSCOW’S NAVAL ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS

Between the late 1950s and 1967 the Soviet common theme was denuclearization and the establishment of a zone of peace in the Mediterranean. The Soviets clamored for the withdrawal of the warships of all outside powers,46 and by 1967 had initiated a campaign to remove the 6th Fleet altogether from the Mediterranean. At the same time, Moscow’s propagandists claimed that the Soviet naval presence served the interests of European security and of peace.47 These statements were expressions of Moscow’s concern for the deployment of the 6th Fleet and the inability of the Soviet 5th Eskadra to counter that threat effectively. However, in the aftermath of the June War Moscow’s call for the
denuclearization of the Mediterranean became muted because the Soviet position in the area was greatly improved. The Soviets began to portray their naval forces in the Mediterranean as an effective deterrent to the perceived threat presented to the Arab states by the 6th Fleet.\(^{48}\) The Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev demanded naval deployment limitations in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean in 1971; three years later he proposed the withdrawal of ships carrying nuclear weapons from the Mediterranean. However, his broader aim was to bring about a dissolution of the NATO alliance.\(^ {49}\)

**GROWING MILITARY PRESENCE IN EGYPT**

By 1970 the average strength of the Soviet 5th Eskadra was about 40 surface ships and at least ten submarines. The majority of the surface combatants were drawn from the Black Sea Fleet, while some ships were on four- to six-month deployment from the Northern Fleet. After September 1968 the Soviets began to deploy some of their newest surface combatants to the Mediterranean. The five-month deployment cycle of submarines, with the mass relief of units at the end of their deployment, was established in August 1969.

By early 1969 Soviet warships were beginning to use the repair facilities at the Al-Gabbari shipyard in Alexandria, then being expanded with Soviet assistance. The yard was used mainly to overhaul Soviet diesel-electric submarines. At the same time the Soviets started to develop a support facility at Mersa Matruh for their destroyers and frigates in 1970. They also used a nearby airfield, which was beyond the range of Israeli fighter-bombers.\(^ {50}\) After August 1970 there was an almost continuous presence of Soviet submarines and surface combatants at Mersa Matruh. Likewise the ports of Alexandria and Port Said were full of Soviet combatants. A sheltered, deep-water anchorage in the Gulf of Sollum was frequently used by Soviet naval vessels. Obviously, the Soviets were able to maintain a significant naval presence in the area because of the ready access to Egyptian ports and anchorages.\(^ {51}\)

By mid-1972 the Soviets used more or less exclusively seven airfields in Egypt, basing about 150 aircraft there, including 120 MiG-21 MFs from Frontal Aviation and 30 Su-19 from Air Defense. The large number of fighters did not operate over the Mediterranean, but defended Egypt’s political and economic infrastructure, primarily the Nile Valley and the Delta. These aircraft were deployed only in 1970–72. A small number of Soviet MiG-25 Foxbat and Tu-16 Badger reconnaissance bombers also operated from two of these airfields. The ASM-carrying bombers flew from Aswan and the reconnaissance aircraft from Cairo West. Some Be-12 and later Il–28 patrol aircraft and An-12 EW aircraft flew from the airfield at Mersa Matruh.\(^ {52}\)
The Soviet military presence in Egypt was partly designed to shore up Moscow’s damaged prestige, uplift the friendly Arab regimes and deter Israel from future action against the Arab states. To justify their naval presence, Soviet propagandists claimed that the Black Sea and the Mediterranean were actually a common geographic entity. By 1971 Soviet experts asserted that dominance of the Mediterranean basin gave the Americans the keys to southern Europe, the Middle East, the Indian Ocean and Africa, enabling them to threaten from the south the position of the Soviet Union and the peoples’ democracies. Moscow argued not only for freedom of navigation, but also for the right as a superpower to use its forces to protect its overseas interests. Admiral Gorshkov claimed that the mission of Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean was to stay in close proximity of the ‘imperialist’ navies where they had, among other things, an opportunity to measure the opposition’s strong and weak points and to observe not only their actions but also their reactions to changes in the international situation. The Soviets stressed that they never had, nor intended to have, bases in the Mediterranean. This was only formally true, but the fact that they made constant efforts to expand the use of existing bases and to obtain the use of new naval facilities in the area contradicted this.

In the early 1970s the Soviets apparently followed an expansionist strategy in the Mediterranean, along the coast of North Africa, in the Red Sea and in the Indian Ocean. Egypt was used as their principal base and they conducted reconnaissance flights to monitor the movement of US carriers, and especially of Polaris submarines. They also kept a close watch on the air and naval activities of other NATO countries.

The first significant Soviet show of force in the Mediterranean after the Six Day War came during the Jordanian crisis in September-October 1970. In response to the movements of US carrier groups in early September, the Soviets began to increase their squadron level from 47 ships (including 18 surface combatants) to about 60 in the first week of October. At one point there were at least seven Soviet SSM-armed ships positioned within striking distance of the American carriers. The Soviet naval presence was a major factor in US planning during the Jordan crisis in 1970.

MOSCOW SUFFERS A SETBACK IN EGYPT

Moscow’s efforts to solidify further its already strong influence in Egypt eventually backfired. In providing security assistance, the Soviets were careful not to give the Egyptians the wherewithal with which to mount an offensive against Israel. Soviet-Egyptian disagreement over arms deliveries in 1971 was made public in July 1972. President Nasser’s successor Anwar al Sadat ordered about 17,000 Soviet advisors and Soviet air-defense fighters to leave the country in that month. Many of the Soviet
sophisticated weapons, such as the SA-3 SAMs, were confiscated by the Egyptians, who also took control of all military facilities used by the Soviets in the country. The Soviet naval presence in Mersa Matruh ended and all work on a major support complex there was halted. The Soviets were also forced to cease reconnaissance flights over the Western navies from Egyptian airfields. All ASW reconnaissance aircraft operating from Cairo West and the ASM bombers based at Aswan were withdrawn as well. Yet, surprisingly, the Soviets were allowed to use other Egyptian naval facilities, including the Al-Gabbari shipyard. Additionally, by September 1972 the Soviets had sent their ships back to Egyptian ports and about 300 advisors, mostly naval personnel, remained in Egypt. The reason for this was that President Sadat did not want an irreparable break with the Soviets. In retrospect, Sadat’s action in July 1972 had a twofold objective: to press the Soviets into providing Egypt with offensive weapons to recover Sinai and to ensure Egypt’s freedom of action to undertake such an offensive.

The Egyptians tried to entice the Soviets to provide offensive weapons for their planned offensive against Israel. In December 1972, several months in advance, they offered Moscow the opportunity to renew the 1968 support agreement for a second five-year term. As a result, the Soviets began to deliver modern weapons to Egypt and Syria. Additionally active preparations began for the Egyptian offensive against Israel that led to the Yom Kippur (Ramadan) War.

THE MOST DANGEROUS CRISIS, OCTOBER 1973

The most assertive Soviet naval response in the Mediterranean occurred during and in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The Soviet 5th Eskadra consisted just before the outbreak of hostilities of 52 ships, including 11 submarines, three cruisers and two amphibious ships. The war started on 6 October when Syria and Egypt launched a surprise attack on Israel. However, by 15 October Israeli forces had crossed the Suez Canal and the Egyptian 3rd Army was trapped on the canal's east bank. Both the US and the Soviets sent reinforcements to their fleets in the Mediterranean. The crisis deepened on 25 October, when, in response to the Soviet threat to send their troops unilaterally to enforce the ceasefire between Israel and the Arabs, the United States ordered a world-wide alert of its forces, including some strategic nuclear forces. By then the Soviets had succeeded in positioning a group of SSM/ASM-armed destroyers and cruise missile-armed submarines around each American carrier group deployed south of Crete. Soviet submarines, scheduled to return home, were kept in the western Mediterranean and later redeployed into the eastern Mediterranean as the US resupply of Israel began. The Soviets also conducted a huge air-lift and sea-lift of weapons and military equipment to
Arab countries, mostly to Egypt and Syria. By 31 October the Soviets had deployed a total of 95 ships in the Mediterranean. Afterwards, the Soviet force level declined slightly, but remained above 90 ships for the duration of the crisis.

The Yom Kippur War demonstrated that the Soviets were capable of responding to US naval movements quickly, and with greater versatility than they had shown in any previous crisis in the Mediterranean. The Soviets concentrated sufficient forces to pose a serious threat to the survivability of each of the four task forces of the 6th Fleet then deployed in the area. Additionally, the Soviets concentrated a sufficient number of surface combatants off the Egyptian coast in support of their sea-lift and air-lift efforts carried out during the crisis.

Following the war the force activity level of the 5th Eskadra decreased, but the basic pattern of Soviet naval activities in the area remained unchanged. The Soviet amphibious group abandoned Port Said in October 1973 and moved to Mersa Matruh. The five-month cycle in the mass deployment of Soviet submarines was extended to ten months.

The 5th Eskadra was involved in the two Middle East crises in 1974. During the Cyprus crisis in July the Soviet naval reaction was to counter US naval diplomacy. During the peak of the crisis in July several Soviet cruisers and destroyers conducted surveillance of US carrier forces. After the US had evacuated its citizens on 23 July, Soviet forces evacuated their nationals from Larnaca without incident. As the crisis subsided, both the Soviet and the US ships withdrew from the area. In another crisis in 1974 Soviet ships made a port call at Latakia as a sign of support for Syria’s delay in approving an extension of the US Golan peacekeeping force mandate.

MOSCOW INTENSIFIES ITS SEARCH FOR NAVAL FACILITIES, 1974–80

Because of the difficulties with Egypt, the Soviets began to search for alternative sources of support for their 5th Eskadra. Already in July 1972 Syria had reportedly agreed to the increased use of the port of Latakia, but limited Soviet activities there to the water’s edge. Also the Syrians denied the Soviets the use of the country’s airfields. The Soviets made an agreement with Libya for a major arms sale in return for access to the country’s port facilities.

The Soviets continued their quest for access to port facilities in a number of Arab countries and nominally non-aligned Yugoslavia in 1974–75. After President Sadat had made it clear that he would use Soviet access to Egyptian facilities as a bargaining chip, the Soviets pressed Syrian President Assad, during his visit to Moscow in April 1974, to allow their ships to use Syrian facilities. Moscow was apparently successful, because
in May of the same year a Soviet auxiliary was moved from Latakia to the port of Tartus.

Moscow’s consistent efforts to obtain access to Yugoslavia’s naval facilities finally brought results in April 1974 when the Federal Parliament amended the country’s law on the coastal sea (Zakon o Obalnom Moru), allowing the overhaul and repair of foreign warships to be carried out in Yugoslav naval facilities on a quasi-commercial basis. The new law of 1974 stipulated that any foreign navy was eligible to use Yugoslavia’s naval facilities. However, the amendments to the law were so worded as to exclude US and other Western navies from carrying out repairs to their vessels in Yugoslav ports.73

The first Soviet naval vessels to be overhauled under the provisions of the new Yugoslav law were two submarines accompanied by a submarine tender in December 1974. Afterwards a naval repair yard in Tivat in the Bay of Cattaro was used for the repairing and overhauling of Soviet diesel-electric submarines. One submarine tender was permanently based there. On average three to five Soviet submarines per year were overhauled in the Tivat yard.74 The Soviets also used a commercial repair facility in Bijela, in the Bay of Cattaro, and a shipyard in Trogir, near Split, to dock and repair their naval auxiliaries (often disguised as merchant vessels).

By the mid-1970s the 5th Eskadra normally consisted of 55 ships, of which from 20 to 25 were warships.75 Compared with the US 6th Fleet, the Soviets were at a substantial disadvantage because of the inadequate basing support in the area. The Soviet ships were mostly concentrated in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, where they regularly used the ports of Alexandria and Mersa Matruh or the anchorage at Sollum (some 100 miles east of Mersa Matruh). Soviet ships also used the Syrian ports of Latakia, Banyas and Tartus, where a special area was reserved for them.76

The Soviet position in Egypt began to erode dramatically in the aftermath of the October War of 1973. President Sadat, because of the continuing dispute with Moscow over Soviet arms deliveries, put further restrictions on Soviet access to Egyptian naval facilities in the spring of 1975. By June of that year the Soviets were forced to leave Mersa Matruh and the Gulf of Sollum. However, they were allowed to use an anchorage north of Sollum, just outside Egyptian territorial waters. Only the nucleus of Soviet support ships remained in Alexandria and submarine maintenance and repair were allowed to continue. However, the Soviets lost the right to enter and leave Alexandria at will.77

The Soviets suffered one of their most humiliating setbacks since they began their activist policies in the Mediterranean in March 1976 when President Sadat unilaterally abrogated the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. He gave the Soviets just one month to evacuate all personnel and facilities from Alexandria. This withdrawal was completed on schedule by 15 April.78
The loss of a foothold in Egypt greatly complicated the Soviet problem of maintaining a sizeable naval presence in the area. After 1976 the Soviets made greater use of port facilities in Syria, while intensifying their efforts to obtain routine access for their ships in other friendly countries in the area, notably Tunisia, Libya and Yugoslavia. In May 1976 the Soviets asked for permission to use storage and maintenance depots in Syrian ports, but were only allowed to upgrade port facilities in Tartus. The Soviets afterward moved both their naval support facilities and naval auxiliaries from Alexandria to Tartus.\(^79\)

The Soviets obtained access to Libyan naval facilities even before the break with Cairo became known.\(^80\) After 1977 the Soviets began to use the facilities at the Tunisian port of Menzel-Bourgiba to overhaul and repair their naval vessels. They also approached both Italy and Greece to use repair facilities for their naval auxiliaries. Italy, after consulting NATO, rejected the Soviet request. Greece, by contrast, allowed Soviet ships to be repaired at the Neorion shipyard on the island of Syros. By 1979 the Soviets provided about a third of the total repair work conducted there.\(^81\)

By the late 1970s Yugoslavia had become a major recipient of Soviet arms and equipment. It also became the main focus of Moscow’s efforts to secure adequate shore support for ships deployed in the Mediterranean. At that time there were rumors that the Soviets had used Yugoslavia’s commercial ship-repair facilities extensively to overhaul their naval auxiliaries. The Yugoslav ports also served as some of the main supply bases for the 5th Eskadra.\(^82\) Admiral Gorshkov, during his visit to Yugoslavia in August 1976, requested that Belgrade grant priority to Soviet ships and increase the numbers allowed at any one time in the country’s ports.\(^83\) However, Soviet efforts to obtain greater access to Yugoslavia’s port facilities in 1978–80 reportedly met with strong opposition on the part of Marshal Tito’s regime due to the then deteriorating relations between Moscow and Belgrade.

The Soviets continued to use Middle Eastern and African ports during a number of crises. During the Ethiopian-Somali War the Soviets mounted a large sea- and air-lift to Ethiopia, between November 1977 and July 1978. The air-lift got under way on 26 November and ended in January 1978, and involved about 225 aircraft. Most of the flights originated in Odessa, Ukraine; one route passed over the Turkish Straits and ended in Aden. Turkey had the authority to inspect over-flights, but failed to exercise this right because of its dependence on the use of Bulgaria’s airspace for commercial traffic to western Europe. Another route using Budapest as a staging area went over Yugoslavia and then over Syria to Ethiopia. It was reported that the Soviet air-lift involved the violation of the airspace of ten countries and drew an official protest on this score from Belgrade.\(^84\) The Soviets also used Yugoslav airspace in a number of routine resupply.
missions to its clients in the Middle East and Africa in 1975–76, specifically Angola, Algeria, Libya and Syria.\textsuperscript{85}

SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE DECLINES, 1981–85

The Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean averaged 30–40 units throughout the 1980s. The 5th Eskadra predominantly used anchorages in international waters in several parts of the Mediterranean in the 1980s. Soviet ships also had access to naval facilities in Syria, Libya and Yugoslavia. By the early 1980s the Syrian port of Tartus became a base for Soviet submarines, providing full maintenance and repair facilities.\textsuperscript{86} However, the Syrian ports were small, chronically overcrowded and virtually incapable of providing sustained support for large numbers of surface combatants and submarines. Syria reportedly offered quasipermanent access to its support ships.\textsuperscript{87}

Soviet naval aircraft returned to the Mediterranean in June 1981, after almost ten years. A limited number of IL-38 May ASW aircraft had routinely been deployed to Syria and Libya in the 1980s. Additionally Tu16 Badger naval bombers sporadically operated from Syrian airfields. However, by 1989 the Soviet naval aircraft deployment to Libya and Syria had been reduced to only 65 per cent of the level in the preceding year. The Soviets ceased to deploy their naval aircraft in the Mediterranean in December 1989.\textsuperscript{88}

The Soviets were also successful in obtaining access to service their naval auxiliaries in other riparian states in the Mediterranean in the late 1970s. But in January 1981 Greece ceased to service Soviet naval auxiliaries and offered instead to continue servicing only commercial vessels. Yet the new socialist government in Athens renewed the agreement with the Soviets a year later to use Neorion shipyard and also offered the use of another shipyard in Syros.\textsuperscript{89} In the early 1980s the Soviets also used the French naval base at Toulon to carry out repairs on their auxiliaries. However, because of French suspicion of Soviet intelligence activities this work stopped in early 1983.\textsuperscript{90}

Soviet efforts to obtain access to Maltese port facilities finally paid off in January 1981, when two agreements were signed, allowing Soviet merchant ships to enter Maltese ports without special procedures. The Soviets were also permitted to store fuel at the facility of Has Saptan in quantities sufficient to refuel 200 ships annually. After the Maltese and the Italians the Soviets became the most important users of the facility.\textsuperscript{91}

Relations between Moscow and Belgrade began to improve after Tito’s death in May 1980. Gorshkov paid another visit to Belgrade in June–July 1981; Yugoslavia shortly afterwards received two modern frigates (Koni-class), the first ships delivered by the Soviets since the late 1960s.
In the 1980s the principal activities of the 5th Eskadra’s surface combatants, other than conducting good-will visits to Mediterranean ports, included gatekeeping at choke points and the surveillance of US and NATO surface ships. The patrols conducted by Soviet surface combatants from their anchorage off Kithira island and east of Crete primarily monitored traffic to and from the Aegean. They monitored shipping traffic in the western Mediterranean by keeping at least one destroyer almost continuously east of Gibraltar and in the Sicilian Narrows. Soviet ships also conducted numerous small-scale and several large-scale exercises in the Mediterranean, including a joint naval exercise with the Syrians in July 1981. During that the Soviets deployed four Tu-16 Badgers and four Il-38 ASW aircraft to Syria, as a sign of support for the regime. Moscow and Damascus signed a 15-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1980. Two Il-38 ASW aircraft were deployed from a Libyan airfield near Tripoli to monitor the movements of the US 6th Fleet. This was the first time since 1972 that Soviet naval aircraft were operationally deployed in the Mediterranean.92

Soviet naval vessels were deployed close to the Lebanese coast during Israeli military actions in that country in 1982. After the US had concentrated two carrier groups off Lebanon in mid-May the Soviets responded with an intensive surveillance effort of American naval movements. Soviet ships took up positions at choke points in the central and the western Mediterranean,93 but their reaction was not nearly as vigorous as it had been during the previous crises in the area. By late May the Soviets had deployed an additional nine ships, bringing the total strength of the Eskadra to 39. However, by then the crisis had subsided, allowing the US to move one of its carrier groups from the Mediterranean.94 The US and the French forces operating off Lebanon’s coast in 1983–84 had resulted only in a limited strengthening of the 5th Eskadra.95

By the mid-1980s the Soviets were reliant on the major recipients of their arms, notably Syria and Libya, to further their strategic goals in the region.96 Moscow also tried to improve its relations with Algeria, primarily through arms-sale agreements. However, Algeria consistently refused Moscow’s repeated requests to obtain permanent basing rights and to conduct joint exercises.97

**CHANGE OF MOSCOW’S POLICY AND STRATEGY UNDER MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, 1986–91**

In the late 1980s Moscow’s policy in the Middle East and the Mediterranean began to change from reliance on the ‘progressive’ Arab regimes toward establishing ties with moderate Arab states, notably Egypt and Jordan. Moscow used its withdrawal from Afghanistan as proof of its
changed policy toward the Arab states in general. The Soviets also began for the first time to woo Israel. As in the past, Moscow used economic and arms agreements to solidify or expand its political influence in the region. The debt issue also became one of the tools in Moscow’s new policy in the region, rescheduling Egypt’s debt of about $4.0 billion in 1987. The improvement in relations with Israel resulted in a greater receptivity in Tel Aviv to a possible Soviet role in the peace process.

The Soviets also began to change their policy on arms sales, becoming more selective, mainly because of economic reasons. Most arms sales were for hard currency. Traditional allies such as Syria, Libya and Iraq became recipients of the most advanced Soviet weapons in an effort to reassure them of Moscow’s support. Oil-barter agreements were accepted as partial payment when necessary, as, for example, with Libya. Concessionary terms were reserved to protect a special relationship or to develop a promising new one.

In general, Moscow’s policies toward the Middle East and the Mediterranean under Gorbachev sought to promote Soviet objectives without alienating the United States. The Soviets increased their effort to improve relations with Egypt after the withdrawal of their troops from Afghanistan; they also co-operated with the US and other nations to oppose Iraqi aggression in 1990. Finally, Moscow reduced its support for radical states such as Libya and Syria.

Despite these changes, Soviet policy and strategy faced several constraints. The lack of formal and only limited informal relations with Israel hindered Moscow from becoming a full and trusted partner in the Middle East peace process. Arab states were highly critical of Moscow’s intervention in Afghanistan. Moscow had little to offer economically and represented generally a poor model for economic development for the Arab world. The perception was that Moscow offered Arabs only halfhearted support in times of crisis. Arms purchases became less attractive for many Arab states because of the proven poor performance of Soviet weapons and equipment when pitted against Western ones.

By 1990 the Soviet naval presence in the area fluctuated around 25 to 35 ships. Soviet naval aircraft made sporadic deployments to Syria and Libya. However, the Soviets had only limited access to naval facilities in Syria, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Yugoslavia.

The 5th Eskadra was employed in peacetime with the primary aim of neutralizing the presence of Western navies and demonstrating Moscow’s support for friendly countries in the area. The principal wartime role of the 5th Eskadra was apparently to deny the West control of the eastern Mediterranean and to prevent its naval forces from carrying out strikes against targets in the southwestern part of the USSR. However, geography, the straits’ transit regime and the lack of adequate logistical support facilities ashore imposed significant limitations upon the size,
speed in augmentation and employment of Soviet naval forces in a major crisis in the area. As long as Turkey retained control of the straits and remained a loyal member of NATO, the Soviets had only limited options to choose from to quickly reinforce their forces in a contingency.

COLLAPSE OF SOVIET POWER AND INFLUENCE

After the breakup of the USSR in 1991 the geopolitical situation in the Black Sea and the Caucasus dramatically changed. The 5th Eskadra was officially disbanded in May 1991 and Russia lost nearly all its naval and air bases from Izmail (in the Danube Estuary) to Kerch. The Russian Federation in 1998 controlled only about 350 miles of the Black Sea coast, compared with 1,100 miles before 1991. The Black Sea Fleet became effectively divided among a number of successor states, while the Russian Black Sea Fleet totaled about 30,000 men in 1998, compared with the 100,000 that had served in the Soviet Black Sea Fleet. The Crimean Peninsula, with its large number of naval bases and airfields, came formally under control of Ukraine. There is a continuing, unresolved problem concerning the division of some 400 units of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet and shore establishment. The Sochi Agreement of 1995 between Ukraine and Russia stipulated that the fleet should be shared. The fleets are to be based separately, but the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea Fleet was to remain in Sevastopol. Since then both countries have been involved in a bitter dispute over how to divide the fleet and naval facilities. The ultimate fate of the Black Sea Fleet depends on the resolution of the problem of basing for both navies. Russians are adamantly opposed to turning over their largest naval base at Sevastopol to the Ukrainians. Nevertheless, they seem to be resigned to the prospect of building new bases in the coastal area between Kerch and Anapa.

Military experts assert that Russia lost its geopolitical influence in the Black Sea because of the significant weakening of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet. Allegedly, while in the 1980s the Black Sea Fleet was 2.5 times larger than the Turkish Navy, the situation today is just the opposite. From the Russian perspective, the Russian Crimean group of forces (which includes the Black Sea Fleet) must perform combat tasks in the ‘Bosphorus Sector’ (the Turkish Straits) and the central part of the Black Sea, maintain a ‘favorable operational regime’ (protection of basing and deployment areas) along the Caucasian coast and repel aggression by enemy ships from the Sinope-Trabzon axis. Hence, Russians argue that the Black Sea Fleet must be preserved and strengthened as the ‘operational-strategic’ formation.

Russians believe that their ‘geopolitical rivals’ are currently making considerable efforts to weaken and eliminate the Russian Black Sea Fleet and subsequently to squeeze it out of the Caucasus. If that happens
Russia’s position in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean will be further weakened and thereby the US will be allowed to have a completely free hand in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{112} The Russians are unhappy with NATO activities in the Black Sea area, objecting to its ships making friendly port calls in Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine. They argue that NATO’s ‘expansionism’ can be opposed only by the joint action of Russia and Ukraine.\textsuperscript{113} Russians were apparently upset by the naval exercise SEA BREEZE-97, held off the Crimean coast between 25 and 31 August 1997. In that exercise, hosted by Ukraine, seven NATO navies and the navies of all the riparian states except Russia participated. Russia was invited, but chose not to do so.\textsuperscript{114} Russian military experts asserted, implausibly, that the scenario of SEA BREEZE-97 resembled what had happened in the Crimean War of 1853–56. However, the real scenario was the provision of humanitarian relief in the aftermath of an earthquake.

Despite Russia’s greatly weakened geo-strategic position, the Black Sea provides the shortest route to the countries of southern Europe, Asia and Africa. Thus control of the Black Sea is vital for Russia’s integration into the world community.\textsuperscript{115} The prevalent Russian view is that the political-military situation and trends in the southern part of the Black Sea are highly unfavorable because Russia is in danger of losing its geopolitical influence in the areas traditionally important to it: Asia Minor, the Balkans and the Middle East.\textsuperscript{116}

There is a growing rivalry between Turkey and Iran in Central Asia—an area that was formerly an exclusive zone of control and influence of the USSR. Turkey is pushing for the creation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone (BSECZ), while Iran is trying hard to obtain markets and influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Turkey’s efforts to spread its influence in the Black Sea area, Central Asia and the Caucasus generate an equally strong Russian counter-effort. Russia’s problem in the Black Sea is complicated by the fact that the newly independent and oil-rich states in the Caucasus and Central Asia desperately want to reduce their reliance on Russia for both the production and the transport of gas and crude oil. Currently, crude oil is transported from Central Asia to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk and then shipped to the Mediterranean. Ukraine also wants to reduce its dependence on Russia for gas and oil. For a variety of reasons, Turkey is interested in transporting gas and oil over its territory direct to the Mediterranean ports and thereby reducing tanker traffic through the straits. Two oil routes are being considered: a ‘northern’ route via Chechnya and Russia to Novorossiysk and a ‘western route’ via Georgia: Baku to the port of Supsa. A third route is being debated as well: from Azerbeijan to the Mediterranean via Georgia and Turkey (Baku to the Turkish port of Cayhan).\textsuperscript{117}

Russia, like the former USSR, finds it hard to acquiesce in Turkish sovereignty over the straits. Moscow claims that the new regulations for
the transit of commercial vessels through the straits (in effect since July 1994) represent a unilateral change to the Montreux Convention. The new regulations ban, in practice, the passage of supertankers that threaten Turkey's environmental security. Russian ships constitute about 25 per cent of all traffic transiting the straits, and hence it was not surprising that Moscow vehemently denounced the new straits regime. Among other things, Russians charged that Turkey's motives were purely political not environmental. They also alleged that the real reason for these restrictions was Turkey's efforts to push for the transporting of crude oil from Azerbaijan overland to a Turkish port in the Mediterranean.

Another point of friction between Moscow and Ankara is Russia's recent request, citing an alleged threat to the country's interests in the south, to make amendments to the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty to allow it to deploy more forces in what is now the North Caucasian Military District. Turkey is concerned that the Russian request is a smokescreen for Moscow's desire to obtain a dominant position in the Caucasus. The Turks do not accept as justified Moscow's request to increase its forces in the southern part of the country. In Ankara's view, the newly established states (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) are too weak to pose any threat to Russia and, moreover, Turkey does not have a common land border with the Russian Federation.

Despite the lack of their naval presence, Russians remain involved in Mediterranean issues mainly by relying on diplomacy, economic aid and arms sales. Moscow's current policy and strategy seem to be aimed at preventing Turkey from exerting too strong an influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus and neutralizing its relatively stronger position in the Black Sea. Thus the most immediate problem for Russia is how to obtain and maintain a dominant position within the Black Sea, especially in regard to the Turkish Navy and its possible reinforcement by NATO navies.

The first extended Russian naval presence in the Mediterranean since May 1991 (when the 5th Eskadra was formally dissolved) took place in January 1996, when the aircraft carrier Kuznetsov accompanied by two destroyers (one each from the Northern and the Baltic Fleet) entered the Mediterranean. However, even Russians admit that their navy is capable only of showing-the-flag missions in the area. Nevertheless, the Russians firmly believe that without a naval presence in the Mediterranean their interests will be ignored. Moscow is currently trying to strengthen its diplomatic ties and to expand military ties to Greece and the Greek part of Cyprus. Both Russia and Greece have apprehensions over Turkey's policies in the Caucasus, the Aegean and Cyprus. Turkey is allegedly focusing on the exercise's scenario. In 1996 Russians announced the sale of sophisticated S-300 SAMs to the Greek part of Cyprus. Ankara voiced its strong opposition, claiming that the new missiles would pose a serious
threat to Turkey’s mainland and hence be a destabilizing factor. Turkey also threatened to use force against Cyprus if the S-300s were actually deployed on the island, and significantly increased its opposition to the plan in summer and fall of 1998. Finally, the Cyprus government backed down and in late December 1998 announced that it would re-negotiate the deal with Russia and deploy the missiles on the Greek island of Crete. However, that plan is not going to placate Turkey and will probably be abandoned. The Turks argued with some justification that the missile sale, in fact, increased Russian-Turkish tensions and threatened to prevent the transit of Russian ships carrying the missiles through the straits.124

Moscow was also one of the principal powers supporting the Serbs in their war against Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and recently in Kosovo. However, the lack of military muscle to back its diplomacy in the Balkans clearly frustrated Moscow. Some Russian military observers believed that a joint Russian-Ukrainian squadron in the immediate vicinity of US carriers would have been a ‘stabilizing’ factor, obstructing NATO’s military intervention in the Yugoslav conflict.

CONCLUSION

Since the end of World War II Soviet policy and strategy in the Mediterranean has undergone several major changes. After the defeat of Nazi Germany the Soviet position in the Black Sea was greatly strengthened by the establishment of the communist-led rebellion in Greece. Turkey’s geostrategic position in the Aegean would have been considerably weakened in the case of a communist victory in Greece. Hence, the ability of the US and its allies to come to Turkey’s aid would have been made considerably more difficult and costly. However, Moscow’s strategic aims during Stalin’s era seem to have been focused on acquiring a foothold in the straits, or at least to modify the Montreux Convention to secure complete Soviet dominance in the Black Sea. Accomplishment of that strategic aim was a prerequisite to the projection of Soviet military power into the Mediterranean.

For the first two years after the end of World War II the Soviets tried to obtain the acquiescence of the United States and Great Britain to change the straits regime. Moscow also exerted strong pressure on Turkey to agree to a shared control of the straits. All these efforts ultimately failed because Stalin did not dare to risk a conflict with the West. By 1948–49 the open rift between Moscow and Belgrade and the failure of the Greek communists in the civil war led to the dramatic weakening of Soviet influence and power in the Balkans. For the remainder of Stalin’s rule the Soviets did not conduct any active policy to spread their influence and power in the Mediterranean.

The first major change in Moscow’s policy and strategy toward the
Mediterranean came in the aftermath of Stalin’s death in 1953. The new collective leadership in Moscow initiated several major changes in domestic and foreign policy. Initially, Moscow intended to improve its hitherto bad relations with the US and the West in general. By the mid1950s the Soviets began to court selected ‘progressive’ regimes in the Third World to undermine the US and Western position and to enhance Soviet influence and prestige. The Mediterranean seemed an ideal place for the Soviets to conduct their new policy and strategy. The key elements in Moscow’s strategy were arms sales, economic aid, and diplomatic and propaganda activities in support of Arab states. However, the Soviets were well aware that their objectives could not be accomplished without a credible military presence in the area. The problem for the Soviets was how to project military power into an area that is geographically close, yet difficult to reach due to the inherent weaknesses in the USSR’s maritime position. For the Soviets a major and essentially insoluble problem was how to maintain and sustain a military presence in the area, given the limitations imposed by the Montreux Convention and the long distances between the Mediterranean and the operating areas of the Soviet Baltic and Northern Fleets.

After a brief and bitter experience in Albania, the Soviets began intensive efforts to obtain access to naval facilities in Egypt and Yugoslavia. The perceived threat from US Polaris submarines was only one, not the sole reason for Moscow’s decision to deploy naval forces permanently in the Mediterranean. The principal reason for that decision was the change in Soviet policy and strategy in general that occurred in the mid1960s. The Soviets decided to implement the policy of force in the Third World that ultimately aimed to weaken dramatically US and Western influence and power world-wide. The principal Soviet aim in the Mediterranean was to bring about the withdrawal of the US 6th Fleet.

By 1965–66 the Soviets adopted a local-war doctrine as the foundation for their then evolving diplomacy of force in the Third World. The first practical test of the new activist policy came in the Middle East during and in the aftermath of the Six Day War of 1967. The Soviet ability to support ‘progressive’ Arab regimes rested from the outset on two factors: their naval presence in the conflict zone and a quick-reaction capability to resupply their clients with war matériel, and with troops if necessary.

Although viewed with considerable alarm by the West, the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean was not a completely new phenomenon. Whenever Tsarist Russia was strong and unopposed or co-operating closely with other European powers, it conducted assertive policies in regard to the straits and the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore it was almost a foregone conclusion that the Soviets, after starting to build a ‘blue-water’ navy and laying the groundwork for more forceful policies in the Middle East, would deploy naval forces in the Mediterranean.
However, perhaps too many Western observers and the public at large have taken at face value Moscow’s repeated assertions that the Soviet presence in the area was based exclusively on the need to defend the southwestern part of the ‘homeland’. In Moscow’s propaganda vocabulary, every Soviet military action was declared to be ‘defensive’. Yet it cannot be denied that in the post-Stalin era there was a dramatic expansion of the areas in which Soviet ‘defensive’ interests were to be found and in the number of interests considered in need of protection. This is not to deny that the former USSR had legitimate interests in the Mediterranean, specifically, to spread its influence and enhance its prestige among the riparian states and to protect shipping in the eastern Mediterranean, to name but a few.

The peak of Soviet influence in the Mediterranean was in 1972 and in the short time following the end of the October War of 1973. The Soviet naval presence and the apparent willingness to use force on the behalf of Arab states played a powerful restraining role in the Jordanian crisis of 1970 and during the October War. However, Moscow’s constant push to enlarge its foothold in Egypt came to an abrupt end in the mid-1970s. Afterwards Soviet ability to influence events in the Mediterranean steadily declined. The Soviets achieved some success in obtaining access to naval facilities in Syria, Libya and Yugoslavia. However, none of these countries offered the advantages of the position and facilities of Egypt.

Sовiet policy and strategy changed in the mid-1980s, when the focus shifted to improve the ties with moderate Arab states and Israel. Moscow sought in general to be accepted as a partner in the ongoing peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The Soviets continued to provide economic aid and security assistance to a number of radical regimes. Some of the weapons and equipment delivered to Syria and Libya were more advanced than those provided for close allies in the Warsaw Pact. However, the Soviets ultimately did not accomplish their stated strategic goals in the area because of their inability to provide a sound economic model for the Arab states. The Arabs also perceived that in the several crises that erupted in the area Moscow’s support was mainly political and propagandist. Moreover, the prestige of Soviet weapons and equipment suffered whenever they were used against their Western counterparts.

Since 1991, the geopolitical and geo-strategic position of the new Russian Federation in the Black Sea has dramatically been weakened in comparison to the one enjoyed by the former USSR. The Russian Black Sea Fleet is a much smaller and far less effective force than the Soviet Russian Black Sea Fleet. The ultimate fate of the fleet is uncertain because of the still unresolved problem of basing on the Crimea and division of the fleet between Russia and Ukraine. Russia is also confronted by a true ‘arc of crisis’ (largely aggravated by Moscow’s policies in the area) along its southern borders that is unprecedented in its modern history. Central Asia
and Transcaucasia, the areas once completely under the control of Moscow, are today the scene of clashes of interest among some 20 nations and several major external powers. Russia, Turkey and Iran are major factors in this still evolving struggle for regional power and influence. For Russia, the Black Sea remains the linchpin for its links to overseas regions. A major part of Russia’s trade, especially in crude oil, passes through the straits. To influence events and strengthen its influence beyond the confines of the Black Sea Russia must be able to use and sustain its military power projection capabilities effectively, especially its naval strike forces. The current military and naval weakness of Russia is transitory and will not last. Sooner or later, Russia will emerge again as a major player in Eurasia. However, as long as Turkey possesses full control of the straits and the Montreux Convention remains unchanged, Russia will find it as elusive as in the past to try to project and to sustain its military power in support of its policy and strategy in the Mediterranean.

NOTES
3 Ibid, pp. 18–19.
4 Article 13 of the Convention requires all the sea powers to give the Turkish government at least eight days’ notice of an impending visit. The name, type and hull number must be provided as well. Each ship must transit escorted by no more than two destroyers and must complete the voyage in daylight. The language of the Convention is somewhat ambiguous and seems to exclude the transit of aircraft carriers, except if making a port call at the invitation of Turkey. Submarines based in the Black Sea may transit under the provisions of Article 12 only ‘to be repaired in dockyards outside the Black Sea’; Neville Brown, ‘The Eastern Mediterranean: A Fulcrum of World Power’, Orbis (Fall 1973):938; Jesse W. Lewis, The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean (Washington, DC, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1976), p. 71; Chomeau, Seapower as a Political Instrument, pp. 16–17.
6 Chomeau, Seapower as a Political Instrument, pp. 20–1.
7 Sicker, The Strategy of Soviet Imperialism, p. 44.
8 Ibid., pp. 44–5; Chomeau, Seapower as a Political Instrument, pp. 20–1.
9 Chomeau, Seapower as a Political Instrument, p. 23.
12 The program also envisaged the building of four cruisers, 20 destroyers, 16

16 The agreement provided among other things for the deliveries of two destroyers, four fleet mine-sweepers, 12 torpedo craft and six submarines; ibid., p. 78.
18 Ibid., pp. 9, 12.
20 Dragnich, The Soviet Union’s Quest, p. 16.
22 These submarines belonged to the Whiskey-class and were organized in a separate submarine brigade but were operationally subordinate to the Black Sea Fleet; Lewis, The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean, p. 57; ‘Naval Operations in Mediterranean Sea’, FBIS-UMA-97–040-S, 1 December 1996.
23 Lewis, The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean, p. 57; Morris, The Russian Navy, p. 79.
26 Morris, The Russian Navy, p. 79.
28 The Soviet Navy’s Commander Admiral Sergey Gorshkov made a first official visit to Egypt in December 1961. This lengthy visit apparently laid down a groundwork for facilitating a closer naval co-operation with Egypt at some future date; in January 1962 the Soviets delivered two Whiskey-class submarines and two Skoryy-class destroyers to Egypt. Afterwards a large number of smaller ships, specifically minesweepers, submarine chasers and the Komar-class missile craft were delivered (the Komsas were introduced into the service with the Soviet Navy in 1959 and were the first craft armed with anti-ship missiles); Dragnich, The Soviet Union’s Quest, pp. 22–3.
The agreement provided for delivery of two submarines, two destroyers, more than 30 Komar- and Osa-class missile craft, and some smaller ships; Dragnich, *The Soviet Union's Quest*, p. 25.


37 Ibid., p. 81.


43 The Soviets reportedly signed a five-year basing agreement with Egypt in April 1968; Dragnich, *The Soviet Union’s Quest*, pp. 21–3, 29, 44, 51.


46 Chomeau, *Seapower as a Political Instrument*, p. 35.

47 Ibid., pp. 82–3.


53 The Soviet ships made extensive use of four ports: Port Said, Alexandria, Mers Matruh and Sollum and also made port calls at Berenice in the Red Sea; ibid., pp. 264–5.


Ibid., pp. 174–5.


Ibid., p. 99.


Ibid., pp. 268–9.

Around each US carrier there were three Soviet ships: two destroyers, one armed with anti-ship missiles and one armed with SAMs. The third ship was a ‘tattletale’ ship capable of providing mid-course corrections for anti-ship missiles. Four Soviet cruise-missile submarines were also deployed around US carriers; Lewis, *The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean*, p. 83.


In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War Moscow contemplated sending Soviet combat troops to help the Arab states. Brezhnev reportedly asked Tito during their meeting in Kiev on 12 November 1973 to allow the use of airspace for Soviet transport aircraft carrying troops. Tito rejected this request. However, this report might have been a fabrication, because the Soviets did not have any intention to introduce troops into the Middle East unilaterally at that time. Belgrade officials often leaked the content of their talks with the Soviets but in a way to show their alleged resistance to Moscow’s demands or requests; Vego, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Policy of Force*, p. 88.


The new law came into effect on 30 April and it ‘liberalized’ access for foreign warships to Yugoslav territorial waters and port facilities. Article 7, as amended, stipulated that foreign warships, public vessels and fishing vessels could sail through the Yugoslav territorial waters if permission were given in advance by the Yugoslav Defense Ministry in agreement with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. A significant change came in regard to Article 7, point 3, where the words ‘three warships’ were substituted by ‘three foreign combatants and two foreign auxiliary ships’. This amendment in effect, increased the number of foreign naval vessels of the same navy from three to five; ibid., pp. 124–5; The most significant change was the addition of several new articles to the law on the coastal sea. For example, Article 7A provided that repair and overhaul of foreign naval vessels could be carried out in Yugoslav port facilities provided that a permission was issued by the Yugoslav Defense Ministry and in agreement
with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The repairs and overhaul were allowed only in military yards. The law limited the number of foreign ships under repair or overhaul to no more than two at any given time. The work of foreign naval vessels was limited to 4,000 tons for combatants and 10,000 tons for naval auxiliaries; ibid., pp. 128–9.

75 Ibid.

76 This included two cruisers, four destroyers—some armed with anti-ship missiles, 12 submarines—including some nuclear-powered, four amphibious ships with naval infantry embarked, and a motley collection of AGIs, tenders, oilers and supply ships; Lewis, *The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean*, p. 59.

77 Ibid., p. 67.


86 Ibid., pp. 154–5.


98 The number of Soviet military advisors in Algeria was reduced from 2,500 in early 1980 to about 800 in 1985. A year later Moscow signed a new $2.0


101 Idem, p. 23.


104 Idem, Soviet Military Power: Prospects For Change, 1989, p. 121; idem, Soviet Military Power, 1990, p. 97; by the late 1980s on average 200 to 250 Soviet naval vessels transited the straits per year. Turkey generously interpreted the Montreux Convention to allow the 40,000-tons Kiev—to all intents and purposes an aircraft carrier—to pass through. Turkey, in fact, accepted the Soviet definition of Kiev as an ASW cruiser; idem, Soviet Military Power, 1990, pp. 297–8.

105 Director of Naval Intelligence (OP-092), Understanding Soviet Naval Developments, pp. 37–8.


108 Ibid.


111 Ibid.


117 ‘Azerbeijan: Caspian Oil Pipeline’s Future Pondered’, FBIS-SOV-97-181, 30 June 1997; The new 564-kilometer oil pipeline from Ceyhan (on the Turkish Mediterranean coast) to the port of Samsun on the Black Sea coast will initially have the capacity of about 40 million tons a year and in the second phase 30 million tons. The oil will be carried by tankers from Samsun to the Ukrainian ports; ‘New Oil Pipeline Increasingly Skirting Russian Territory’, FBIS-SOV-97-171, 20 June 1997.

118 Among other things, the new regulations stipulate that vessels longer than 150 meters are advised to take pilot and guiding tugs; automatic pilot for navigation is prohibited, the ship’s height is limited to 190 feet, no more than
a single vessel carrying material deemed hazardous is allowed to transit the straits at the same time, all ships must notify Turkish authorities 24 hours in advance of intention to transit through straits, and ships longer than 200 meters are allowed to transit only in daytime.

119 ‘Russia: Turkey Said Seeking Control of Black Sea Straits’, FBIS-SOV-97-293, 20 October 1997, p. 1; about 45,000 ships per year or 123 ships per day transit the straits. This traffic volume is three times higher than the traffic through the Suez Canal. By some estimates as many as 60 ships per day carrying oil and other hazardous material pass through the straits. On average five ships larger than 80,000 DWT pass the straits on any given day.

120 Besides Russia, Greece, Dubai and the Greek part of Cyprus also announced that they will not abide with the new straits regime. Russians claimed that Turkey detained several hundred Russian flag ships and inflicted some $500 million of damages on the Russian economy; ‘Russia: Turkey Said Seeking Control of Black Sea Straits’, FBIS-SOV-97–293, 20 October 1997.


122 Ibid.


11. Algérie, French 8-inch-gun cruiser of 1934. She was one of a kind, but one of the outstanding cruisers designed within the limits established by the 1922 Washington Treaty on Naval Disarmament.
Global Independence versus Regional Interdependence: France and Italy in the Mediterranean since 1945

Reynolds M. Salerno

The Mediterranean has been completely transformed since the end of World War II. It has evolved from an imperial transportation and communication route connecting east and west and north and south, to a peripheral yet critical theater in the Cold War, to one of the most perilous regions in the world today. The two largest European powers in the region, France and Italy, not only witnessed but also contributed to this Mediterranean metamorphosis. Devastated physically and spiritually by World War II, these two nations looked to the Mediterranean as a stage upon which to rebuild their national pride and international status. Yet France and Italy—neighboring countries that share many historical, political, economic, cultural and religious interests—adopted starkly different approaches to Mediterranean affairs.

This chapter addresses the contrasting French and Italian views of the Mediterranean by analyzing maritime and international affairs in both an historical and contemporary context. Throughout the last half-century diplomatic and naval initiatives have been perhaps the two most important aspects of French and Italian security policy in the Mediterranean. Yet both Cold War scholars and contemporary policy analysts tend to examine either naval or foreign affairs in isolation, overlooking their connections and mutual influences. Moreover, most appraisals of current French or Italian Mediterranean security neglect events that occurred before 1990, while most post-1945 histories of France or Italy in the Mediterranean avoid considering the implications for contemporary affairs. Finally, no study exists that compares French and Italian policies in the Mediterranean since 1945. By beginning to fill these gaps this chapter reveals important continuities in the French and the Italian Cold War and
post-Cold War attitudes toward the Mediterranean: French naval strategy and foreign policy perceived (and still perceive) the Mediterranean as one of many theaters in which to pursue France’s status as a global, independent power, whereas Italian naval strategy and foreign policy aimed (and still aim) to ensure Italy’s status as an influential yet interdependent power in the region.

WORLD WAR II AND ITS AFTERMATH

Even though France and Italy fought on opposite sides during the Second World War—France as an Allied power and Italy an Axis power—the French and the Italians were belligerent adversaries only briefly. Italy intervened in World War II only days before France capitulated to the Wehrmacht and, by the time the Allies liberated France, the Italian Fascists had been defeated. Yet Franco-Italian antagonism, marked by conflicting imperial interests as well as ideologies, contributed significantly to the origins of the war.\(^1\)

One of the principal theaters in which this pre-war imperial and ideological rivalry manifested itself was the Mediterranean, specifically between the French and the Italian Navy. At the Washington naval disarmament conference of 1921–22, largely as a result of Anglo-American-Italian diplomacy, Italy was granted the right to build a navy as large as the French fleet, which was then the world’s fourth largest. Not surprisingly, this international arrangement infuriated the French and thrilled the Italians, laying the groundwork for a Franco-Italian naval rivalry that raged throughout the inter-war years.\(^2\)

However, when war finally arrived, no large-scale Franco-Italian naval conflict in the Mediterranean took place. The French naval staff was not able to persuade the British in 1938–39 to launch a naval offensive in the Mediterranean that could eliminate Italy at the outset of a war against the Axis powers. And an outright fear of engaging the combined Anglo-French forces inspired the Italian naval staff in 1939 to argue successfully for at least a postponement of Italian belligerence.\(^3\)

By the time the US and British forces landed in French North Africa in November 1942 the French and the Italian Navy had both been significantly weakened. The British bombardment in July 1940 of the principal French overseas naval squadron at Mers-el-Kébir in Algeria destroyed or damaged many French warships, heightened the French Navy’s disgust for the British and drove many French naval officers into the Vichy government. For the next two years the Vichy Navy concentrated on protecting convoy traffic passing between southern France and North Africa. In late 1942, when the Germans and the Italians occupied southern France, the French Navy scuttled the core of its Mediterranean fleet at Toulon rather than concede it to the Germans. By
the end of the war most of the French Navy of 1939–40 had been damaged or sunk, including the two modern carriers that had been under construction. Most of France’s shipyards, ordnance factories and ports had also been demolished. For all intents and purposes, in 1945 the French Marine Nationale did not exist.4

The Italian Regia Marina also experienced little success during the war. With the exception of controlling the sea lanes from Italy to Libya in 1941–42 and a few attacks, co-ordinated with the German Air Force, against Malta-bound convoys in the summer of 1942, the Italian Navy did not fare well at all. It missed its best opportunity to challenge the Royal Navy for Mediterranean supremacy in the summer of 1940, after France had fallen and when the Marina could match up well against Britain’s Mediterranean fleet. The British air raid on the Italian port of Taranto in late 1940 cost the Italians half of their capital-ship fleet. Three of Italy’s seven heavy cruisers were lost at Matapan the following year. These two débâcles, combined with Italy’s lack of fuel, aircraft carriers, a fleet-air arm, radar and night-fighting capabilities, crippled the Navy’s effectiveness. Of the seven battleships that Italy had during the war, six suffered damage or destruction on 12 separate occasions. Yet the Italian naval staff’s determination to avoid major fleet engagements with the highly respected and feared Royal Navy meant that many of Italy’s capital ships, remarkably, survived the war.5

Although the war did not destroy the Italian Navy, the war’s conclusion devastated Italy. The Fascist legacy embittered Italian politics throughout the first years of the Republic. Moreover, rampant hardship beset the Italian economy in the mid-1940s. Over the course of the war, prices in Italy increased 240 per cent while wages dropped 75 per cent. By 1947, annualized inflation had reached 50 per cent. Italy’s international prestige was badly shaken as well. According to the terms of the Italian peace treaty of 1947, Italy abdicated its empire, allowed Trieste to become a ‘free territory’, and had reparations imposed on her by the USSR, Yugoslavia, Greece, Ethiopia and Albania. Most painful were the disarmament clauses. The Air Force was reduced to 200 combat planes and the Army to 250,000 men. The Navy had to surrender approximately half of its post-war tonnage to the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France and Greece. The peace treaty also dictated that Italy could add no new ships to its fleet until 1950 and indefinitely precluded it from acquiring battleships, carriers, submarines, motor torpedo-boats or any specialized assault vessel. In 1947 the Italian fleet consisted of only ten warships and a handful of smaller craft.6

Although the French leaders also faced economic turmoil and domestic-political upheaval in the years immediately following the war, France fared better than Italy in the international arena. France retained its status as a great imperial power, with colonies and départements in Africa, the Pacific
and the West Indies. Although the Americans conceived and financed the Marshall Plan, they sought assistance for its distribution from Britain and France. As a result, the US funneled over 20 per cent of the European Recovery Program’s grants and credits into France. Between 1948 and 1952 France received more than $2.7 billion in direct assistance; only Britain and its dependencies received a larger portion of this aid. Finally, the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949 and the formation of NATO—with its headquarters in Paris—extended the American nuclear umbrella to western Europe and France, improved French security and elevated French stature in Allied strategic planning.7

The French Navy also fared better than its Italian counterpart. While dismantling the Italian fleet, the war’s victors rebuilt the French Marine. In 1946 the British not only loaned France an aircraft carrier and a variety of smaller vessels but also gave France their share of surrendered German tonnage. By the end of the year there were 21 ex-German vessels in the French fleet. France also received 11 warships and dozens of support craft from the US and Italy. Although the addition of these ships quickly reestablished the Marine, post-war France did not recover its status as a formidable European naval power. All these ships had operated extensively during the war and many proved difficult to keep in active service. This fact, as well as the perceived stigma of sailing another nation’s discarded warships, enraged the French naval staff. But financial and domestic-political realities prevented France from embarking on significant naval reconditioning or new construction. In fact, it was not until 1949–50 that France initiated a multi-year shipbuilding program, yet even this was, according to one historian, ‘excessively modest’. Providing funds for 8,000 tons of new shipbuilding a year, the 1949–50 naval tranches addressed only the Marine’s deficiency in the small-ship categories. Finally, the war in Indochina, which broke out in December 1946, placed a heavy strain on French naval resources and curtailed France’s maritime presence in Europe.8

THE EARLY COLD WAR MEDITERRANEAN

The Cold War dramatically escalated with the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. The Western powers perceived that the outbreak of the war and the accompanying expansion of the Soviet military indicated that western Europe was increasingly vulnerable to a Soviet invasion. In September 1950 the American Secretary of State Dean Acheson proposed that NATO should bolster its strength by integrating German troops into the Alliance. Intensely wary of German rearmament, the French suggested instead that the western Europeans establish a unified European military force. Not only would the creation of a European Army prevent the formation of a West German military and high command, but it would
also ensure France a leadership role in a new European security system. With US support, negotiations for a European Defense Community (EDC) opened in early 1951 and in May 1952 the Europeans signed the EDC treaty.\textsuperscript{9}

The Italian government expressed only lukewarm support for the EDC. The Italians feared that it would allow the US to reduce its military presence in Europe and thus eventually weaken NATO. Since joining the Alliance in 1949, the Italian government had recognized that its long-term viability depended on a strong NATO with a durable American commitment. Despite violent opposition to Italy’s association with NATO from the political left, Italy’s ruling Christian Democrats perceived the US in Europe—particularly the European Recovery Program and the US 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean—as a guarantor of Italy’s domestic stability and international security.\textsuperscript{10} The government’s appreciation of the US grew when the Americans facilitated the rebuilding of Italy’s military and prestige. In late 1951, the US arranged a complicated diplomatic maneuver that essentially voided all the military clauses of the Italian peace treaty of 1947 without the consent of the USSR. This allowed Italy to take advantage of the simultaneous expansion of the Marshall Plan’s Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP). Established in late 1949 as a one-year, $1.2 billion military aid package earmarked for the US’s new allies in Europe, MDAP was expanded in mid-1951 to a program valued at over $5 billion. Between 1949 and 1952 Italy received over $1.5 billion in Marshall aid, much directed toward the Italian military.\textsuperscript{11}

The escalation of the Cold War also affected affairs in the Mediterranean. In June 1951 NATO established a Southern Command at Naples specifically to provide naval support for France and Italy and to protect the Mediterranean lines of communication; its earmarked forces included the French Mediterranean fleet, the Italian Navy and the US 6th Fleet. The Lisbon Conference of February 1952 altered this arrangement. Upon the admission of Turkey and Greece into the Alliance, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) redesigned the 6th Fleet, based in Naples, as ‘NATO Striking and Support Forces Southern Europe’. After wrangling with the Americans over control in the Atlantic, the British in March 1953 obtained command of Allied naval forces in the Mediterranean, based in Malta and subordinate to SACEUR. The French and the Italian Navy were each detached from Naples and assigned regional responsibilities from Malta.\textsuperscript{12}

These changes to NATO’s Mediterranean command had profound effects on both France and Italy, and particularly on their navies. The French perceived an Anglo-Saxon condominium over Mediterranean policy at a time when Britain’s Mediterranean naval forces were no stronger than France’s. Moreover, the French believed that the situation in the Mediterranean dramatized the demotion of France within the Alliance
and, even worse, portended the exclusion of France from the making of future Allied strategy. Particularly humiliated that its fleet had to serve under a British commander in the Mediterranean, the French naval staff, headed by Admiral Nomy, demanded a reconsideration of French shipbuilding. In late 1952 the Conseil Supérieur de la Marine issued the Statut des Forces navales, which called for a navy of 540,000 tons by 1970. To attain this level new construction would have to reach at least 30,000 tons annually—almost four times larger than the French naval tranches of 1949 and 1950. Such a fleet was necessary because, according to the French strategists and theorists Vice-Admiral Barjot and Admiral Castex, the French Navy had to establish ‘a mastery as absolute as possible’ in the Mediterranean to guarantee France’s ‘fall-back base’ in North Africa in the event that the Soviets overran Europe. The French government endorsed these arguments and augmented French shipbuilding in the early 1950s. Between 1952 and 1955 alone, even after accounting for the retirement of many old ships, the French fleet grew from 350,000 to 385,000 tons.13

Italy also reacted strongly, yet differently from France, to the changes in the Mediterranean in the early 1950s. Although the Italian fleet was placed under British command, the Italians still believed that they remained an important element in defending NATO’s southern flank. At the time of the reorganization of the Southern Command, SACEUR appointed an Italian general as Commander-in-Chief of Allied Land Forces in Southern Europe. Moreover, Italy and the US had signed a series of agreements in 1951 and 1952 that formalized the creation of NATO’s southern headquarters at Naples and permitted US forces to use the port of Livorno to build a large arms and supplies depot outside the city. And once a final settlement was reached for Trieste in 1954, the Italian Parliament ratified the London Status of Forces Agreement and the Paris Protocol, which effectively established Italy as the permanent host of NATO’s Southern Command.14

The Italian Navy interpreted its demotion from Naples to Malta as a critical appraisal of the state of its fleet. The Navy’s first post-war rebuilding program had little effect, inspiring Randolfo Pacciardi, Italy’s Minister of Defense, in mid-1951 to describe the Marina as ‘semi-old, semi-built, and unable to serve [the nation or the Alliance]’. The revision of the peace treaty and the expansion of MDAP, however, provided the Navy with a unique opportunity. Beginning in 1952, Admiral Emilio Ferreri, chief of the naval staff, oversaw the expansion and acceleration of the Navy’s modernization and replacement initiatives. Between 1952 and 1957 Italy rebuilt six major vessels and completed two new warships as well as 14 coastal-defense boats. Even the Italian air arm was reconstituted during this period. In addition, Ferreri endeavored to commit the US to a long-term program of assistance for the rebuilding of the Navy. During a
visit to Washington in 1950, Ferreri persuaded the US to give Italy a few warships and dozens of support vessels, and to invest heavily in Italian shipbuilding.15

In the mid-1950s French relations with the NATO powers began to deteriorate. After leaving Indochina in defeat in 1954, the French contended with the outbreak of civil war in Algeria. Neither the US nor Britain offered material or moral support for this new problem in North Africa. In 1954, after failing to endorse the EDC, the French Parliament narrowly and reluctantly ratified the Paris Accords, which approved West Germany’s entry into the Atlantic Alliance and brought France into the Western European Union (WEU)—a less supranational framework of military integration than the EDC. Sharp differences between Washington and Paris with regard to the future of European security had emerged.16

But perhaps the greatest blow to NATO-French relations was the Suez crisis of 1956. Pressure from the US, as well as the USSR and most of the international community, compelled the British and the French to withdraw their ultimatum to Nasser’s Egypt, which had nationalized the Canal and supplied moral and material aid to the Algerian rebels. It appeared to the French that the British, who first gave way to the international condemnation, had again betrayed France and that the Americans had ensured France’s defeat.17

Suez motivated the French Marine to participate actively in the redefinition of French security policy. During the crisis the French naval staff was humiliated by having to concede command to Britain and endure the harassment of their warships by the 6th Fleet. Although most officers in the Marine had been opposed to France’s acquisition of nuclear weapons, Suez and the launching of the Soviet Sputnik rocket in 1957 persuaded them to change their minds. The credibility of the American nuclear deterrent and the reliability of the Alliance had been undermined. Anglo-American hegemony in NATO had marginalized French interests and concerns in the Mediterranean. To counter these developments, France, and specifically the Navy, needed its own atomic capability. Besides strengthening European deterrence and ensuring a French advantage over West Germany, a nuclear France could establish France’s strategic independence and return international stature to the Marine. After the French Atomic Energy Commission accelerated the nuclear program in 1957, the Marine announced that it would build France’s first nuclear-powered submarine and open a school for nuclear-propulsion and guided-missile development. The following year Admiral Lemonnier argued publicly that ‘nuclear reprisals [are now] the only instruments of effective protection’.18

General Charles de Gaulle, who in 1958 became the first President of the Fifth Republic, shared the naval staff’s desire to redefine French
security policy. De Gaulle bristled not only at the American monopoly over nuclear weapons but also at the apparent US disregard for the opinions of its French ally. The Americans had not consulted Paris about either the crisis over the Quemoy and Matsu islands in the Strait of Formosa or the dispatching of troops to Beirut following the July 1958 revolution in Iraq. After the US Navy declined the Marine’s request for an enriched uranium reactor, de Gaulle rejected the American overture of mid-1958 to base American intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) on French soil that would remain, at least nominally, under the control of SACEUR, an American. He then vowed to remove France from the NATO framework unless the ‘Atlantic’ Alliance changed fundamentally. In September 1958 de Gaulle proposed that the US, Britain and France set up an organization to make ‘joint decisions on political questions affecting world security’. Not only would this three-power directorate share nuclear secrets and collective control over the Alliance’s nuclear weapons, but it would also elevate the importance of the Mediterranean in NATO planning. ‘What happens…in the Middle East or Africa’, de Gaulle explained, ‘immediately and directly [interests] Europe.’ The following month Eisenhower rebuffed de Gaulle’s proposal, confirming de Gaulle’s conviction that NATO was an instrument of American domination and that the Alliance no longer served French interests, especially in the Mediterranean. French autonomy vis-à-vis NATO had to be achieved.

Independence, de Gaulle understood, required a national nuclear deterrence strategy so that France could ‘immediately respond to an aggressor’s potential using the most powerful weapons’. In late 1958 de Gaulle accelerated French nuclear-weapons research by appointing Pierre Guillaumat, the commissioner for atomic energy, as the Minister of the Armed Forces and by according a key role within the military to Charles Ailleret, the leading French theorist of nuclear defense. Although an Army general, Ailleret recognized that ‘since modern strategy has become intercontinental, maritime strength has assumed capital importance’. France’s ‘autonomous force…should be capable of intervention anywhere…’. Yet Ailleret also asserted that the development of long-range nuclear missiles had ‘condemned’ large surface ships, describing them as the ‘the no. 1 targets’. Admiral Nomy exploited this claim to promote the building of a French nuclear submarine, which, he argued publicly in 1958 and 1959, ‘is, in its capacity to deliver a strategic atomic strike, one of the most efficient, dependable and economical instruments’.

De Gaulle appreciated this argument and soon identified the Navy as the core element of France’s future nuclear strike force, known as the force de frappe. In 1960, soon after the successful testing of France’s first atomic bomb, the Navy received official endorsement for its initiative to develop a nuclear-powered submarine that could launch sea-to-land ballistic missiles with atomic warheads. Parliament also granted the Navy a five-year
building program for four major warships and about 50 support vessels; funds to expand the naval air arm were also allocated. By 1963, with many vessels approved by the Fourth Republic then in service, the French Navy operated 64 ocean-going surface warships and regained fourth place in the hierarchy of the world’s fleets. France’s expanding Navy, as well as a conviction that France would receive nothing, inspired de Gaulle in early 1963 to reject categorically President Kennedy’s offer to supply France with Polaris missiles for deployment on French submarines, which would be assigned to a projected multilateral force (MLF) within NATO and controlled by SACEUR. While the MLF idea crumbled in 1964, France’s own nuclear submarine fleet came into existence three years later, with the launch of the Redoubtable; its superior capacity, range, maneuverability and security made the Air Force’s Mirage IV—the first platform of the force de frappe—virtually obsolete.22

As in his nuclear program, de Gaulle identified the Navy as the vanguard for reacquiring complete French military sovereignty. He agreed with the Navy that to operate under British (and American) command in the Mediterranean and restricting its ability to intercept arms traffic to Algeria were extreme indignities. Thus, in 1959 de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO’s naval command in the Mediterranean. Once the Algerian war was concluded in 1962 and France embarked on a successful policy of rapprochement with the states of the Middle East, de Gaulle transferred most of the French fleet to the Atlantic. For the first time since 1871 the French Navy was no longer responsible for ensuring the safe transport of French troops from North Africa in the event of tension on the continent. The following year, after NATO had refused to place the proposed new command of the area embracing the eastern Atlantic and the western Mediterranean under a French admiral, de Gaulle detached his Channel and Atlantic fleets from the Alliance command. In early 1964 France withdrew all its naval officers from the staffs of NATO’s Atlantic and Mediterranean headquarters. Thus, well before de Gaulle removed France from NATO’s integrated command in 1966, the Navy and French affairs in the Mediterranean had become key aspects of de Gaulle’s quest for French strategic independence.23

The Suez crisis was also a defining moment for Italian relations with NATO and Italian policy in the Mediterranean. Once the Trieste issue was settled and Italy was admitted into the United Nations in 1955, Italian policy sought to elevate the country’s international profile. Suez, which demonstrated the decline of British and French influence in the Mediterranean, as well as the new American presence in the region, provided a perfect opportunity. Prime Minister Fanfani believed that Italy could both contain and moderate Nasser and other Arab nationalists, allowing Italy not only to exploit Middle Eastern oil and to establish itself...
as an influential regional power, but also to become a useful asset for American strategies in the Mediterranean and a respected actor within NATO. This policy of ‘neo-atlantismo’—activism in the Mediterranean in order to improve Italy’s European and Atlantic status—was designed to improve the government’s domestic consensus by winning support from the pro-neutral Socialists and securing cheap and reliable oil supplies for Italian industry. Moreover, proponents of ‘neo-atlantismo’ hoped to rearrange the hierarchy within NATO by establishing a special Italian-American relationship.24

It is in this context—attempting to strengthen Italy’s position within the Alliance rather than to build an independent role outside it—that Italy embarked on a nuclear program in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Following the Geneva Conference of 1955, the Ministry of Defense authorized the creation of a Center for the Military Applications of Nuclear Energy (CAMEN), housed at the Naval Academy in Livorno. Resentful of the American refusal to share nuclear-weapons knowledge with its allies as well as the virtual Anglo-French nuclear monopoly, CAMEN encouraged Defense Minister Taviani to purchase a ‘swimming pool’ research reactor in early 1957. Many financial, technological and political impediments, however, precluded the acquisition of a national nuclear weapon. Initially, the Italian military endeavored to participate in the development of a European nuclear capability independent of the US. In 1957 Taviani joined the Franco-German negotiations already under way on the subject of military co-operation and, by November, the French, Italian and German Defense Ministers had agreed to establish a trilateral committee (FIG) to study joint production of weapons in the aeronautic, nuclear and engineering fields.25

Although the nuclear part of the FIG program was halted by de Gaulle in 1958, the Italian government was extremely reluctant to rely on a European initiative for its nuclear development and simultaneously pursued its inclusion in any arrangement related to the deployment of atomic weapons within NATO. In fact, while the Defense Minister negotiated with the French and the Germans, Italian diplomats consulted US government officials about American plans to offer IRBMs to their NATO allies and to create a nuclear stockpile in Europe under joint custody. By 1959 Italy and the US had agreed to deploy two squadrons of IRBMs on Italian soil. The missiles were manned by the Italian Air Force but controlled by SACEUR; a dual-key system, divided between the US and Italy, governed any launch decision.26

The Navy endorsed Italian nuclear sharing with the US. The well-respected, pre-war and wartime admirals Romeo Bernotti and Giuseppe Fioravanzo publicly argued that Italy and the Marina should adopt NATO’s co-operative nuclear strategies. As early as 1958 members of the Italian naval staff began discussing with their American colleagues Italy’s
interest in developing a nuclear capability either for surface vessels or submarines. By the end of the year the US Joint Chiefs of Staff responded positively to the Italian Navy’s request for assistance, setting the stage for a variety of joint efforts by the two navies. Between 1957 and 1960 the Italian Navy began refitting or building six guided-missile warships—including two of the largest Italian warships built since World War II, the guided-missile escort cruisers Andrea Doria and Caio Duilio. The Navy also introduced the Bergamini class, the first warships designed to carry helicopters. In 1960 Admiral Corso Pecori-Giraldi, chief of the naval staff, requested funds so that Italy could deploy the Polaris missile on Italian ships. Specifically, the Navy planned to build, over three years, a fleet of 12 to 15 surface vessels that would each deploy from two to six Polaris missiles. Even though Giulio Andreotti, the Minister of Defense, found this particular plan too expensive to implement, by 1961 the Italian fleet, with the help of the US, became the first navy in Europe to mount guided missiles on a surface warship. Both the US and the Italian naval staff hoped that this flagship of the Italian fleet, the guided-missile light cruiser Giuseppe Garibaldi, would augment the proposed MLF.27

But the national elections of June 1963, which strengthened the Socialist and the Communist party, prevented the Italian government from expressing full support for the MLF. The French and German opposition to an MLF under SACEUR control effectively derailed the idea. Despite this apparent setback, the elevation of an Italian admiral to command of the Alliance’s Malta-based naval forces allowed the Italian naval staff to seize on its increasingly close relationship with the Americans to overcome many of the financial constraints placed on Italian conventional weapons procurement in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. As a result, the Italian Navy fielded a fleet of 55 ocean-going warships by 1963—only nine ships fewer than the French Navy—and began building its fourth guided-missile cruiser the Vittorio Veneto in 1965.28

THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Affairs in southern Europe during the Cold War changed considerably after 1964, when the Soviet Union first established a force of eight ships in the Mediterranean. Following the Six Day War in June 1967, many Arab states severed relations with the US and granted the USSR permission to use their Mediterranean ports. With access to the Egyptian ports of Alexandria, Port Said and Mersa Matruh, the Soviets’ presence in the Mediterranean swelled to 70 vessels in 1967 and, briefly, to almost 100 during the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Thereafter the Mezhdunarodnava Eskadra fluctuated between 30 and 50 vessels. Because of America’s widening global responsibilities, especially those in southeast Asia, the 6th Fleet struggled to respond to the rapid growth in the Soviet
Mediterranean fleet. By 1967 the number of Soviet vessels in the Mediterranean almost equaled that of the American ships there and, in 1973, the Soviets briefly deployed a larger force than the 6th Fleet. At no time, however, was the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean superior to that of the US, which maintained a ‘two-carrier commitment’ in the Mediterranean throughout the Vietnam War. Except for the periods of the Arab-Israeli wars, the size of the 6th Fleet remained at approximately 40 ships.29

The north-south division of the Mediterranean between western and Soviet naval power, respectively, affected France, Italy and their navies differently. In the early and the mid-1960s, de Gaulle increasingly distanced himself from the Atlantic Alliance and its strong Anglo-Saxon influences, attempting to carve out a truly independent status for France and continental Europe between East and West. France, according to de Gaulle, would soon be at the center of a politically, economically and strategically united Europe that could defend its interests autonomously and play a role in world affairs independent of the US and the USSR. The European Economic Community (EEC), which became effective in 1958, conformed with de Gaulle’s vision of a European ‘union of states’. In 1963 this concept underscored the French veto of British membership in the EEC and the signing of a Franco-German treaty of reconciliation that provided for consultation between Paris and Bonn on all important subjects related to European defense. Besides recognizing communist China and exchanging high-profile state visits with Soviet Premier Kosygin, de Gaulle identified the Mediterranean as a region in which he could best articulate the independence of French (and European) policy. After France granted Tunisia its independence in 1956 and withdrew from Algeria in 1962, de Gaulle established close co-operation with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia in 1962, Iraq in 1963 and Egypt in 1964. During the Six Day War de Gaulle implicitly supported Nasser and Arab nationalism by condemning Israel’s opening of hostilities, voting for a United Nations resolution that called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces, and suspending all French deliveries of arms to Israel. Later that year he declared that co-operation with the Arab world was ‘the fundamental basis of our foreign policy’.30

As a result, the entry of the Soviet fleet into France’s Mediterranean backyard was not regarded as an overt threat. The enhanced presence of Soviet ships, however, persuaded de Gaulle and the French Navy that an autonomous Europe required a substantial French naval nuclear force with a global reach. The Navy could no longer be perceived as only a Mediterranean power. Thus the French President endeavored to build an ‘Oceanic Strategic Force’. In 1965 the naval staff pressed for and had approved a five-year construction program that included three nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines and one nuclear-powered
fleetsubmarine—effectively quadrupling France’s nuclear power at sea between 1965 and 1970. At the start of this naval nuclear program, de Gaulle explained publicly that ‘for the first time in history, the Marine is the first line of French defense and henceforth this will be increasingly true’. Yet the Navy’s nuclear focus diverted funds from the development of its conventional surface forces. Although the aircraft carriers Clemenceau and Foch were commissioned in 1961 and 1963, France canceled the Navy’s third carrier and finished only two of the planned eight guided-missile frigates during de Gaulle’s tenure. Between 1962 and 1967 France built only one major surface warship, the Aconit. For its ‘classical’ forces, the French Navy of the late 1960s and early 1970s relied almost entirely on those ships whose construction was approved by the Fourth Republic.31

By contrast, the Arab-Israeli tension of the late 1960s and the growing Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean strengthened Italy’s role in the Alliance. The gradual reduction of British and French Mediterranean naval forces led in early 1966 to the consolidation of the Malta and Naples headquarters, which enhanced co-operation between the American command and the Italian fleet. Alliance considerations as well as important domestic constraints influenced Italy’s decision in late 1966 not to adopt a national nuclear policy and instead to pursue an Atlantic nuclear option. Consequently, an Italian general became Deputy SACEUR for nuclear affairs and Italy joined the US, Britain and West Germany as permanent members of NATO’s nuclear planning group.32

The Navy exploited these developments in the Mediterranean to justify the augmenting of its fleet and a reconsidering of its principal tasks in the region. In 1964 Admiral Alessandro Michelangoli, chief of the naval staff, embarked on the ‘Enrico Fermi’ program, which turned the focus of the Italian Navy away from nuclear weapons and towards nuclear propulsion. Again, the Navy sought and received help in this endeavor from the US. With the support of Defense Minister Roberto Tremelloni, the Navy’s annual estimates increased over 145 per cent between 1964 and 1967. New construction approved in 1967 provided for a 50 per cent increase in the number of guided-missile cruisers and a doubling in the number of guided-missile destroyers and hunter-killer submarines. Although the Marina never fulfilled the Fermi program—sacrificing conventional shipbuilding for its failed attempt to build a nuclear-powered ship—its endorsement also facilitated a shift in Italian naval doctrine. Instead of concentrating on coastal defense and mine countermeasures, the Marina in the late 1960s began supporting the 6th Fleet and protecting the lines of communication in the Mediterranean. Largely as a result of Italy’s enhanced participation in the region, NATO’s naval forces were able to maintain a clear superiority over the expanding Soviet Mediterranean fleet.33
With the end of the 1960s came also the dissolution of the rigidly bipolar, international system that had governed world affairs since 1945. The rise of many newly independent and non-aligned nations in the Third World, as well as the defection of China from the Soviet camp and its emergence as an independent force in world affairs, contributed significantly to the new shape of the international system in the early 1970s. Rapid nuclear proliferation, decolonization and the perception of an emerging Chinese threat persuaded the US and the USSR to pursue nuclear arms control and commit themselves to East-West détente. Events in Europe that de Gaulle had inspired also contributed to the changing dynamics of the international system. In the late 1960s—shortly after de Gaulle began seeking a rapprochement with the Soviets—West Germany adopted a new ‘eastern policy’ that aimed for a normalization of relations with the states of eastern Europe as a means of facilitating a continent-wide relaxation of tensions that, in turn, would encourage German unification. Bonn’s Ostpolitik resulted in non-aggression pacts with the USSR and Poland in 1970, a treaty with East Germany in 1972, and the admission of both Germanies into the UN as separate sovereign entities in 1973. These events led directly to the opening of the European Security Conference in Helsinki and its Final Act of August 1975, which formally recognized Europe’s existing political frontiers.

All in the world was not well, however, and one of the centers of continuing turmoil was the Mediterranean. Tensions in the Middle East had propelled many Arab states into the arms of the Soviets, while the Israelis had grown increasingly dependent on American support. Colonel Qaddafi, an outspoken opponent of the West, engineered a coup d’état in Libya in 1969. Two years later Egypt and the USSR concluded a treaty of friendship and co-operation. In addition to frequent skirmishes along the Suez Canal between the principal client states of the two superpowers, a crisis erupted between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus that damaged the integrity of the Alliance in the Mediterranean. Moreover, spectacular acts of terror entered the realm of international, and specifically of Mediterranean, affairs. In 1972, for example, Palestinian terrorists murdered Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics and a Libyan aircraft bombed an Italian corvette monitoring commercial fishing in the Mediterranean.

The surprise Egyptian-Syrian offensive against Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur in 1973 reignited the Cold War in the Mediterranean. Although the United Nations soon brokered a ceasefire and the warring factions signed the Camp David peace agreement in 1978, the war’s conclusion had world-wide repercussions. The oil-producing states of the Arab world retaliated for the American airlift of supplies to Israel during the war by halting petroleum shipments for five months. The embargo caused a severe shock to the international economy—the price of crude oil
throughout the world quadrupled between 1973 and 1975—and proved the industrial North’s dependence on the developing South.

Safeguarding the Mediterranean sea lanes to the vital resources of the Middle East, as well as opening a North-South dialogue, suddenly became high priorities for the Western powers. Yet neither the French nor the Italian Navy had adequate forces for these tasks. The French Marine had invested heavily in building an underwater strategic force and the Italian Marina had squandered many of its resources on attempting to build a nuclear-powered ship. In a letter to their naval chief in early 1970, more than 200 officers of the Italian Navy described a ‘discontented and troubled’ atmosphere among the ranks. Because the military had remained transfixed by a northeastern-oriented defense posture, the Navy’s share of the 1970 defense budget had shrunk to 13 per cent. In the near future, the Marina expected to decommission more than five times as many tons of warships than it planned to build. Thus the Italian Navy would soon be unable to carry out its expanding national and international responsibilities.35

These sentiments, as well as the terrorist activities of 1972, persuaded Admiral Gino De Giorgi, chief of the naval staff, to publish a white paper on the future ‘prospects and orientations’ of the Navy. De Giorgi argued that the Italian Navy not only had to safeguard Italy’s borders in the Mediterranean, protect the commercial sea lanes and participate in Alliance deterrence exercises, but also had to defend the national fishery fleet, oversee search and rescue operations, and provide assistance to survey-oceanographic activities. To accomplish these tasks, the Navy required a diversified and modern fleet of 160,000 tons—not its ageing 105,000-ton fleet of 1973. After a protracted debate that raised public awareness of the Navy’s expanding expectations in the Mediterranean, Parliament approved the Legge Navale of 1975, which provided a ten-year supplementary appropriation of 1,000 billion lire to build the Italian Navy’s first carrier, two destroyers, eight frigates, two submarines, ten mine-hunters, nine small vessels and 24 helicopters. The ordinary budget provided for eight additional vessels and 40 additional helicopters. Although high rates of inflation prevented the complete fulfillment of this ambitious program, by the mid-1980s the Marina deployed approximately 40 major warships in the Mediterranean. A force structure designed specifically to address a wide variety of tasks in an ‘enlarged Mediterranean’ that stretched from Gibraltar to the Persian Gulf began to take shape.36

Although the French Navy also tried to accelerate its shipbuilding programs in the 1970s, the Marine enjoyed less success than its Italian counterpart. Despite Italy’s labor agitation, economic distress, social unrest and precarious political situation during this period, Italian foreign policy in the Mediterranean remained firmly attached to the Atlantic
Alliance. Yet French foreign policy in the 1970s continued to seek a ‘third way’ between the superpowers, especially in the Mediterranean. Shortly after selling ten Mirage aircraft to Libya in 1970, President Pompidou described Qaddafi as ‘the prototype of future leaders of the Arab world’. During the Yom Kippur War the French Foreign Ministry expressed implicit approval of the Egyptian offensive and, following the war’s conclusion, the government asserted ‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people’ and proposed an ‘Arab-European’ dialogue on the subject. France embraced Yasser Arafat in 1975 and allowed the Palestinian leader to establish a ‘liaison and information’ office in Paris. Finally, the French oil and arms industries had established extremely valuable business relationships with the Arab states of North Africa and the Middle East that the government—in a period of domestic economic turmoil—would not jeopardize. In almost direct opposition to American support of Israel, the Fifth Republic in the 1970s attempted to build a ‘European Mediterranean policy’ that recognized the Arab states as partners and sought to reduce regional tension through mediation.

This Mediterranean policy, combined with a crippling rate of inflation and escalating unemployment in France throughout the 1970s, prevented the French Navy from successfully pressing its case that the heightened threats in the Mediterranean demanded a larger fleet. Yet the oversights of the 1960s had begun to take a toll on the Marine. In 1973 the naval staff proposed an ambitious program, known as Plan Bleu, which over 13 years would provide for a fleet of two nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, two helicopter carriers, six strategic nuclear submarines armed with state-of-the-art Exocet missiles, and more than 300,000 tons of other warships. Although Pompidou supported the plan, it never received parliamentary approval.

Despite the Marine’s failure to arrest the decline in its surface fleet, the naval staff eventually persuaded the government that affairs in the Mediterranean required a stronger French naval presence there; France’s economic livelihood depended on a secure Mediterranean. Forty per cent of France’s maritime trade and 50 per cent of its oil imports traveled through the Mediterranean. In 1976 Pompidou’s successor Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, responded to Britain’s naval withdrawal from the Mediterranean and returned the greater part of the Marine to its southern base at Toulon. He also announced the doubling of the size of the Levant fleet from 77,000 to 136,000 tons. This redistribution, as well as the American decision in 1974 to begin giving France nuclear-weapons technology, improved French relations with NATO. In 1977 the Commander-in-Chief of the French Mediterranean fleet signed a secret accord with the Allied commander of the Mediterranean, confirming the new strategic importance of the Mediterranean for the French.
In the late 1970s and the early 1980s a renewed Cold War erupted, highlighted in 1979 by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which aimed to expand Soviet influence into the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Although in the mid-1970s the Egyptians had expelled Soviet ships from Egyptian ports, renounced their treaty with the Soviets, moved closer to the US and signed an agreement with the Israelis for the return of the Sinai peninsula, peace in the Mediterranean remained elusive. Syria and Libya, which had become the principal Soviet client states in the region, had built formidable armed forces that they each employed to escalate tensions in the Middle East and North Africa. While the Syrians supplied the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in southern Lebanon with Soviet-built jet fighters and surface-to-air missiles so that it could strike against northern Israel, the Libyans manifested their intention to expand into Chad, Niger, Tunisia and Central Africa. In addition, the Lebanese Civil War, the Moroccan-Algerian conflict over the western Sahara and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war plagued the Mediterranean during the early 1980s. The North Atlantic Assembly recognized the increasingly dangerous Mediterranean situation in late 1982 by declaring that ‘the Southern region now constitutes not a flank, but a central front. It is one of the strategic centers of Europe.’

These developments prompted unprecedented co-operation among the three principal western powers in the Mediterranean—the US, France and Italy. And this co-operation principally occurred in naval affairs. In June 1982 Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon to retaliate against the PLO and to secure Israel’s northern frontier. When an American-sponsored agreement ended the fighting at the end of the summer, a multinational intervention and peacekeeping force of American, French and Italian marines oversaw the evacuation of foreign residents as well as Palestinian political leaders and military forces from Lebanon. The escalation of the Iran-Iraq war in 1987, which threatened the integrity of Mediterranean trade and communications from the Middle East, also motivated France and Italy to dispatch large naval contingents to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Operating alongside the British and American fleets in the region, the French and Italian forces escorted westbound oil tankers and cleared mines from the shipping lanes.

Over the course of these operations, the new political leaders of France and Italy—the socialists François Mitterand and Bettino Craxi—signaled their willingness to shoulder greater international responsibility in promoting stability in the Mediterranean. It was recognized that non-traditional security concerns, such as Palestinian and Islamic terrorism, illegal immigration from the Third World and an illegal narcotics and arms trade across the Mediterranean, affected the nations of southern Europe more directly than those of the Atlantic. And it was understood that the navies would be largely responsible for addressing and responding to these
unconventional threats. To this end the French and Italian chiefs of staff signed a series of technical accords on air force and naval co-operation in 1987, agreeing to interconnect their radar and to organize joint air and naval patrols in the region. They also broadened their regional security system by signing similar bilateral agreements with Spain the following year.44

Despite the developments in the ‘enlarged Mediterranean’ and their forays into regional co-operation, the French and the Italian Navy retained different priorities. Embarking on many international humanitarian, peacekeeping and escorting tasks did not persuade the French naval staff to reconfigure its fleet or doctrine accordingly. This circumstance resulted from the government’s persevering dependence on nuclear deterrence. The French perceived the US’s efforts at nuclear arms control during the late 1980s—highlighted by the 1987 INF treaty—as a reduction of the American nuclear commitment without any corresponding decline in the nuclear danger posed to Europe. The French believed that they had a responsibility to maintain the integrity of European deterrence. Thus the Navy continued to invest most of its resources in building one of the world’s largest fleets of ballistic-missile submarines and aircraft carriers—vessels that largely remained deployed in the Atlantic. Yet the number of French ships best suited for Mediterranean operations—cruisers, destroyers, frigates and corvettes—dropped precipitously from 69 in 1975, to 46 in 1985 and to 37 in 1991. Although the Marine maintained about 300,000 tons in its fleet, its total number of ships fell from more than 200 in the early 1970s to about 120 at the end of the 1980s.45

By contrast, Italy embraced the Marina’s new role. Italy’s first aircraft carrier, the Giuseppe Garibaldi, was launched in the early 1980s. Shortly thereafter the government formally reassessed its national defense policy with the release of the Libro Bianco of 1985, which identified a growing threat to Italy from the south and the east and the need for Italy to integrate land, air and sea defenses as well as prepare to participate in peacekeeping and civil-protection operations in an ‘enlarged Mediterranean’. As a result, the 1985 defense budget allocated 2,783 billion lire to the Navy for the modernization and expansion of its destroyers, corvettes, submarines, minesweepers and amphibious craft. Financial constraints as well as the Air Force’s monopoly of control of all Italian airpower prevented the Navy from building a second carrier in the late 1980s. But the 1985 budget avoided any reduction in the number of its other principal surface vessels between the mid-1980s and the mid 1990s.46 In 1989, following the Italian Navy’s successful operations in the Persian Gulf, Ciriaco De Mita, President of the Council, declared: ‘The Marina is and will remain an essential instrument of quality: an element of stability and equilibrium in the Mediterranean, a security force in the southern flank of the Atlantic Alliance...’.47
THE POST-COLD WAR MEDITERRANEAN

The collapse of the Soviet economy, followed by the disintegration of the Soviet empire and then of the USSR itself in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, resulted in the withdrawal of the Soviet fleet from the Mediterranean and the reduction of the 6th Fleet to a one-carrier task force. The Gulf War of 1990–91 and the beginning of Arab-Israeli negotiations in late 1991, as well as the creation of the US 5th Fleet in the Indian Ocean and the assignment of the Persian Gulf area to the US Central Command, revealed that the Americans now viewed the Near East and the Middle East as two distinct regions. The Mediterranean, in American eyes, was no longer ‘the place where the Gulf begins’. In 1991 NATO adopted a ‘new strategic concept’, abandoning its forward defense posture in Europe and describing nuclear missiles as ‘truly weapons of last resort’. Even though the Alliance acknowledged a ‘southern menace’, the absence of a single unifying threat prevented NATO from identifying the Mediterranean as a unique strategic area; the Mediterranean was described as only a ‘peripheral zone’. NATO’s post-Cold War concerns focused on expansion into east central Europe and the rapid crumbling of Yugoslavia.

The changing Alliance view of the Mediterranean inspired a gradual shift in Europe’s role in maintaining regional security. The increasing tendency of both the French and the Italian Navy to operate in a multinational, and specifically European, context shows this evolution. In the 1980s, when the French and Italians operated in multinational groups in the Persian Gulf and off Lebanon, the navies exchanged information only bilaterally to prevent mutual interference. During the Gulf War the US-led UN coalition used a common political-military directive that laid down guidelines for co-ordination in several sectors among all participating forces. The enforcement of the embargo in the Adriatic and the support of land-based peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia in 1993–96 introduced operational co-operation between NATO and the WEU. Two separate task forces were integrated under a single chain of command with a common set of rules of engagement. Finally, in 1995 France, Italy and Spain established the European Maritime Force, which was designed to provide a diversified, on-call emergency force, with a fully integrated and rotating command structure, for humanitarian, peacekeeping and crisis-management tasks.

These maritime developments coincided with the French and Italian adoption of a European diplomatic approach to Mediterranean affairs that sought to co-operate with, rather than alienate, the nations of the less-developed south and east. In 1989–90 France, Italy and Spain attempted to sponsor a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean and then endeavored to unite themselves, Portugal and the Maghreb states.
of North Africa into a ‘Group of Nine’ that would encourage peace, security and trade across the Mediterranean. Despite the failure of these two initiatives, France and Italy, along with Spain, Portugal, Greece, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey and Malta, participated in the Mediterranean Forum of 1994, which discussed the enhancing of the European Union’s position in the region. The following year the French and the Italians played leadership roles at the Barcelona Conference, which set precise objectives for a pan-Mediterranean dialogue that would directly involve the EU in the problems of North Africa and the Middle East, and in the WEU’s initiative in addressing mutual security issues between the five European Mediterranean countries (including Malta) and the five states of the Maghreb Arab Union.50

Despite the trend toward both maritime and diplomatic European cooperation and integration, France and Italy, even today, maintain contrasting agendas for ensuring Mediterranean security. The French—embittered at the waning US nuclear commitment to Europe and the US refusal to entrust a European with command of NATO’s southern region—believe that they are now responsible for building an autonomous Mediterranean (as well as European) security system. By contrast, the Italians hope that the strengthening of European-Maghreb relations will persuade the Alliance to develop its Mediterranean position. To this end, Italy proposed a Partnership for the Mediterranean in late 1995 that would begin a dialogue between NATO and the states of the region and aim to extend NATO membership, or association, to deserving Mediterranean nations.51 The Italians support the WEU and NATO equally and simultaneously, but it seems that Italy is uncomfortable with a Mediterranean dominated by the EU. Thus far, the Italian attempt to draw NATO into a Mediterranean grand strategy has failed.52

These divergent perceptions of the Mediterranean region have influenced the unique composition of the French and the Italian Navy in the 1990s as well as their plans for the future. Although the end of the Cold War has compelled France and Italy to restructure their forces fundamentally, stark differences between the two fleets and their doctrines remain. Anxious to reap a peace dividend, reduce their public debt, strengthen their economy and qualify as first-round members in the ‘Euro club’, the Italian government directed the Ministry of Defense to prepare a Modello di Difesa to reduce its spending on national defense without affecting Italy’s security and ability to project forces outside the central Mediterranean. As a result, the Italians have reduced their global naval forces by almost 30 per cent since 1989, while attempting to ‘keep step in quality...with the other European navies’. Revised downward three times in the 1990s, the current Modello di Difesa envisions yet another 20 per cent contraction between 1996 and 2005. Between 1989 and 2005 the fleet expects to cut the number of its principal surface warships in half,
from 22 to 11. Moreover, the Marina does not expect a new major warship to enter into service until 2007 at the earliest.53

All this has occurred at a time when the responsibilities of the Marina have blossomed. Besides the Gulf War and the operations in the Adriatic, the Navy has conducted peacekeeping tasks off the Sinai (since 1979) and off Somalia (1993), as well as humanitarian relief/immigration control off Albania (since 1991). Moreover, the Navy participates in international minesweeping operations in the Red Sea and patrols in the Mediterranean for fishery protection, pollution control, drug interdiction and the suppression of illegal immigration. In 1996 Italian naval vessels spent 129,000 hours at sea, an increase of more than 60 per cent compared to 1985. Moreover, operations consumed 57 per cent of Italy’s naval activities in 1996 (67 per cent in 1995 during the height of the Adriatic embargo), compared to only 20 per cent in 1985; the Italian Navy’s hours of active operations almost quintupled between 1985 and 1996.54

Despite Italy’s extensive role in regional international missions, the Marina remains deeply committed to the Alliance; an Italian admiral has recently been elevated to the command of NATO’s Mediterranean naval forces. As a result of its increasing responsibilities and dwindling resources, however, the Italian Navy has become one of the strongest advocates for the enhancing of multinational naval co-operation and interoperability. According to Admiral Angelo Mariani, chief of the Italian naval staff, these steps ‘[are] required not only for complex and sensitive joint operations but also…to optimize the utilization of available financial, technical and professional resources… The question is no longer to “rule” over the seas, but to share them…’.55

Without any major reassessment to change its acquisition program, the French Navy in the early 1990s continued the gradual decline that had begun in the 1970s. The commitment to its nuclear deterrent force also never wavered. Between the end of the 1980s and 1996, the number of ships in the French Navy dropped from about 120 to 101. Yet none of the reductions affected France’s Oceanic Strategic Force or the carrier fleet. Hardest hit were the ships that operated in the Mediterranean, specifically the nuclear-powered attack submarines, anti-aircraft destroyers and minesweepers.56

The naval staff first began appreciating the weakness of its conventional surface fleet during operations in the Gulf and the Adriatic, where it was outperformed by the well-diversified Italian Navy. These facts, as well as the government’s requirement to reduce the size of the defense budget, provoked the Livre blanc of 1994, which asserted that ‘la dissuasion remains the heart of our defense policy’ but recognized a ‘progressive conversion’ of French forces engaged in ‘crisis-prevention and crisis-management missions, without risk of nuclear escalation’. The Navy was expected to improve the ‘strategic mobility’ of its conventional forces by
establishing a ‘new relationship between deterrence and action’. Based on this document, a naval law for the years 1997–2002 was adopted. Although the naval law will eventually increase the proportion of the Navy’s classical forces, the numbers of French destroyers, frigates and minesweepers will continue to decline. While the nuclear submarine fleet will decrease by 44 per cent, the total size of the Navy will shrink by almost 20 per cent: from 101 ships in 1996 to 82 in 2002.57 Thus the future ability of the French Navy to project its forces for ‘crisis-prevention and crisis-management missions’ remains in considerable doubt.

However, these non-traditional naval tasks, which occur largely in the Mediterranean region, remain only a secondary concern for the French. During the 1990s regional operations never consumed more than 28 per cent of French hours at sea; oceanic deterrence remained the priority. Moreover, the Livre blanc of 1994 not only emphasized the objective of defending French national interests, but also that of ‘building Europe’ by ‘affirming a European defense identity’. In this context, the French and the Marine believe that they have a European responsibility to retain their nuclear weapons as a defense against global threats. Admiral Jean-Charles Lefebvre, chief of the French naval staff, recently asserted that ‘global security’ is the only adequate way to address today’s ‘menaces multiformes’.58

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

Despite the tremendous changes in France, Italy and the Mediterranean region since 1945, significant aspects of both French and Italian policy have prevailed during this period. Throughout and since the Cold War, French statesmen and strategists have viewed the Mediterranean as one of many important regions for French security. Once France regained her military and diplomatic clout in the early and mid-1950s, the French and the French Navy sought to guarantee France’s status as a global, independent power. The Gaullist European ‘union of states’ vision and its ‘European Mediterranean policy’ were developed to place France at the center of an autonomous Europe. France built and maintained the nuclear Oceanic Strategic Force not only to preserve military sovereignty but also to provide ‘global security’ for France and Europe. These priorities, despite the changing international and Mediterranean environment, endure in French policy today. Since 1945 the ensuring of Mediterranean security has remained subordinate to the more ambitious objectives of French foreign and maritime affairs.

By contrast, Italian security since the Second World War has been inextricably linked to both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Alliance. During the Cold War Italy relied on the US and NATO to rebuild the Italian military, provide nuclear deterrence and bolster Mediterranean security. Italian solidarity with the Alliance and a desire to become an
important regional power influenced Italy’s ‘neo-atlantismo’ as well as the Marina’s nuclear decisions and unwavering support of the 6th Fleet. As the American presence in the western Mediterranean waned in the early 1990s and the nature of security threats in the Mediterranean shifted, Italy and the Italian Navy adjusted accordingly, leading regional cooperative initiatives and revising the naval force structure. Yet, rather than endorsing a purely European approach to Mediterranean security, Italy remains committed to drawing the Atlantic Alliance into these new ventures.

These divergent French and Italian perspectives, which coincide with the reluctance of the US and NATO to participate in a Mediterranean grand strategy, augur ill for future Mediterranean security. Not only are the Mediterranean policies of the two largest European powers in the region not necessarily complementary, but their classical navies are contracting so rapidly that they might eventually be unable to respond adequately to regional instabilities. Unless priorities change, the gap between French and Italian maritime objectives and means will widen, making force projection increasingly difficult. Such a circumstance could debilitating French and Italian foreign policy in the region and place Mediterranean security in jeopardy.

Preserving security in the Mediterranean will depend on a variety of multilateral diplomatic and maritime initiatives. Fortunately, France and Italy have already committed themselves to a pan-Mediterranean dialogue and a European Maritime Force. But these ventures alone may not be satisfactory. In fact, many in Europe fear that the North African states may perceive the growth in co-operative efforts among the European navies as threatening, which could exacerbate North-South tensions. Adopting a Franco-Italian perspective on Mediterranean affairs, developing comprehensive international and European shipbuilding programs to reduce acquisition expenses, and encouraging NATO to recognize Europe’s dependence on a stable southern littoral are imperative for the preservation of Mediterranean security.

NOTES

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FRANCE AND ITALY


22 Each Mirage could carry two 60-kiloton atomic bombs. By contrast, when the Redoubtable entered into service in 1971, it was equipped with 16 ballistic missiles with a range of 2,500–3,000 kilometers, each carrying a nuclear warhead of 500 kilotons. Thus, the Redoubtable alone could carry more than twice as many kilotons as France’s entire 62-plane Mirage fleet. See Berstein, The Republic of de Gaulle, pp. 162–9; Lothar Ruehl, La politique militaire de la cinquième république (Paris: PFNSP, 1976), pp. 74–98, 235–73; Henri Le Masson, ‘The French Navy in 1963’, Brassey’s Annual (1963), pp. 101–11.

23 Frémaux, ‘La Ve République et la Méditerranée’: 311–18; Ruehl, La politique militaire de la cinquième république, pp. 55–63; Jordan, Alliance Strategy and Navies, p. 110; Carl H. Amme, Jr, NATO without France (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), passim; Michael M. Harrison, The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 135. Some French admirals at the time emphasized that France and the French Navy remained firmly attached to the Atlantic Alliance. In 1963 Admiral Sola said that ‘in practice nothing has changed since 1959 as regards the relationship of the French Navy with the allied navies and co-operation with them is still close and constant in planning and joint exercises. There can certainly be no question of any allied navy planning its own “private war”...the interests of France are inseparable’ from those of NATO. See NATO Letter XI (November 1963):28; Sokolsky, Seapower in the Nuclear Age, pp. 51–2. Only three years later, however, Commander Huan of the French Navy wrote, ‘The present attitude of the Anglo-Saxons...is quite reminiscent of the position they took vis-à-vis French naval policy in 1921–22 during the Washington disarmament conference, when France was treated as an imperialist nation and a future enemy rather than as an ally. These mistakes are being repeated today,’ Claude Huan, ‘The French Submarine Force’, US Naval Institute Proceedings, 92 (February 1966):53.
24 Alessandro Brogi, L'Italia e l'egemonia americana nel Mediterraneo (Firenze: Scandicci, 1996), passim.


POLICY AND STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN


47 Cited in Giorgerini, *Da Matapan al Golfo Persico*, p. 672. For Defense Minister Vicenzo Nigro’s assertion that operations in the Gulf represented the Navy’s most important mission since the Second World War, see his ‘Shaping Italy’s Future Defence’, *Military Technology* (February 1989):41.


52 NATO created a standing naval force in the Mediterranean in 1992, but it represented a reaction to the drawdown in the 6th Fleet in the late 1980s rather than an enhanced NATO commitment to the region. See ‘NATO’s New Standing


55 Admiral Angelo Mariani, ‘Summary Report’, presented at First Regional Seapower Symposium for the Navies of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea,’ Venice, 8 November 1996 (I am grateful to John Hattendorf for providing me with a copy of this paper); idem, ‘Peacetime Patterns of Cooperation’, pp. 37–48.


57 ‘Synthèse du livre blanc sur la defense’, 1994 (I am grateful to Captain Girard for providing me with a copy of this document); État-Major de la Marine, *Dossier d’information Marine*, 1996.

The Mediterranean Region during the Cold War and after

Dominic Fenech

No region of the world as much as the Mediterranean can claim to have experienced, or as often been the main theatre of the great divides of history. Once considered the centre of the world, if not of the world itself, this sea and its littoral lost its centrality in international affairs after the onset of ‘modern’ history, then resumed its importance once the new northern European powers had asserted themselves and proceeded to vie with one another for its domination and control. The sixteenth-century Mediterranean witnessed the peaking of an acute contest between the two great empires of West and East, the Christian Habsburg and the Muslim Ottoman empires, respectively. Concurrently intersecting it, however, there emerged a much more enduring North-South contest within Christian Europe itself, signalled by the Reformation that was grafted upon the emerging fracture between the economically progressive North and the politically reactionary South. During the next two centuries the Mediterranean East-West contest was abandoned, as northern Europe consolidated its ascendancy at the expense of Mediterranean Europe, which continued sliding into under-development. In the course of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century then, the great powers which had emerged in the meantime to direct international affairs turned their eyes on the Ottoman Mediterranean, dominating it through conquest, patronage and various forms of protection and tutelage, and, in a way, standing vertically the once horizontal Christian-Muslim contest. In this process not only did the southern and the eastern Mediterranean fall under European control, but to the dominant sea power in particular, Great Britain, it assumed the character of a single geo-strategic region, from where it could both protect its national interest as an imperial and commercial power and monitor and influence affairs in continental Europe. In the years that followed World War II, the Mediterranean region
returned to be the contesting ground, this time for world powers from East and West. The reverse side of the specificity attached by such powers to the Mediterranean region is the regional fragmentation induced by the same competing external powers and the unequal development of its component parts.

In the two world phenomena—the Cold War and decolonisation—that followed the end of World War II, the Mediterranean was a proto-international system. The Cold War being an East-West contest and the struggle for independence and (later) against neo-colonialism a North-South contest, the Mediterranean contained the ingrained experience and legacies of both.

As for the East-West contest, the Mediterranean featured in the very conception of the Cold War long before World War II ended, when Britain and the reluctant United States pursued the war in the Mediterranean rather than responding to the Soviet Union’s plea to open a Second Front in Europe. In the later stages of the war Churchill and Stalin were still discussing their future in the Mediterranean in the same terms as their British and Russian counterparts might have discussed them a century earlier. In October 1944 in a dress rehearsal of Yalta, the two statesmen clinched at Moscow the ‘percentages agreement’ over the former site of the Eastern Question, with Britain (still the guarantor of neutral Turkey) retaining Mediterranean Greece, and the Soviet Union most of the Balkan hinterland, as spheres of influence, while a decision over Yugoslavia was shelved by the 50–50 per cent formula. At the close of the war Stalin might well have been a Romanov, in demanding from Turkey the right to have Russian bases in the Straits and Bevin a Palmerston in backing Turkey to refuse.

The early twentieth-century abandonment of Anglo-Russian differences—which under certain aspects had been a form of Cold War in which the Mediterranean figured prominently—had been rendered possible by Britain’s realization, like Russia (and, of course, its ally France), that the real threat to its interests came from Germany. During World War II circumstances once again had led Britain and Russia to shelve their differences and make common cause, if not common front, against Germany. The impending defeat of Germany eliminated the necessity for cohabitation and restored the conditions for the traditional Anglo-Russian adversity to reassert itself, at a point in time when the post-war role of the United States was still uncertain. This implied an urgent resumption of the nineteenth-century, cross-Mediterranean East-West confrontation, with the region and the sea itself a vital link between Europe and Asia. The patronage of Greece, the asserted British guarantee of Turkey, the upholding of the Montreux Convention on the Straits, the dispute with the Russians over the latter’s hesitation in withdrawing from northern Iran, the installation of Commonwealth troops in Venezia Giulia
to check Tito’s advance in the direction of Italy—these end-of-war stances follow the all too familiar pattern constructed by Britain in the nineteenth century against Imperial Russia. But, for the time being, containment was pursued piecemeal and opportunistically, in the shape of putting stops wherever gaps appeared, rather than a co-ordinated strategy which Britain in any case was no longer capable of organizing. While Roosevelt might disapprove of the cynicism of the ‘percentages agreement’, his successor Truman followed the same strategy when he led the United States into Britain’s shoes in the Mediterranean, whence in Europe, Asia and the world. He set off by making Greece and Turkey, two Mediterranean countries on the periphery of Europe, the first test cases of his ‘Doctrine’ in 1947, shrouded as it was in the ideological mantle of the Cold War that the Doctrine institutionalized.

Parallel to its policy of containing Russia in southeastern Europe and Asia, nineteenth-century Britain had used its paramount position in the Mediterranean to influence events in western Europe, the potential adversary here being usually France, since Russia had been kept bottled up in the Black Sea. This function of the Mediterranean as Europe’s southern flank was after World War II recognized by the Western allies within the new context of the East-West division of Europe, where this time the adversary was the same Soviet Union. Although complementary to containment, the defence of western Europe was a distinct regional strategy, formulated before containment became a global strategy. The regional strategic function as Europe’s southern flank was sealed by the decision to include non-Atlantic Italy in NATO when it was launched in 1949, although it had not been among the core group of the Brussels Treaty (1948).

When Turkey and Greece, seeing that NATO was not being exclusive about its Atlantic personality, asked to be admitted as members, it was still thought sufficient, in 1949, for the West to reassure them that their own security was taken care of by the American guarantee that was built upon the Anglo-French guarantee of 1939. The picture changed when the start of the Korean War in 1950 inspired the notion of co-ordinated containment on a world scale. From that point onwards it was inevitable that Turkey in particular, the kernel of the former Ottoman Empire, should assume a key position in the scheme. Just as in the nineteenth century British concern for its position in distant India had influenced to a high degree the formulation of its eastern Mediterranean and western Asian policies, likewise the Korean War in the Far East was crucial in the role that the American-led West allocated to the same areas. Inasmuch as the Korean War signalled the world-wide spread of the Cold War, the Mediterranean once more assumed a strategic importance in relation to the world, additional and complementary to its importance in relation to Europe. Straddling Europe and Asia, Turkey was poised to play a vital role
forging contiguity between the existing NATO group and the projected organization of the ‘northern tier’ countries in western Asia. Once Greece and Turkey were part of NATO (1952), Britain on behalf of the West put together the Baghdad Pact (1955). When Britain lost the Middle East at Suez, Eisenhower extended another ‘Doctrine’ for the region in 1957, replicating Truman’s commitment to the Aegean neighbours a decade earlier. Meanwhile, the Balkan Pact (1954) attempted to supply the missing link in the contiguity of the containment chain by roping in Yugoslavia. The fierce independence of Tito could not allow the Balkan Pact to develop into an extension of NATO, even had the Greco-Turkish dispute over Cyprus not killed the Pact anyway. However, that same independence, sustained by American reassurance, meant that once again Russia fell short of reaching the shores of the Mediterranean, especially since Albania later on defected also.

In the later nineteenth century British statesmen had come to perceive an Anglo-Russian war to be ‘in the logic of history’. Given all the precedents where the United States, despite initial hesitation, adopted as its own British policies towards Russia each time it stepped in to inherit hitherto British positions and commitments, the Atlantic ‘special relationship’ that developed between Britain and the United States equally lay ‘in the logic of history’. Just as, in the ‘Great Game’, the assiduousness with which Britain sought to contain Russia was not matched by too remarkable a success, similarly containment within the context of the East-West Cold War did not deliver lasting results. Neither the Baghdad Pact and its successor CENTO, nor SEATO further east acquired the cohesion necessary to make them effective as barriers against the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the failure of containment was exposed for what it was when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, hot on the heels of America’s loss of a major regional ally in Iran. Not surprisingly, that failure blew the whistle for the start of the ‘second Cold War’. On the other hand, the poor cohesion of anti-Soviet alliances in the Middle East and Central Asia contrasts with that of NATO in western Europe and the Mediterranean which, despite many shocks along the way, outlived the Cold War itself and survived despite that fact.

For when all is said and done the East-West contest belonged in Europe, not only because it was there that the Iron Curtain was most clearly drawn, but because it was in Europe that the essential ingredients—and values—of the East-West contest existed, namely, advanced capitalism cum liberal democracy and communism. Whereas in the, generally speaking, developed countries the fear of communism was easy to sustain, many countries of the Third World had little in material terms that communism either threatened or could be grafted on to. ‘From the point of view of the weaker governments’, it has been suggested, ‘the Cold War has been conducted by methods similar to those employed in the Great Game,
although the “civilising missions” to which they have been incidentally subjected have changed in character. As it turned out, the ‘civilizing missions’ of both West and East remained as alien to countries on the periphery of the core bloc of Europe (with its Atlantic extension) as their nineteenth-century equivalent had been. Indeed, in many parts of the Mediterranean and the Middle East what the West stood for moved from being irrelevant to antagonistic. For what, in the prevalent post-war situation, acquired the appellation of ‘West’ too clearly coincided, from this standpoint, with the traditional colonial powers and forces. That Turkey, despite its underdevelopment, does not fall within this group is as much a result of its non-colonial past and its European calling as it is of the critical strategic importance attached to it by the West and, conversely, its own real fear of the bordering Soviet Union.

Where French interest in the Arab Mediterranean had been mainly colonial, nineteenth-century Britain had affected to be the dominant power in the region for essentially strategic reasons. After Fashoda (1898), Britain even traded recognition of French control over Saharan Africa for its own retention of the Sudan. However, the discovery of oil in the Middle East early in the twentieth century combined important economic interests with the traditional British strategic interests in the region. Hence, after World War II Britain remained reluctant to give up its positions, even after it gave independence to India and began handing over to the United States its traditional role in the Mediterranean. Though manifesting itself differently, the persistent imperialist mentality in the Mediterranean of both France and Britain meant that they had to be forced out of their colonial or para-colonial positions, leaving behind a resentment proportional to the difficulty of forcing them out. The results were particularly visible in Egypt and Algeria, and later on even more explicitly in Libya, the last to shake off Western control. The first anti-European backlash during the Arab struggle for independence was followed by the next wave of resistance to neo-colonialism, chiefly directed at the United States.

Since the personality of the former imperialists from the North now merged into that of the West, and since, moreover, the United States installed itself in the Mediterranean as both the leading Western power and the leading economic power in the developed world—with Middle Eastern oil to feed the economies of the developed world as its primary economic interest—it followed almost naturally that the anti-imperialist radical states should lean, if anywhere, towards the Eastern superpower. In this way, the North-South and the East-West divide were inseparable in the Mediterranean. The same might be said for other regions in the world, but in the Mediterranean they were more visible because it borders directly the core of one and the same northern and western bloc. Furthermore, of course, the anti-Western front of Arab radical politics was consolidated,
and legitimized even in conservative Arab eyes, by the overt American support of Israel, readily perceived as the agent of continued Western imperialism. With the Arab-Israeli conflict towering so high in Middle Eastern politics, it is hardly surprising that Anglo-American efforts to persuade Arabs to make the East-West contest their own met with little success. On the other hand, despite the natural abhorrence of communism to Islam, the combination of anti-imperialist recoil and Israeli enmity opened doors for Soviet patronage in a region hitherto unpenetrated by the Russians. Indeed, the possibilities opened up to it by the Arab defeat in the 1967 war prompted the Soviet Union to assemble its own resident Mediterranean naval presence, the 5th Eskadra, and thus challenge the monopoly of the United States 6th Fleet, having already begun preparing to do so in the wake of the Greco-Turkish dispute over Cyprus in 1964.4

Awareness of the gulf in the level of development between North and South within a world overshadowed by the contest between East and West eventually found expression in the non-aligned movement, made up as it was largely of ex-colonial countries trying to resist both the bipolar pull of international relations and neo-colonialism. Given the intersection of the East-West and the North-South divide within the Mediterranean, it is significant that two of the founding fathers of non-alignment, Tito and Nasser, should have hailed from two countries on the edge of three continents here. Where Tito’s non-alignment was conceived in the original heat of the Cold War and inspired by the condition of bestriding the political frontier between two blocs in Europe (East-West), Nasser’s chief inspiration was the persisting foreign influence in the Middle East and expressed more the Afro-Asian resistance to neo-colonialism (North-South). The meeting of the two schools gave the movement its formal character at the first summit in Belgrade in 1961. If in the long run nonaligned countries did not avoid being implicated in the East-West contest, bartering superpower influence for economic and political support in the form of patronage and aid, this was precisely because outside the formal power blocs the distinction between East-West and North-South was obscure from the start.

On the other hand, within western Europe the East-West confrontation led to some erosion, so far as was possible, of traditional North-South differences that traced their roots back to early modern history. The programme of post-war European reconstruction, buttressed by Marshall Aid and other forms of American and Western aid, reached out to include slow developers such as Italy. Joining the Common Market as an original member, Italy’s economic rescue further became the business of its partners to the North and it claimed the lion’s share of EEC development funds, with a view notably to solving its own internal North-South problem. All along, the perception of the strong Italian Communist Party as a Trojan horse accounted in no small way for the urgency of Italy’s American and
European partners to accelerate its economic development. Spain, whose political regime disqualified it from both Marshall Aid and the Common Market, became a direct beneficiary of American and American-inspired aid. Once democracy was restored, concurrently with Portugal, the way was open to join the then European Community, sensitive to the danger of a pendular swing to the Left. Further east, Greece’s accelerated accession to the EEC was similarly aided by the fear of a leftist reaction on account of previous US support for the colonels’ right-wing regime. Thus, within the framework of the East-West contest, the European Mediterranean periphery was deliberately attracted to the European core.

From the Mediterranean standpoint, however, the rounding up of southern Europe into the EC core only deepened further the marine frontier between the northern and the southern shore. Prior to the two Mediterranean enlargements (1981 and 1986), the division had been buffered by the formulation of an EC ‘global’ Mediterranean policy, providing aid and preferential trading terms to the non-member countries. By the time of the last enlargement, two factors in particular undermined the continuing promise of this policy. One was the effect of the enlargements themselves, since the heavily agricultural and semi-industrialized economies of the new members made first claim on the European market at the expense of non-members with similar economies. The other was the Single European Act of 1985, launching a new offensive in favour of deeper integration within the EC.

While these developments were independent of the East-West divide, the relations between western Europe and the non-European Mediterranean acquired a new twist with the termination of the East-West contest. Not only was the political reason for admitting new states from the south into the EC removed, but a new semi-periphery suddenly opened up to the east in direct competition with the Mediterranean to the south, hitherto the Community’s preferred region.

For the end of the East-West contest had other effects besides the lukewarm mood of the EC about extending economic support, whether by accession or by preferential treatment, for political advantage. The lifting of the Iron Curtain and the abrupt disintegration of a hitherto complete system in the eastern half of the continent resulted in a scramble for some form of association with the European Community, just when the latter was embarking on a new phase of integration that implied a deepening rather than a widening. The centripetal force of Brussels contrasts sharply with the centrifugal force in the eastern half of Europe, as countries which had freshly recovered their sovereignty and nationhood dreamed of subsuming them again into that of ‘Europe’. In short, consolidation—and a fear of closing of ranks in western Europe—and the dispersal of eastern Europe became part of the same process the moment the East-West division ended. Faced with a stampede of applications and notices of
application for membership, the Community sorted them into three piles: the already developed EFTA countries; those of eastern Europe; and those from the Mediterranean. The fear of communism gone and hence the days when Community membership might be a short cut for development being over, the EFTA group got in first.

The spectacle of nations simultaneously fighting fiercely for their independence and longing to merge their identity into a Europe aiming, however piously, to transcend individual sovereignty, is tantamount to a reversal of history wherever national emancipation has not been matched by economic emancipation, as though the object of national fulfilment, past and present, is invariably to succeed in capitalist terms. Gorbachev’s warning to East Germany’s Honecker, that those who are late will be punished by history (though ironically East Germany was the most rescuable), might easily be extended to all on Europe’s periphery, with some benefit of the doubt to eastern Europe, including Croatia and Slovenia, who had the excuse of recent foreign control. The nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth had seen the completion of Europe’s constitution into ‘bourgeois’ nation-states, the apparent maturing of an historical process begun four centuries earlier, within the framework of that same international political and economic order that both reflected and served the ascendancy of the North over the South. Apart from the post-World War I national reconstitution of eastern Europe, the three main loci of national unification and consolidation had been the north-centre (Germany), the south-centre (Italy) and the southeast (Yugoslavia). In the long run, the resilience of the national state turned out to be in inverse relation to the distance from north and west. Recent years have witnessed consolidation in Germany in the form of reunification of east and west; strain in Italy in the form of the North’s (Leagues’) impatience with the South; and outright decomposition in Yugoslavia in the form of the North’s rebellion against the South.

The contrast within the nationalist experience is particularly stark in the cases of Germany and Yugoslavia. In both, reconstitution and disintegration, respectively, are directly but in contrasting ways linked, on one hand, with the end of the Cold War and, on the other, with the economic performance of the dominant partner within the union. Both countries lived on the frontier of West and East. Twice aligned by force of circumstances—half to the East and half to the West—Germany recovered national unity at the urgent behest of East Germany (which thus also became the only territory ever to join the EC without applying). Cornered between East and West by circumstances, and delicately balanced between them by choice, Yugoslavia fell apart when the more developed north took flight from the hegemonizing grasp of Serbia the moment that the East-West confrontation dissolved. Ironically, fear of the Soviet Union had abetted to no small degree the de-Balkanization of that same state which
had pioneered the rebellion against the hegemony of the superpowers. The rest was owed to Tito’s statesmanship and his penchant for compromise and experimentation in federalism. Ironically too, the stratagem of decentralization, though perhaps unavoidable, helped to widen the developmental gap between the North and the South. When first Tito and later the Russian scare disappeared, it was the prosperous former Austro-Hungarian north that was quickest to run away from the once Ottoman south.

With the synonymity of the North and the West becoming ever so obvious, the synonymity of East and South has been exposed. In the Mediterranean the reversal of historical trends is such that one might as well bring back the nineteenth-century term ‘Near East’ into the parlance of international relations, and the late mediaeval ‘Levant’ to describe those portions of Europe and the Mediterranean east-south-east of the new frontier that seemed to emerge in the post-Cold War years. It cannot be accidental that the frontier is drawn at about the same place where the dominions of the Ottoman Empire once reached into Europe and that it runs through war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina, the part of the former Yugoslavia which belonged successively to both the Ottoman and the Austrian Empire in the last decades of their existence.

Though qualitatively different and unrelated to the Soviet collapse, the crisis of nationalism—with all that entails for the crystallization of existing core-periphery relationships—is equally visible on the Afro-Asian precincts of the former Ottoman Empire. The promise of Arab unity and renaissance, disappointed after the breakdown of the Ottoman empire and revived after independence from the European empires, has never looked so distant. Even within the Arab world itself, hopes of integration have been scaled down to neighbourly constellations, and even so none too successfully. In the west, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), a sober alternative to the previous spate of abortive mergers, has shown no concrete signs of taking off. Despite the original objective of promoting economic integration, as much to meet the new challenges of dealing with an integrated Europe as to lay an economic base upon which to construct political integration, the countries concerned continued to contend with serious bilateral problems and to trade more with Europe than with one another, sustaining a regional division of labour that has been more beneficial to Europe than to themselves. Across this side of the Mediterranean two movements in particular, a physical and a cultural one, signal the widening gap between North and South: the wave of Europe-bound emigration and the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism. The former a flight to richer pastures, the latter a disillusion with the imported (Western) model of the modern state and a recourse to Islam as the appropriate foundation of the Arab national state, both movements converge into one theme, namely, resignation to incompatibility. The
hostility of Europe to immigrants on the one hand, on the other the Islamic revival, are both grass-root trends. As such, the gap has deepened even at the popular level on both sides, giving it an ominous flavour of a Christian-Islamic, cross-Mediterranean divide.

If the AMU appears to have stalled, its Mashreq counterpart the Arab Co-operation Council was practically stillborn. Foundering under the strain of the Gulf crisis instead of helping to resolve it ‘within the family’, one member, Egypt, fought against another, Iraq, in the ensuing Gulf War that the Arab League was impotent to prevent. Only the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has shown signs of staying power. But this is attributable more to the common self-interest of protecting oil revenues than to the Arab nationalist ideal or even to the construction of an integrated economic system in a region where the vast financial resources of its members could combine with the equally vast human (and military) resources of their Arab neighbours. The reshuffling of regional alignments during the Gulf crisis and for a while after the war promised to forge complementarity between the military resources of Egypt and Syria and the financial power of the GCC. However, the Damascus six-plus-two initiative, a new base for Arab co-operation and integration, quickly evaporated.

The end of the East-West confrontation, the collapse of the Eurasian Soviet Empire, the chronic failure of the Arab world to achieve integration, the outbreak and effects of the Gulf War—all combined to expose a number of peripheries that seemed to restore a core potential to the historic centre of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey. In a sense, picking up the challenge would imply the return to an historic role long ago rejected by Turkey and resisted since. It has been proposed that the coming into being of the Eurocentric capitalist world-system in the sixteenth century was independent of and parallel to that of the Ottoman Empire, a world-system of itself. That system in due course collapsed owing to the empire’s internal contradictions, the external pressures from the north, and the long-term, world ascendancy of the Euro-Atlantic economic system. The Kemalist Turkish nation reborn from the debris of the defeated Ottoman Empire earlier this century not only turned its back upon its imperial past but aimed to extricate itself from the Islamic Middle East by reaching out towards Europe. Decades of adaptation in pursuit of its European calling have not, however, brought it close enough to the core, either in terms of economic development or of the Europeans’ own perception of Turkey, and progress in its application to join the European Union has stalled. Almost half a century of East-West confrontation has seemed to favour Turkey’s Western, if not European, aspirations, with Turkey playing the West’s man in the Middle East in return. No sooner did the end of the Cold War threaten to weaken Turkey’s strategic utility to the West than the Gulf crisis brought back into relief its vital position between Europe and the oil
of the Middle East. Yet if Turkey’s erstwhile role in the defence of Europe from Soviet Russia still did not qualify it for EC membership, much less does its revamped role as an essentially Middle Eastern power. Turkey has for years been developing economic and political relations with its regional neighbours. In particular, its control over and development of the region’s major water resources and the use of its territory to carry oil by pipeline to the Mediterranean combine with its relatively advanced economic set-up to cast it in a leading role for the economic integration of the region. So far, Turkey still entertains the hope that its European vocation may be sealed irreversibly, by an economic and political integration in Europe. But, by the same token, a definitive rejection should encourage it to revert to an historical role as a core Levantine state rallying around it the traditional peripheries. What remains to be seen is whether such a Levantine system, should it come about, would be complementary, subordinate to, or conflicting with the European.

If the Mediterranean is all too clearly divided, the reverse side of that division is its interdependence, in economic as well as in security terms. As the division becomes more clear-cut, the decision whether to allow it to develop into more confrontation or complementarity seems to rest, perhaps more than ever before in the last two centuries, on the regional actors themselves. This may render somewhat ambiguous the role of the United States in particular. Its utility to Europe is less defined than it had been during the Cold War, which was the reason why the US commitment to European security was given originally, and its superpower weight leans more on the South, from where it perceives that the threats to Western—or Northern, since the distinction does not seem to matter anymore—interests derive. This is not altogether novel, except inasmuch as the ebb of the Soviet scare has highlighted and intensified it. It has even been suggested that the intensification of the Cold War from the late 1970s onwards was meant as a screen to cover the mounting offensive against the South, especially the Arab world, as evinced by the institution of the Rapid Deployment Force by President Carter and the concentration of missiles in Sicily: ‘The Mediterranean is no longer NATO’s southern flank against the Soviet Union, but NATO’s central flank against the South.’

There never has been a clear distinction between the military, the political and the economic objectives of the United States since it became a Mediterranean power to support the defence of Europe and to assume the commitments of the former European empires. However, in the pursuit of its objectives, the overbearing force of the East-West contest in international relations often blurred further the distinction between the United States acting on behalf of the political interests of the ‘free world’ and the United States acting on behalf of the economic interests of the first world. It also tended to blur the distinction between action on behalf of the Western alliance and action on behalf of the American national interest.
American policy towards Iran, Syria, Libya and such states as at one time or other defied it, not as a Western but as an ‘imperialist’ power, has more often than not been explained in terms of such states’ attachment to the Soviet Union. When not that, it has been explained in terms of such countries’ implication in international lawlessness. The obvious example is Libya, several times the object of punitive action during the 1980s, and during the 1990s put under UN sanctions. The progression to proponent of a ‘new world order’ to replace the Cold War global balance of power points in the same southward direction, where the political and the economic objectives meet, as the first test case in the Gulf demonstrated.

New international orders, however, are not prescribed, but evolve in correspondence to changes, and become meaningless propositions when, contrived in the euphoria of victory, they aim to preserve the status quo against the pressure for change (as in the post-Napoleonic period), or lack the necessary objective conditions (as in the post-World War I period). Besides, a contradiction between economic and military power has been exposed. When, after the sixteenth century, international relations became increasingly Eurocentric, as intra-European affairs superseded the Mediterranean East-West contest, Eurocentricity was in harmony with an international order that provided the framework for political power to reflect economic strength. With the termination of the twentieth century East-West contest, Europe again recovered centre-stage, in a condition of economic strength, and despite its relative military insufficiency. Though on different scales, both Russia and the United States need Europe economically more than Europe needs them, and both are militarily stronger, even if a military threat from either is not contemplated. The international order, such as there is, is thus out of harmony with international economic reality. The United States led the chorus for a new international order in the historical tradition of freshly victorious powers. However, it did so on the strength of its military power and in the context of its triumph over the Soviet Union and communism, not as an economic power rising to ascendency. Consciously or unconsciously, the project of an independent European defence addresses this contradiction, although it cannot be said that Europeans wish to see the departure of the United States from the commitment to Europe’s defence. Meanwhile, the definition of the threat, if there is one, has assumed direct relevance to the Mediterranean in particular.

The retreat of the adversary that had originally provided the raison d’être for the construction of western Europe’s security apparatus did not result in the dismantling of such apparatus. On the contrary, its centrepiece NATO assumed a new mission as the guardian of collective security within Europe, with an eye on the potential for instability in the east, but also showing increasing concern for perceived threats from the Mediterranean south. Where previously, western Europe’s security concern in the
Mediterranean was a function of its defence from the east, the Mediterranean came to be listed as a potential security threat in itself.\textsuperscript{11} During the first half of the 1990s not only NATO but also the WEU, reactivated in the context of the European Union’s own quest for deeper political integration, as well as the Organization for (formerly the Conference on) Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) hurried to address themselves to the problems that might threaten European security from the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{12}

One such problem and perceived threat is the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism that has been revealed in its true extent since the early 1990s, especially in Algeria. Whether and to what degree the threat of such fundamentalism to Europe is real or imaginary, it is highly significant that the appearance of a danger with a religious tag should have acted as the catalyst for Europe’s appreciation of the depth of the fracture between North and South in the Mediterranean. Independently of and without disturbing the initiatives by Europe’s security organizations to address themselves to the potential security threats from the south, the European Union launched a comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) initiative in November 1995,\textsuperscript{13} symbolically hailing it as the launch of a definitive healing process for the Christian-Islamic conflict that began nine centuries earlier with the first crusade.\textsuperscript{14}

The shift from Mediterranean-centricity to Euro-Atlantic centricity at the onset of modern history ushered a long era of neglect, foreign domination and fragmentation in the Mediterranean, the more so in the twentieth century as the poles of international relations moved further out to the west and to the east. As a result it has been easier to talk of the Mediterranean \textit{region} as an historical reality than as a contemporary one, given the potential for adversity—as opposed to diversity—that has existed and exists within and around it. Regionality has existed less in terms of the relationships between the different parts of the Mediterranean, or even in the subjective perception of most Mediterranean nations, than in the reckoning of such external competing \textit{world} powers as were capable of treating it as a single geo-strategic entity.\textsuperscript{15} Consequently and ironically, what has best defined the Mediterranean region in terms of international relations is not the complementarity of its component parts but, on the contrary, its being the converging point of global conflicts, with all the regional divisiveness that entailed. With one such outstanding global conflict, the Cold War, terminated it certainly does appear that disparity and adversity in the Mediterranean may have reached a critical level. Appearances apart, the question is whether the end of the East-West confrontation is liable to erode or to deepen the North-South division; whether the crisis of the Mediterranean is a sign of impending conflict or an opportunity to tackle the historically rooted problems of the region, by seeking to achieve
Euro-Mediterranean integration. Given the cancellation of some of the most important historical experiments that have characterized the twentieth century, the question seems to come down to a simple one: do we really stand at the beginning of a new historical era or are we simply witnessing the vengeance of a very old one?

NOTES

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2 M.E.Chamberlain, Britain and India, the Interaction of Two Peoples (Devon: David & Charles, 1974), pp. 134–49.


14 See the inaugural speech by the European Commission’s Vice-President Manuel Marin, reported in Europe (Agence Internationale d’Information pour la Presse, Brussels), 27–28 November 1995.

12. The 22,000-ton aircraft carrier, HMS *Ark Royal* joined the fleet in 1938, the second carrier to use the name. She was the only modern aircraft carrier in the Royal Navy at the outbreak of World War II and incorporated many advanced ideas, but her effectiveness was limited by the availability and adequacy of her aircraft. She served in the Mediterranean with Vice-Admiral Sir James Somerville’s ‘Force H’ until U-81 sank her off Gibraltar in November 1941. Two subsequent aircraft carriers, one built in 1950 and another in 1981, have since carried the name that the Royal Navy first used in 1587.
Mediterranean Security: Redefining Naval Force Structures after the Cold War

Geoffrey Till

This is a story of continuities and discontinuities. The continuities derive from the unchanging geographic characteristics of the Mediterranean area, while the discontinuities can usually be traced to the perpetual flow of social, economic and political developments taking place around its shores. Accordingly, when looking at the maritime situation before and after the end of the Cold War we should expect to find, not a sudden and dramatic transformation, but more of a shift in emphasis because, while some things have changed, many have not. And this is indeed what we find.

There is no doubt of the geographic and strategic continuities. Over 90 years ago Corbett wrote in typically glowing prose:

For centuries the destinies of the civilised world had seemed to turn about the Mediterranean. Each power that had in its time dominated the main line of history had been a maritime power, and its fortunes had climbed or fallen with its force upon the waters where the three continents met. It was like the heart of the world; and even the barbarians, as they surged forward in their wandering, seemed ever to be pressing from the ends of the earth towards the same shining goal, as though their thirsting lips would find there the fountain of dominion.¹

It was the ‘keyboard of Europe’² because its geographic position between three continents, the presence of so high a proportion of the civilized world’s trading routes and the resources it offered helped to decide the control of Europe. What happened here significantly affected what happened elsewhere. Much of this rang true even in the Cold War when so much attention was focused on a bloc-to-bloc confrontation along the inner German border—and it rings even more true today now that the new NATO’s centre of gravity has shifted southwards.
But while the Mediterranean has been and remains important for its international consequence much further afield, the reverse is also true. What happens in the Mediterranean has also been considerably affected by what happens outside it. The British role here, for example, has been partly determined by events elsewhere. Forced to leave by earlier difficulties, the British were able only to re-enter after successful actions in other theatres such as Cape St Vincent and Camperdown in 1797. When it came a century later to resourcing the Dardanelles operation with forces that would be otherwise be of use in the main struggle with the German High Seas Fleet in the North Sea, Admiral Jacky Fisher was convinced that the naval balance in the Mediterranean was at once far less important than, and partly determined by, the naval balance in the North Sea.3

The shifts in emphasis that we see today will obviously reflect changes that have taken place in the wider international scene and particularly the end of the Cold War. But they will also reflect the latest local developments that have taken place in the perpetual struggle for control and influence around its shores.

Accordingly, the first section of this paper will briefly consider the way that wider security assumptions affected the area both during and after the Cold War. It will then look at the reverse: how developments here, in both periods, were seen to affect the wider world.

The paper will then go on to consider naval missions in the Mediterranean, again both during and after the Cold War. It will conclude with a review of how such developments have affected both the strategic thinking of navies and their basic composition, now and in the recent past.

**LINKAGES OF THREAT**

The strategic influence of the outside world on the Mediterranean was always considerable. In the Second World War the Mediterranean only became a battle area when Mussolini, encouraged by Hitler’s success in northwestern and central Europe, entered the war. In a putative war between East and West during the Cold War era, the Mediterranean would have been only a secondary theatre of war, the nature of events there being primarily decided by what went on elsewhere. Thus, as far as Michael McGwire was concerned,4 the maritime significance of the area depended heavily on the strategic situation ashore. Once the centre of Europe was assured, Soviet forces would sweep down from the north, seizing the Dardanelles, reaching the Adriatic, forcing Italy out of the war and expelling the United States from the Mediterranean. In typical Russian style, the outcome of the maritime campaign in the Mediterranean would be decided by the conduct of the land war to the north.

In the equally typical maritime style of the United States, maritime events in the Mediterranean depended in large measure on those in the
Norwegian Sea. If events up there required it, 6th Fleet Carrier Battle Groups might have to evacuate the Mediterranean in order to handle more pressing matters elsewhere. Both of these responses illustrate the crucial strategic influence of events elsewhere on the situation in the Mediterranean.

In peacetime too, British and US naval force levels and the roles they prepared for were heavily conditioned by a range of political, economic and strategic factors that had precious little to do with the Mediterranean area itself. Events in the Indian ocean or the Gulf have been increasingly likely to suck US forces out of the area. The French role in the Mediterranean was also often conditioned by its wider security relationship with its European and North American allies further afield. The same went for Spain, in its evolving relationship with NATO.

Against this background, it is perhaps not altogether surprising that the states of southern Europe should frequently complain of their interests and concerns being ignored by the influential NATO states of the north. They often made the point that this was also foolish from the Northerners’ point of view since the strategic nexus that linked the north and the south meant that the former could easily be seriously affected by, even threatened from, the latter. The Mediterranean was an area from which power could be exerted against other, more distant areas. Thus Admiral Gorshkov simply provided another twist to the familiar image of the Mediterranean’s being the soft underbelly of Europe when he pointed out the Soviet Union’s vulnerability to attack from this area:

> Even greater defence significance has been assumed by the Mediterranean sea in modern conditions. Now the possibilities of the imperialist aggressors for attacking the Soviet Union directly from this area have enormously grown in connection with the fact that here is permanently stationed the US 6th Fleet with its aircraft carriers and atomic submarine missile carriers.

Such power threatened the industrial areas of the Soviet southwest, the Black Sea ports, the Baku oil fields, and so on. The same would have applied to the West, were the Soviet fleet ever able to dominate the Mediterranean.

Even at the height of the Cold War there were always local concerns, however, most obviously the tensions between Greece and Turkey, the Arabs and the Israelis, and increasingly, domestic instability in the Maghreb to preoccupy outside powers as well as insiders—no doubt partly because of their possible consequences elsewhere. With the passing of the Cold War such concerns have taken on a much greater relative importance. The shipping routes through the area are as important as ever they were. On any one day 20 to 30 per cent of all the world’s ships are to be found...
passing through the Mediterranean. In the Gulf War, 90 per cent of American air and sea lift came this way: 220 allied ships and 2,000 aircraft used fuel, supplies and the port facilities of Crete alone. The statistics of constant use seem infinite.

The London Declaration of 29 November 1990 recognized that NATO’s centre of gravity had moved south because of the Mediterranean area’s proximity to the three vital areas of Europe’s near abroad, the southern arc of crisis of the former Soviet Union (FSU), the Balkans, the eastern Mediterranean, the Maghreb, and a little more remotely, the Gulf.

An horrendous picture can be painted of the threats that the instability in the Maghreb now presents, not just to the European states on the northern shore but to the rest of the European Community too, given the extending range of available weapons of mass destruction and the ‘continentalization’ of Europe’s economy and society. As a result, the current problems of the Mediterranean command relatively more attention than they used to.

MARITIME FUNCTIONS

Not surprisingly, given the maritime nature of the theatre, this renewed focus continues to have a major impact on the role and function of navies both from within and outside the Mediterranean. The relative importance of internal and external factors varies considerably from function to function.

Coastal Functions

Even in the Cold War period coastal functions were largely local issues, even though the importance of sea transit through the area made their consequences quite substantial for outside navies too. There were countless threats to good order in the area and the Italian Sea Defence Law of December 1982 illustrated the way in which local navies came to terms with it.

Continuing jurisdictional disputes were one obvious such threat. This had an added edge in that two local countries did not sign the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)—namely Israel and Turkey—and the United States and Britain had major difficulties with it. In most cases the issues were ‘questions’ rather than prospective causes of war. The Italian claim that the Gulf of Taranto was an historic bay, and even the complex dispute over the central Mediterranean between Sicily, Tunisia, Libya and Malta came into this category. The Aegean dispute between Greece and Turkey, of course, was and remains a much more serious affair. But the only such issue that actually led to serious military action during the Cold War period was that between Libya and the United States over the
The Gulf of Sidra which flared into local conflicts in 1981 and 1986. The defence of jurisdictional positions, whether this is seen as actually fending off intruders, or as a merely symbolic function, was an important influence on the size, composition and function of the navies of the area.

Greece’s putative decision in June 1995 to extend its territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles, in accordance with the provisions of UNCLOS, inevitably provoked a strong reaction from Turkey, which warned of the potential seriousness of any attempt to extend this to the Aegean. These periodic flare-ups usefully remind us both of the maritime continuities of the area and of the dangers to which they might lead.

The requirement to supervise or defend fishing grounds had the same effect. Tunisia had disputes with both Italy and Libya over these. Paradoxically, this duty required the Italian Navy both to prevent Italian fishing boats from entering Tunisian waters and to protect those that did so from the Tunisian Navy. The performance of this complex task was much aided by the fact that the Tunisian Navy was largely trained by the Italians.

The Mediterranean has always been a hot-bed of terrorism, with perhaps one third of the world’s terrorist acts being committed in the countries spread around its shores. Although the prospect of a major maritime dimension to this has never quite taken off, despite such episodes as the infamous Achille Lauro affair, navies have had a significant role in its general control. This has taken such varied forms as the interception of Palestinian raids across the coasts of Israel, patrols against the smuggling of arms and the use of carrier aircraft in strikes on countries suspected of aiding terrorism.

These multifaceted roles in coastal protection can only grow in relative significance now that the end of the Cold War has reduced the salience of oceanic or high-seas threats. In more recent times this has been illustrated by the increasing preoccupation with controlling illegal immigration most recently and dramatically from Albania. The drowning last year of 300 people off Sicily is a terrible reminder of the scale of the problem. To this must be added a growing concern for the menace that drug-smuggling and environmental pollution represent to Europe’s wider security.

To cope with this growing range of threats in coastal waters (whether these are one’s own or someone else’s) the US Navy has moved towards littoral operations. As we shall see later, this has been replicated by Europe’s leading navies too.

**Naval Diplomacy**

As Corbett showed, ‘besides being a fighting machine, a powerful navy is also a powerful diplomatic asset’. Navies have indeed always been used as part of foreign policy, in the Mediterranean as elsewhere. In the Cold War era Western navies saw their diplomatic missions as:
NAVAL FORCE AFTER THE COLD WAR

- to promote regional stability in the Mediterranean area;
- to maintain the political cohesion of NATO’s southern flank; and
- to limit Soviet influence in the area, protecting local allies from direct and indirect, military and non-military pressure from the Soviet Union.

This usefully reminds us that there was always much more to maritime security than simply countering the Soviet Navy. The military dimension of NATO’s maritime security in the Mediterranean was but one aspect among several. The interconnections between this and the social, economic and political well-being of all the countries of the area are obvious. The key role played by some of NATO’s northern countries in helping develop Turkey’s economy from the late 1970s is an important illustration of this point.

To take the last maritime function first, the peacetime confrontation of the US and the Soviet fleet of 1973 best exemplified the use of naval forces as a tool of crisis diplomacy. Each move was carefully calculated to send messages of support to various allies and bystanders, to deter the adversary but also to signal restraint. The situation was at its most menacing between 25 and 30 October in the waters south of Crete when the three US Navy carrier battle groups were all targeted by Soviet surface-action groups.12

Both sides could take some satisfaction from what transpired in the 1973 crisis and for both the flexibility and the diplomatic utility of naval forces were convincingly portrayed. Since the end of the Cold War and with the effective disappearance of the old Soviet Mediterranean squadron, however, this task has completely disappeared.

In the Cold War era the biggest local threat to regional security was clearly the Arab-Israeli dispute that had led to the superpower confrontation just discussed. The disputing superpower navies had an important role to play in providing a measure of assistance to their local allies and in influencing each other’s behaviour towards them. They were reacting both to a security problem already in the Mediterranean and to another they brought with them.13

The Italian role in the connected Lebanon crisis of 1984 is an interesting illustration of the way in which navies were used to influence events ashore and of the lessons to be drawn from the experience. The Italians used the San Marco Tactical Group, which included a specialist, 350-man crisis-management team, on a couple of old ex-US Navy LSTs deployed off the Lebanon coast, with up to six major combatants plus support and logistics ships. The facts that individual ships could be away from port for two months and that the whole operation lasted nearly a year pointed up the need for sustainability. The value of forces capable of going ashore was obvious; the lack of organic airpower was acutely felt by the Italians (especially as they were the only major participant not to have it) and
influenced the Navy’s campaign for Sea Harriers for the Garibaldi. Arguably, the biggest lessons to come out of the experience were, first, the limitations in the capacity of naval forces to determine the outcome of messy events ashore, and, secondly, the need for unity of command between the chief participants.14

The extent to which many of these experiences and lessons were replicated in the NATO/WEU experience off Bosnia usefully reminds us of the extent to which things have stayed the same, despite the ending of the Cold War. This type of naval diplomacy has clearly grown, however.

The last type of naval diplomacy we have identified is aimed more against friends than adversaries and is intended to contribute to local cohesion by facilitating gestures of assurance and mutual support. The central role of the US 6th Fleet during the Cold War, of providing the central core of the nexus of naval and political relationships between the local NATO and other friendly powers, is hard to exaggerate. Intricate negotiations about headquarters command positions, staff college exchanges, joint exercises and shared procurements all had an important alliance-building consequence.15

These days, when the absence of an obvious and common adversary offers at least the prospect of increased fragmentation, there is a strong need for more coalition building. The formation of standing naval, air and amphibious forces of local countries and other interested parties, demonstrates continuing Western solidarity, facilitates their combined participation in operations such as Desert Shield/Storm and may even make it easier to develop links with non-NATO states. German participation in such activities nicely illustrates the way in which NATO’s maritime attention has swung more to the south than it once used to.

To some extent, though, this might be in compensation for a putative reduction in the size of the US naval contribution to west European security in general and of the 6th Fleet in particular; in its deliberations this consideration balked large in the WEU’s concerns. The assumption seemed to be that in the Bottom-Up Review,

The disguised intention was to accept long periods in which the United States would not have a carrier in the Mediterranean at all. There would also be considerable cuts in the number of ships the United States would deploy in the Mediterranean, North Atlantic and European waters generally, and in the number and duration of exercises.16

All these coalition-building complexities have figured in the NATO/WEU conduct of the Bosnian crisis and have played an important role in determining the future role and composition of participating navies. While their intention was undoubtedly to affect the situation ashore, they had
significant implications for the security architecture of Europe. Sorting out the fine details of the command relationships between NATO, the WEU and the several national command authorities was a complex affair operationally, but loaded with diplomatic significance. In this way naval forces provided a kind of currency for diplomats to expend in pursuit of political aims.\textsuperscript{17}

But, once again, there is little new in all this. Such negotiations simply reflected the arguments that the British and the Americans had in the early 1950s about command in the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{18} They echoed the historic complexities of agreeing the relationship of Greece, Turkey, France and Spain to each other and to NATO. The coalition-building function of navies is not new; moreover, it deserves to be regarded as a type of maritime strategy the importance of which is more likely to grow than to decline in the future.

\textit{Sea Control}

Where the accent was on continuity when it came to considering the peacetime functions of navies in the Mediterranean during the Cold War, the wartime functions have markedly changed. In the old days the debate was about the size and effectiveness of the Soviet Mediterranean squadron and the threat that it, when bolstered by land-based air forces operating from the Crimea, the Balkans and possibly parts of the North African coastline, represented towards the 6th Fleet. Some argued that the 6th Fleet might have to pull out of the Mediterranean partly because of more urgent calls for its assets elsewhere and partly in recognition of the operational dangers of staying in such a restricted sea. The official line, however, was that sufficient elements of the 6th Fleet would be able to stay, co-operate with local forces and quite quickly clear the Mediterranean of hostile naval forces.

The detail was the subject of considerable debate and the consequences were a major determinant of the composition of those European navies. The extent to which the 6th Fleet (or COMSTRIKESOUTH) would cooperate with NAVSOUTH forces or would rather operate autonomously became an interesting issue of philosophy and demarcation. The 6th Fleet tended to emphasize power projection while NAVSOUTH's natural inclination was towards the escorting of reinforcement shipping, ASW and limited sea control around its specific areas of operation. Their ability to sort these issues out was limited by a variety of political complexities, most obviously the attitude of France, Spain, Greece and Turkey towards NATO, and of the last two towards each other as well.

None the less, the geography of the Mediterranean encouraged preparation for barrier operations of one sort or another among and between the Aegean islands and the several narrows across the centre and,
of course, the exits of that sea. The helicopters, aircraft, diesel submarines and small combatants of the local navies were expected to be able to divide the Mediterranean into segments and then to contribute to their sanitization one by one. The distinctive ‘narrow waters’ character of this kind of operation was nowhere better illustrated than in the Adriatic, where the battle for sea control would have been largely a matter of mines, coastal radar, missiles and guns, helicopters, land-based aircraft and quick-reaction fast attack craft.

In these post-Cold War days with the end, at least for the time being, of any significant sea-based challenge to the allies’ control of the high seas, there has been a readiness to send much larger and more capable forces into the narrow seas in support of operations against the shore. As we have seen elsewhere in this book, such a switch to a Corbettian model of seapower centred on the projection of maritime power away from the Mahanian focus on decisive battle, and sea control has a special resonance in the Mediterranean.19

The concentration of conventional naval force in the Adriatic in recent years is a complete transformation of the situation prevailing before. But even so, the control of such difficult waters could not be taken for granted. Naval forces participating in the Adriatic had always to be on the alert for Yugoslav submarines, shore-based missiles and fast patrol boats. The fact that their defence rested on the effectiveness of a multinational force, of course, complicated matters.

Operations against the Shore

One of the major themes of Corbett’s seminal work on the British in the Mediterranean was that operations from that sea could transform European security. In his memorable phrase, an aggressive maritime campaign there could ‘eat into the roots of France’.20

But the reverse was equally true—events in the Mediterranean could be largely determined by events ashore. In the Cold War, campaign areas such as the Gorizia gap, Thrace and northern Greece and Anatolia might have been secondary to those on the Central Front in grand strategic terms but were nevertheless crucial to the role and functions of navies in the Mediterranean.

Probably the most important wartime role of the 6th Fleet, however, was to exert an influence on that campaign, most especially through its strike aircraft. The quality of the US Navy’s air contingent made its contribution disproportionately valuable.

In more recent times the putative adversary has changed but the emphasis on the projection of power ashore as part of an expeditionary campaign has, if anything, grown. In the Gulf War it took the form of a high intensity campaign; in the Adriatic it was a much more moderated peace-support
operation. But in both cases the accent was on littoral operations in which
the function of naval forces was to influence events ashore.

The Defence of Sea Lines of Communication

Historically, the requirement to defend shipping was one of the main
reasons for the appearance of outside powers in the Mediterranean. The
British made their first substantial appearance there in the mid seventeenth
century, and the Americans 150 years later. The depredations of the
corsairs of the Barbary coast were a particular threat in both cases. It was
a defining moment in the development of both navies:

No change in our naval history is greater or more far-reaching than
this. It was no mere change of organisation; it was a revolution in the
fundamental conception of naval defence. For the first time the
protection of the mercantile marine came to be regarded almost as the
chief end for which the regular Navy existed, and the whole of naval
strategy underwent a profound modification in English thought… [A]s
soon as the mercantile marine became a recognised burden on the Navy,
the main lines of commerce became also the main lines of naval
strategy.21

During the Cold War, in times of tension, or even of difficult peace, the
protection of shipping in general and of oil-tanking in particular was a
continuing concern and there was a heavy concentration of both in the
Mediterranean. The fact that Soviet shipping was attacked in the course of
the 1973 Arab-Israeli war is a reminder that the same imperative applied to
them too. Perceived threats ranged from an interdiction campaign
launched by a major navy at one end of the spectrum, to isolated,
politically inspired terrorist strikes at the other. The example of the Gulf
tanker war of the 1980s was in everyone’s mind.

The protection of Mediterranean shipping in time of war was a much
more complicated matter. This was partly because the amount and the strategic
significance of that shipping was so critically dependent on what was
happening on the Central Front. If events there were unfolding so fast that
the war would rapidly end, either with or without a nuclear exchange, then
the fate of a few tankers or supply ships in the Mediterranean hardly seemed
to matter. But if the central war were halted, halting or of low intensity, then
it probably would. Rather the same could be said about the maritime
consequences of putative land campaigns in the Balkans or Anatolia.

On the other hand, and this was a point frequently made by the
Mediterranean powers themselves, this was a sea full of islands all of
which would need to be supplied and reinforced in times of tension and
conflict.
Many of these issues still apply in the post-Cold War era. Mediterranean SLOCs (sea lines of communication) are as important to Europe’s economy as ever they were and the importance of the area to the support of Desert Shield/Storm has already been remarked upon. Sailors have reasonably warned against the assumption that the fact that these shipping routes were not attacked somehow implies that it was not important to defend them. The strategic consequence of Mediterranean shipping routes has fundamentally changed with the end of the Cold War, even though the main threat to them may have done. This is another of the continuities that so characterize the area.

NAVAL CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of all this for the navies of Europe are profound and, to a perhaps surprising degree, common whether they are based in the Mediterranean or not. They will be dealt with under three headings, namely doctrine and development; deployment and activity; and the size and shape of the fleet.

Doctrine and Development

Sparked off, in many cases, by the experience of earlier conflicts, the Europeans have been rethinking their roles and expectations. For the British, this came in the light of the Falklands campaign. The Italians ruminated on their experience off the Lebanon; the French on theirs in the Gulf War. The Germans and the Dutch have taken a general view on the implications of the end of the Cold War for them and for their allies.

They all agree that ‘security’ must now be defined more widely. Thus Italy’s Admiral Guarnieri:

[W]e must take into account that, while the previous traditional roles are changing, other tasks linked with maritime environment and economic activities are becoming more relevant, especially in the public’s opinion and perception. Presently the Italian Navy is both directly involved and provides support to other national authorities in various tasks such as fishery protection, pollution control, drug interdiction and control of the Adriatic Sea and the Sicilian Strait.

These wider tasks imply a greater emphasis on what the French call the tasks of ‘solidarity’ which will include rescue operations, humanitarian work broadly defined and environmental work. These tasks shade into those of ‘action’, low-intensity operations intended for vigilance and prevention. At the more familiar end of the spectrum there remain the high-intensity operations required for projection.
In doctrinal terms, the British have probably taken this type of thinking further than any other Europeans by distinguishing between the military (or combat-governed) uses of force, the policing or constabulary role and the benign use of naval force for disaster relief, search and rescue, and so on. ‘Specific doctrine must be crafted for each use and a distinct attitude of mind is required of the command and military personnel involved.’

This is but one of the implications of this doctrinal shift from one end of the spectrum towards the other, but there are many others. In Italy this wider conception of security has even led to some of the Italian Navy’s larger amphibious warfare ships being paid for by other departments of state.

**Deployment and Activity**

This doctrinal stress on operations other than war implies more of a focus on the littorals, for that is where most of the problems addressed are likely to arise. The difference between this and what went before has been well recognized. The Dutch Navy for one has clearly seen the need for something of a shift away from the open-ocean, blue-water operational environment that it had been optimized for in the Cold War era. In consequence, there will be rather more stress on coastal ASW, rather less on the oceanic equivalent. None the less, planners are careful to emphasize that a readjustment of the balance is called for, not a wholesale transformation. ‘The service must adapt without giving up our open ocean capabilities.’ This is an attitude commonly to be found among the European navies.

For some of them such littoral operations also imply the acceptance of the need for more distant operations than they were used to in the Cold War era. The German Navy’s acceptance of the need to move away from its Cold War Baltic preoccupation to send minesweeping forces to the Gulf, support German forces in Somalia and conduct extended patrols in the Mediterranean in support of NATO, WEU and UN operations indicates a particularly noticeable shift in attitudes. It may indeed prove to be something of a defining moment for the post-war German Navy.

It is perhaps less marked with the British, the French, the Italians and the Spanish, all of whom have been well used to operating in the Mediterranean for this purpose. But here the same, more outward preoccupation is evident. The Spanish, for example, have recently formed a Rapid Action Force. This is army-based but expected to link up with Spain’s marine forces. Although such a force is most obviously appropriate to the exertion of national influence in the axis of the Canary and the Balearic Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar (bearing in mind the dispute with Morocco over Ceuta and Melilla), there is some prospect of its being available further afield.
Paradoxically, one consequence of all this is the increased operational tempo reported among the navies of Europe:

[T]he operational activities of our naval forces have increased more than 50% when compared to the operational time carried out during the Cold War... The result has been reversing the ratio between the training and operational time. More precisely, operations consume 67% of our time, while in the 80s it was only 20%.28

In compensation for the strain, there is even more of a tendency to seek the solutions to common problems in common with one’s friends, with an increasing stress on combined operations with allies. In the Mediterranean this has led to the creation of the Standing Naval Force, Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED) on a NATO-wide basis, with the principle being extended to the future Mine Countermeasure Forces, Mediterranean (MCMFORMED) and Combined Amphibious Forces, Mediterranean (CAFMED). Alongside this are developing European combined naval forces such as the European Maritime Force (EURO-MARFOR), an initiative of the European Mediterranean states to increase their naval togetherness in their own area. Both approaches complement the interest in the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) noted earlier.29

While a positive desire to encourage solidarity is an important part of this drive, it also proceeds from a much more fundamental fact of life—an increasing inability to match resources and commitments:

It remains melancholically undeniable, however, that the French navy—while officially refusing to admit it—will depend more and more on allied [and particularly US] contributions, particularly as regards escort and ASW assets, if it is to operate with an acceptable level of safety. In the future, autonomous operations will increasingly only be possible in very specific and limited cases. In most other cases, French naval forces will operate within allied task forces...30

The problem is exacerbated by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in general and by the increasing relative sophistication of the navies of the developing world. Concern about the spread of submarine technology in the shape of German Type 209 and Russian Kilos has often been remarked. This fear has to be taken particularly seriously in a crowded sea such as the Mediterranean. The huge effort to guard allied supply routes during Desert Shield/Storm from a couple of probably inoperative submarines based in the Maghreb illustrates the point. Nor is it a new one; 24 years ago, Qadaffi posed quite a threat to the Queen Elizabeth II after all.
Size and Shape

The same pressures are pushing the Europeans into more collaboration, not merely in the conduct of operations but also in the procurement of the necessary platforms, weapons and sensors. This is in response to the increasing constraint on naval budgets, even though as a general rule the sea/air share of total defence allocations has fared rather better than the land/air. There is no doubt that Europe’s navies are under pressure and that a certain contraction is taking place. The French Navy is losing 22 combatants and is now having to look seriously at smaller, cheaper options than the second Charles de Gaulle nuclear carrier. ‘Fewer ships, more tasks for the German Navy’, sums up the situation for all of Europe’s navies. To an extent, though, the modernization programme that accompanies the contraction compensates for some of its worst effects. Typically, the overall capability of European navies has declined less than their size.

The balance of Europe’s fleets is shifting too, particularly in favour of amphibious/projection forces:

New strategic scenarios require flexible, self-sufficient and mobile naval forces capable of projecting military forces ashore and ensuring them of effective support from the sea. This force is far better at facing the wide range of ‘other than war’ situations such as peacekeeping, humanitarian air, personnel evacuation, peace enforcement and crisis management. As a consequence the necessity to improve the amphibious component has become a real priority.

The Italian intention is to build up their fleet of LPDs with the third San Giorgio announced in October 1990, enlarge the San Marco Battalion and integrate the Army’s amphibious forces into the package. The French Force d’Action Rapide is also to be made meaner, leaner and more professional so that it can be used abroad with fewer domestic political constraints.

In many ways the partnership between Britain’s Royal Marines and the rest of the Navy (not to mention the uncharacteristically high proportion of total naval manpower now taken by the Royal Marines) indicates the same special solicitude for amphibious forces. After years of concern, the Royal Marines have won through in their desire for a modernized amphibious fleet. The Dutch, too, have procured an amphibious warfare ship for the first time in many years, and for a time it looked as though the Germans would follow suit.

The Italians aspire to a second Garibaldi carrier and the French determination to get a second major carrier even if it is not quite as majestic as the future Charles de Gaulle has already been remarked upon. The British are now beginning to grapple with the problem of replacing both the aircraft and the platforms for their next carrier generation. These
systems have a high priority because of their particular contribution towards expeditionary operations and to the currently fashionable ‘manoeuvrist approach’ both of which are designed to optimize the flexibility that derives from mobility. The British acquisition of naval cruise missiles springs from the same cause. Such flexible weapons systems have a special value in contributing to the ‘adaptive force packages’ that Europe’s naval officers agree to be the basic element of their operations in the next century.

CONCLUSIONS

Three tentative conclusions seem to emerge from all this. First, the Mediterranean remains the central sea, both affecting, and being affected by, western Europe and its navies. Secondly, despite the traumatic events marking the end of the Cold War, a surprising number of things are staying the same. Thirdly, there has been a marked shift in the role of the navies of Europe. They are more constrained, more littoral, more together—but also more evident in these post-Cold War days.

NOTES

13 Ibid.
14 Interview with Admiral Guido Venturoni, Rome, April 1985.
21 Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 18.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 Guarnieri, ‘Roles, Missions’: 14.
PART IV

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MEDITERRANEAN POLICY AND STRATEGY
THE MEDITERRANEAN AS A REGION: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

As a crossroads of civilizations, the Mediterranean region has witnessed the rise and fall of numerous dominant political forces throughout the ages. The central objective of this analysis is to convey the way in which the Mediterranean basin has evolved as a region. Throughout several historical eras leading regional actors continuously challenged one another’s authority in the area. A particular effort is made to examine the intensity of the interaction within each political-historical era. The purpose in identifying this feature is so that it assists in the task of attempting to comprehend better the current phase of regional interaction.

Regional transformations are not evolutionary in that there is no linear process of development. Rather, the process of regional change is largely the result of historical circumstances that together contribute to the creation of a specific region. A brief look at the evolution of the Pax Romana helps to illustrate this point. One reason the Romans were able to expand their power base at the pace they did was the lack of external interference in the initial stages of their rise to power. The Romans expelled their more civilized overlords, the Etruscans, in about 510 BC and established a republic. At that time, in the east, the Greeks were more concerned with fending off the early fifth-century Persian invasions. In the west the Carthaginians concentrated on safeguarding their trade monopoly and overseas empire, paying little attention to central Italy, whose main concern was still agricultural. As a result Rome could extend its power, establishing a single Italian confederacy by 264 BC and dominating the whole Mediterranean a little over a century later.
THE EARLY MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: HELLENIC CIVILIZATION—ROMAN EMPIRE (3000 BC–AD 565)

The degree of social, economic and political interaction achieved by the Romans dwarfs that of other states or groups of states that subsequently dominated the Mediterranean basin. It can be argued that the Arabs and the Byzantine Greeks each possessed a level of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and historical similarities that together account for their social cohesion. However, neither empire could speak of the same degree of economic or political cohesion that the Romans possessed at the height of their power and neither could co-ordinate the transnational and intergovernmental forces which existed across the Mediterranean.

Italy became politically united when Roman citizenship was extended throughout the peninsula in 90–89 BC. In 27 BC Octavian accepted the title of Augustus and, without any serious political rivals as well as the complete allegiance of the armies, he was able to introduce far-reaching reforms throughout the empire, at all levels of society. His reforms included taxation, family and social life, the streamlining of domestic and provincial administration to eliminate corruption, and a revival of several old Roman and Italian religious cults. These reforms were supplemented by amendments to the constitution and the setting of external frontiers. Although Augustus kept absolute power in his own hands, he allowed the Senate (the old republican magistrates and business classes) to share with him the task of administering the Empire.

The Roman case is therefore a classic example of what can be achieved given a range of natural resources and a sophisticated degree of trade within the core and between the core and the peripheries. The pattern of economic interaction on the societal level clearly illustrates a functioning federal system, as all available resources were directed toward the specific objective of safeguarding the Empire.

In the Roman case the conquest of Sicily, which had led to the collapse of Carthage after the Punic Wars, was the making of the Empire. Its large fertile plains and valleys were supplemented by a constant flow of produce and trade from the north. In fact, Rome was fortunate to possess forests large enough to build its fleets age after age. These resources were augmented by additional sources of iron and timber from places such as Corsica and Sardinia after they had been conquered.3

This example highlights the significance of the land base in creating a strong core in the Mediterranean. History is littered with examples of peoples with a small land base being unable to retain control of their conquests. The Phoenicians, the Greeks and even Carthage found it difficult to provide a steady supply of manpower and resources to keep their maritime activities going. A look at modern history also reveals that Amalfi, Genoa, Venice, Portugal and the Dutch Netherlands also each had
a short spell of naval supremacy. Their activities at sea demanded that they throw all their manpower and economic wealth into naval action. They could do this only so long as the land powers at their rear did not challenge their position. The one great advantage that the Romans had over the modern world was that, in almost every case, they controlled internal free trade. From Gades to Alexandria and the Red Sea there were, in general, none of the customs barriers that have become an integral part of the international political economy of the twentieth century. Rome encouraged free exchange and, apart from a few short intervals, transnational exchanges flourished. Roman citizens were also free to travel throughout the empire.4

By contrast, Hellenic civilization lacked the scale of economic and political cohesion that enabled the Romans to take control of the Mediterranean. Even in their victories over Persia, the Greeks found it difficult to maintain a united front. Endless schisms and their rejection of much required naval reforms led to their eventual defeat, even though their peninsula is better placed to control the eastern Mediterranean than that of Italy.

Although in theory the absence of social cohesion can be offset by a degree of economic and organizational cohesion, this is usually not the case. For example, while it may be argued that the Hellenization phenomenon certainly resulted in closer ties and greater unity in the region, it seems that it did not seriously challenge the basically pluralistic character of the Mediterranean. This is illustrated by the fact that for two centuries or more the Egypt of the Ptolemies and the Seleucid kingdom in Syria coexisted.

Throughout history different states or groups of states formed the focus of international politics in the Mediterranean. The Minoan and the Phoenician seafarers conducted a level of trade that promoted the advance of civilization in the basin. They therefore prepared the route for the Greeks and the Romans, who contributed far more towards promoting a cultural unity throughout the Mediterranean littoral. Indeed, it may be stated that between the third century BC and the fifth century AD, the Pax Romana (the longest in duration of its kind) was a federal empire that had a lasting influence in the area. Even when the Roman Empire was challenged and eventually overrun by other empires the Roman level of transnational and political unity was not to be repeated.

As a strategic centre, Sicily was coveted for its position. It rendered easy the transit between Europe and North Africa and split the Mediterranean into two roughly equal halves. This too facilitated Rome’s objective of coordinating cross-border and intergovernmental affairs. Rome skilfully cemented politically active alliances (with Pergamum and Rhodes, for example) which enabled it, though not a maritime state, to defeat all Mediterranean rivals, until the sea became a Mare Nostrum.
The fluid nature of an international region makes it necessary to continually qualify its delineation. Throughout history a number of states often linked to a particular international region, by virtue of their activities, move closer to the core or drop out of the semi-peripheral sector altogether. In terms of the three dimensions of regional analysis, this often occurs when a particular state begins to interact more with an extra-regional group of states. As the intensity of interaction increases with this international region, the state can find itself slipping down the hierarchical slope of its own regional grouping and rising up the regional nation-state power hierarchy of its ‘new’ trading partners. In modern history Turkey’s pattern of relations with western Europe and the Middle East during the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century illustrates the changes that may take place. Although still active in the Middle Eastern international region, Turkey’s political, economic and military ties place it firmly within the semi-periphery of the western European international region.

This development is more easily identifiable in the era of navigation, exploration and colonization that began with the arrival of the Phoenicians and Ionians in the seventh century BC. In the space of two centuries a string of Phoenician colonies were implanted along part of the coast of Sicily, in Sardinia, and along the coast of the Balearic islands and southern Spain, as well as those of Tripolitania and the whole of Numidia in northern Africa. The colony of Carthage, founded in 813 BC, maintained its allegiance to Tyre until the day when, at the beginning of the seventh century BC, the metropolis lost its autonomy and the colony had to set itself up as an independent republic. By the early fifth century it was to become the premier maritime power of the western Mediterranean. Throughout Mediterranean history peripheral states have played a part in the course of the area’s politics, but rarely if ever were they the main protagonists. The colonizing of southern Italy and Sicily (the so-called ‘second Greek colonization’) which led to the birth of Graecia Magna and, in its wake, rivalry and struggles with Carthage, demonstrates the unpredictable behaviour of these peripheral actors.

A review of Mediterranean politics from the sixth century BC reflects the dominance of anarchic relations in the area which contrasts sharply with the hierarchic nature of relations that were established during the Pax Romana. By the end of sixth century the Greek colonial expansion was complete. The heart of the Mediterranean was occupied by a vast Greek cosmos which, in the west, was confronted by the emerging forces of Carthage and Etruria. In the east it was momentarily confronted by the kingdoms and empires situated in an arc round the eastern Mediterranean, until the immense unitary structure of the Persian Empire emerged as a threat. The structure of the Greek cosmos differed greatly from that which prevailed at the time in other parts of the Mediterranean world. It was
based on the coexistence of a plurality of *poleis* or city-states, each of which constituted a close-knit and jealously independent political formation.

As a result, apart from moments of great peril—such as the Second Medic War in the fifth century BC, when Persia reached new heights of aggressiveness through an alliance with Carthage and the Greeks responded by creating a pan-Hellenic league—the history of the internecine struggles between the great Greek city-states of continental Greece, or *Graecia Magna*, is punctuated by treaties of alliance and military or financial assistance concluded between a city and either Persia or Carthage.7

Due to the diversity of relations in the Mediterranean through the ages, the task of delineating regional boundaries is an extremely complex one. Several peripheral members are borderline cases, that is, they play a role in the politics of a particular region on only some occasions. For instance, note the position of Persia which was one of the leading peripheral actors in the Mediterranean during the classical Greek era. Strong historical and cultural elements identify it with the Middle East regional area, while in terms of power and the structure of relations it is certainly appropriate to include it among the actors in Mediterranean politics.

A review of this era reveals that various modalities of regionalism were in a constant state of flux and contributed to the rise of both the Hellenic civilization and the *Pax Romana*. Analysis of domestic affairs demonstrates how the central authorities succeeded in harnessing their human, natural and economic resources to further their military ambitions. At the cost of some loss of personal liberties, the stable government that the Roman Empire achieved towards the end of the first century BC, provided two and a half centuries of peace and prosperity. Municipalities throughout the provinces enjoyed a considerable degree of local independence, with the predominantly Latin culture of the west complementing the Hellenism of the east.

The foreign policy lens of analysis depicts a period of continuous colonial expansion, encouraged by land-hunger, political disaffection or the desire for adventure or profit. Starting from 334 BC Alexander the Great’s campaigns in the east opened up the resources of the Middle East to the Greeks. Even after his mighty empire broke up after his death in 323 BC, the successor states (Macedon, Ptolemy, Seleucids and Pergamum) continued the diffusion of wealth and a great expansion of trade throughout the eastern and the western sector of the Mediterranean basin. An embryonic network of transnational and intergovernmental relations was therefore established across the Mediterranean.8 The Greeks, like the Romans after them, thus executed a foreign policy agenda that saw them not only establish a local community—the *polis*—but a *cosmopolis*: a whole civilized and increasingly Hellenized (and later Latinized) world.
The Mediterranean area therefore evolved from a comprehensive international region during the Hellenic phase into a fully fledged, federal system during Roman times.

THE CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM WORLD (AD 600–1517)

When Diocletian came to power in AD 284 it was obvious that one ruler could no longer hold the entire Roman Empire together. This is illustrated by his division of power between himself and a joint Augustus with two subordinate Caesars, and his division of the empire into four prefectures and 12 dioceses. The centre of gravity was gradually shifting eastwards: hence Constantine established a new capital and a Christian city at Byzantium, renamed Constantinople (AD 330), while a new taxation system resulted in an economic revival. In any case, further decline followed and, although the Empire was theoretically governed by joint rulers, it gradually broke into an eastern and a western half, with outlying provinces falling to barbarian invaders.

Despite this development, the nature of the domestic scene more or less remained the same. For two centuries after the break-up of the Western Empire, the Byzantine monarchy kept Roman institutions and continued to use its Latin courts. Although Greek superseded Latin and the administration was decentralized, it was the Eastern Empire that compiled the two great monuments of Roman law: the codes of Theodosius and of Justinian. The East also preserved and transmitted much of the legacy of the ancient world to the modern one. Even in the West many Roman traditions survived. The Latin tongue, although widely developing into the derivative ‘Romance’ languages, was still preserved in the Church and as the language of science. Roman law forms the basis of the law of most modern European states and the feats of Roman engineering are still visible in the Mediterranean world.

The network of communications at the time provides further insight into the nature of the regional groupings in terms of personal communications, mass media, interchange among the elite and transportation facilities. Although the Arabs could never completely replicate the Romans in their external campaigns, they did succeed in establishing intergovernmental and transnational relations in the Mediterranean area that made them one of the principal actors throughout the eighth century. Further, their naval supremacy was solidified by the conquest of the geo-strategic Mediterranean islands that included Crete, Sicily, Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, Cyprus and the Balearics.

Arab foreign policy strategic planning attempted somewhat to imitate the Roman network of relations. In the period 632–34 they had completed the conquest of southern Palestine and Arabia; by 634 Persia had been overrun (a feat not achieved by Rome) and the next two years saw the
Muslims advance to Damascus. Victory over the Byzantines at the Yarmuk river encouraged them to advance east into Mesopotamia and northwest into Asia Minor. Simultaneously, Arab forces took control of the entire North African shoreline in the seventh century. They then shifted their attention to Iberia, overrunning the Pyrenees in 717. There were further advances into southern France, but the Arab armies were defeated at Poitiers in 732, and in 759 they withdrew south of the Pyrenees. At around the same time they also deployed their forces against the Byzantine Empire in the east, besieging Constantinople, and therefore threatening to close the circle of expansion right in the heart of Europe. This expansion owed much to the enthusiasm and religious conviction of the conquerors, but it was also facilitated by the war-weariness of the empires of Persia and Byzantium.

By the beginning of the ninth century Byzantium had dramatically shrunk. In the west, the only remaining toeholds were in southern Italy, Sicily and along the Dalmatian coast; Greece was still largely in the hands of barbarian Slavs. Under a fresh and vigorous Macedonian dynasty of emperors, a new era of reconquest and aggressive expansion was embarked upon, and by 1025 the Byzantine frontiers were often close to where they had been in the heyday of Rome.

In 1071 a weakened Byzantine army was defeated by a force of Seljuk Turks at the battle of Manzikert. In the same year the last Italian possession fell to the Normans; and the period of greatness when Constantinople ruled the wealthiest and best-governed realm in the Christian world was at an end. The final assault did not come from the traditional enemy the Muslim infidel, but from the Christian West. It was an already weakened Byzantium which saw the arrival of the first Crusade in 1096, but hopes that Rome and Constantinople could co-exist peacefully were soon dashed. Conflictual intergovernmental power politics thus dominated regional relations.

After a series of defeats at the hands of the Seljuks and the Normans, who resumed full-scale frontier aggression in the 1170s, Constantinople itself was seized and ravaged by the swordsmen of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The main beneficiary was the rising power of Venice, whose fleets had carried the Crusaders. An attempt to set up a Latin Empire of Constantinople proved abortive, as for the first time the Greeks had become a majority within the truncated Empire. In 1261, with the assistance of Genoa, the rival of Venice, they drove out the Westerners. The Greek Empire was only a shadow of the Byzantium of the past and was no match for the Turks when they advanced into Europe in the fourteenth century.

From the seventh to the eleventh century the Arabs were incontestably the masters of the Mediterranean. Owing to their contact with the West and the Far East, the Arabs were valuable commercial intermediaries. The seeds of a transnational type of international region were sown in the
Mediterranean at around this time. They imported sugarcane and cotton into Italy and Africa from India and learned the manufacture of paper from the Chinese without which the invention of printing would have been valueless. Trans-Mediterranean maritime traffic between the Christian West and the Byzantine and Muslim worlds was at a peak in the tenth and eleventh century, although the total size of the traffic was certainly small compared with later trade figures. The fact that the Arabs were both richer and better equipped than their European neighbours added to the conflictual nature of relations in the area. Arab transnational exchanges extended from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Indian Ocean, through the Egyptian ports, which were in communication with the Red Sea, and the Syrian ports, which gave access to the caravan route to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf. In contrast, the Christian peoples were restricted to the coastline of the Adriatic and southern Italy.

Commercial interaction intensified from the twelfth century onwards and led to co-operation occurring in the cultural, scientific and artistic fields. The commercial fleets and navies of the Italians allowed and facilitated this cross-cultural process. Their defensive assistance was sought by all coastline states in the vicinity. In return, the Italian city-states were rewarded by means of fiscal and mercantile concessions.

The decline of the Italian city-states’ commercial hegemony in the basin resulted from a series of developments that slowly saw the European nation-states gain mercantile supremacy. The discovery of America (1492) and the Cape Route to India, the West Indies and China (1497–98), convinced Portugal, followed by Britain and the Netherlands, to increase their emphasis on maritime undertakings. The opening of this new trade route also meant that an alternative course to conduct trade and commerce between Europe and Asia now existed which was to deal a severe blow to the Mediterranean economy in general. The large territorial base and considerable pool of resources which these European nation-states could tap into soon came to play a crucial role in the evolution of Mediterranean affairs.

The simultaneous successful military campaigns of the Ottoman Turks undermined the influence of Venice and the other Italian cities, as routes to the Asian markets fell into the hands of the enemy. It was only a matter of time before the Italian city-states system was overrun by more powerful and resourceful actors in the Mediterranean.

STRUCTURAL FLUCTUATIONS IN THE CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM WORLD

By the end of the eighth century the Mediterranean came to serve as a boundary zone between the Christian north and the Muslim south. This balance of power, along religious lines, was predominant in the region throughout the following two centuries. For centuries Europe had gravitated
about the Mediterranean. It was by means of the Mediterranean that the several parts of the civilized world had communicated with one another. Under the impact of Islam this unity was abruptly shattered. The intercourse between the East and the West, which had hitherto been carried on by means of this sea, was interrupted. For the first time since the formation of the Roman Empire western Europe was isolated from the rest of the world.15

Yet not all states fitted neatly into this arrangement. Although the majority of them on the northern shore, particularly the Byzantines and the Franks, regarded their survival as tantamount to preventing the progress of the Arab hegemonic campaign, a number of states adhered to an alternative policy. Fearing complete control by the papacy and recognizing the potential economic benefits that were available, states such as Naples, Amalfi, Gaeta and Salerno played down the importance of religious differences, often aligning themselves with the Arabs. Hence, despite the lack of common characteristics, this group of Italian city-states formed an informal alliance by serving as an economic and political buffer between the two primary and contentious forces.

Transnational relations evolved further during this period as a result of the Christian West’s succession of crusades to the Holy Land. Christian soldiers were accompanied by merchants and artisans who moved to the Levant, settled down and established prosperous ventures stretching from the Black Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar. The Italian colonies which cropped up throughout the Middle East—Aleppo, Beirut, Damascus, Cyprus, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Antioch—demonstrate a return of transitional forces across the eastern sector of the Mediterranean.

The first part of the Christian-Muslim phase of Mediterranean history therefore demonstrates a shift from a boundary zone management situation to an increasingly transnational Mediterranean area. Confictual intergovernmental dynamics gained in prominence as the Christians and the Muslims sought to maintain and increase their power bases in the Mediterranean basin. The spectrum of relations during the later stages of this period is one of practically complete enmity between the two main poles of power in the vicinity and explains the high incidence of direct military confrontation throughout the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean had therefore developed from a outer zone of suzerainty of the Roman Empire to a frontier area between the Christians and the Muslims and, as patterns of interaction intensified across the area, into a conflict-defined region in which co-operative, cross-border links were present.

THE RISE OF THE EUROPEAN NATION-STATES (1500–1900):
INTRUSIVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL REGIONAL POLITICS

By the start of the sixteenth century the Mediterranean basin was already an area controlled by outside powers. Indigenous actors gradually found
themselves superseded by the rise of the European nation-states. The significance that the nature of communications can have upon the effectiveness of an external power’s desire to influence political relations in a region becomes clear when examining Britain’s role in the Mediterranean.

Britain’s ability to form a central focus of international politics in the Mediterranean in the seventeenth century is partly due to the impressive chain of command that it established. The British set up their first permanent base in the Mediterranean in 1704 when, during the War of the Spanish Succession, they succeeded in capturing Gibraltar. Britain’s successful campaigns against the French, most notably that at Aboukir (1798) and at Malta (1800), increased Britain’s manoeuvrability in both the central and the eastern zone of the basin.16 Its subsequent clashes with the Bourbons in Sicily and the Savoys in Sardinia helped to halt a French initiative to create a Napoleonic system of client states. Britain leased Cyprus from Turkey in 1878 and took over Alexandria in 1882. This control of a series of stepping stones enhanced Britain’s intergovernmental relations throughout the basin and enabled it to monitor potential rivals’ activities closely. It also explains how the British island state could maintain its dominant position so far away from home. Britain’s comparative advantage throughout was its supremacy at sea and it sought to safeguard this at all costs.17

A high level of intergovernmental economic and political interaction was achieved when the British, with a security interest in preserving equilibrium on the European continent, perfected balance-of-power diplomacy. Continuous supplies of produce and war-time materials were obtained from the vast network of colonies that stretched from within the Mediterranean to the key outpost of India. The fact that the British employed these resources effectively, and were successful in replenishing them, largely accounts for their ability to establish a vast empire. Moreover, Britain succeeded in commanding and controlling the area by dividing the basin into two sectors, the east and the west, just as the Romans had done.

Responsibility for these sectors was delegated to allies within geographical proximity. In the west, Britain thus relied on Austria and Savoy to help to monitor the naval movements of both France and Spain. In the east Britain’s main priority was to protect trade routes to India and it therefore trusted the Ottoman Empire to keep the Russians in check.18 However, it cannot be argued that Britain’s high degree of organizational and economic cohesion compensated for the lack of social cohesion in the area. Even in those colonies where it took complete command of political relations, the lack of social cohesion was never completely overcome—something that was revealed in the subsequent decolonization process in the twentieth century.
Even at the height of British colonial power in the Mediterranean (1815), the cornerstone of London’s defence policy remained one of preventing any of the core or the peripheral actors from translating their potential power into a rival maritime hegemon. France’s continental expansion was already severely limited and British superiority at sea meant that it would have to allocate a large proportion of its resources to maritime programmes if it seriously wanted to challenge the British. Spain also had to accept the abandonment of any Mediterranean endeavours after a succession of decisive defeats at the hands of both the British (Capo Passaro in 1718) and the Austrians (Milan, Naples, and Sardinia at the turn of the eighteenth century).

Russia and Austria were another two external powers whose interests and potential in the Mediterranean gradually increased at the end of the eighteenth century. Russia’s primary concern was to gain access to and control of a warm water port, which, unlike Russia’s outlets on the Baltic Sea, was free from hostile powers. Influence in the Mediterranean was also seen as conducive to Peter the Great’s desire to Europeanize his country. Russia’s policy towards the Turks was thus regarded as justifiable for ethnic and religious reasons: it saw itself as the rightful protector of the Slavic peoples and as the self-professed heir to the Byzantine Empire. As the guardian of Christianity, Russia advanced southward in 1774, at first establishing footholds in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. In 1774 the Tzar took command of the Crimean Turkish outpost, with the Bosporus Straits forced open to its commercial navigation.

Austria’s interest in the region increased once it became apparent that the provisions of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 would prohibit it from attempting to unify the Holy Roman Empire under its authority. Realizing that its continental ambitions had received a serious setback, Vienna concentrated its resources on the Ottoman Turks in the south. Austrian campaigns proved successful in the long-term as the Ottoman Empire was eroded.

International relations in the Mediterranean in the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century are particularly indicative of the effects the intrusive system can have on the level of power and the structure of relations in an international region. Constraints in continental expansion shifted European great power attention to the Mediterranean. As European manoeuvring in this ‘sphere of influence’ increased, the Mediterranean became the geopolitical playing field. When viewed from the capitals of Europe, the Mediterranean was thus assessed in regional terms.

Britain’s central concern in the case of Russia was that the Tzar might attempt a ransacking of Constantinople in an effort to establish an outlet into the Mediterranean. Such a development would serve a double blow to
British interests in the area. First, it could potentially interrupt British commercial ventures in the eastern Mediterranean. Secondly, it could also tilt the balance of power in the region away from the British. In other words, if the Russians proved successful in their Mediterranean campaign they would probably join forces with the French and the Spanish to overcome British supremacy.

In any case, London decided to dedicate most of its supplies and reserves in the Mediterranean to monitoring the French. Revolutionary France restored the traditional expansionist foreign policy agenda of the Bourbons. Its objective was to carry out a process of boundary delineation by verifying its natural boundaries on the Rhine and the Alps. France also began to exert pressure on Italy as a first step towards enhancing its position in the Mediterranean and the Levant.

French ambitions to disrupt British interests throughout the basin failed to get off the ground. They suffered a series of defeats at the hands of the British, as we have seen. Once again British superiority at sea was the key factor which enabled it to resist the French hegemonic undertaking.

Britain maintained its power monopoly after further successful campaigns against the Bourbons in Sicily and the Savoys in Sardinia. Its influence on the structure of relations in the region is well illustrated by its blockade of a French attempt to create a Napoleonic system of client states with Spain and Turkey. Britain achieved this by forcing open the Bosporus, conquering the Ionian islands and launching a succession of maritime expeditions against Spain.

Overall, change in the Mediterranean’s balance of power was minimal between the Congress of Vienna and the latter part of the nineteenth century. Britain retained its dominant position in the littoral, concentrating more and more of its resources on the eastern sector of the basin.

There are two reasons for this shift in policy. First, Britain became more preoccupied with the eastern zone because of its ever increasing commercial activities in the Middle and the Far East: suffice to say that trade within the Mediterranean was less important than trade beyond it, for all the countries of the littoral combined did not purchase as many British goods as did India on its own. Secondly, the British wanted to make sure that the vacuum being created by the declining Ottoman Empire was not completely filled by the Russians who were relentlessly waiting in the wings. In the western sector, Britain’s attention was focused upon the containment of France. After its losses in the Americas, the French hoped that they could compensate by territorial gains in the Mediterranean. But Britain’s system of communications, level of power and structure of relations were strong enough to prevent this from occurring.
Cantori and Spiegal describe two types of external regional participation: politically insignificant involvement and politically significant involvement. The former refers to those types of measure that are unlikely to influence the balance of power within an international region. Cultural and educational exchange programmes, material aid and trade are some of the actions that fall under this umbrella.

The latter refers to all those circumstances where the influence of an outside actor will alter the balance of power within a particular region. There are a number of ways that an external actor can have a direct impact on the evolution of an international region. The possession of a colony, direct military or financial investment, formal alliances or direct military intervention are just some of the options open to an external actor when attempting to gain a foothold in a specific area. It is this type of involvement that can have a direct impact on the dynamics of region-building and thus the type of involvement that this research is primarily concerned with.

The British experience in the Mediterranean is certainly a clear example of politically significant intrusive action because, unlike its predecessors who controlled the basin, Britain was not a Mediterranean nation. As such Britain’s interests in the region were strictly maritime. Like the Roman episode, its dominance is also an example of superpower overlay being realized in the Mediterranean.

The political potential of the external powers in the international relations of a particular region is in a constant state of flux. For example, Britain’s position in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century may be contrasted with the more evenly balanced nature of the intrusive system during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The degree of supremacy which the British had previously held in the Mediterranean basin gradually diminished as other European states, in particular Germany, France, Russia and Italy, increased their influence especially with the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

Realizing the intrinsic decay of Ottoman power, the Egyptian leader Muhammad Ali embarked upon a delicate diplomatic balance between England and France, by playing one side against the other. By 1839 it was apparent that the Pasha’s military forces were far superior to Turkish military power. King Louis Phillipe withdrew his support for Muhammad Ali and formed a coalition with England to try and save the independence and integrity of the Ottoman state. The British bombardments of the Pasha’s positions in Beirut and Acre were a prelude to the London Treaty of 1840. Until this point France had been the prime protector of the Muhammad Ali dynasty, with Britain the champion of Turkish suzerainty over Egypt. Anglo-French action against the Viceroy of Egypt led to closer
relations between England and Egypt, which in turn led to British domination by the end of the century.

The scramble for colonies by the European nation-states and the rise of nationalism are the main characteristics of Mediterranean politics in the second half of the nineteenth century. Both had a significant impact on the nature of the intrusive system in the Mediterranean, which saw more of an equilibrium being achieved among the European great powers’ interests. The French set up stepping stones on the southern shores of the basin by seizing Algeria in 1830 and Tunisia in 1881. The British balanced French progress by strengthening their position of authority in Egypt in 1882. This permitted the British to control the recently completed Suez Canal (1869), which was of great strategic and economic value.24

The first traces of nationalism emerged in the Mediterranean in the Balkans, when Serbia and Greece won independence in the 1820s. Italy followed suit after its process of unification in 1869–70. The intrusive system reacted to this development by condoning the region’s indigenous course of events, demonstrated by Britain’s wholehearted support of Italian statehood. These links were further improved when the new Italian state sought to imitate the days of the Roman Empire by acquiring colonies for itself at the expense of the French. Apart from disputing Tunisia with the French, Italy took control of Eritrea in 1885 and captured both Libya and the Dodecanese in 1911–12. Italy’s Mediterranean ventures were balanced by the necessity to nurture continental ties, especially in the Balkans, in an effort to bolster its national security.25

These internal shifts within the Mediterranean were complemented by a series of changes that took place in the region’s intrusive system. British and other European nations’ efforts to prop up the Turkish Empire were unsuccessful, and the ‘Sick Man of Europe’ could not regain any of its previous regional power. Russian ambitions in the Balkans were consistently held back by diplomatic and military operations orchestrated by Britain, which wanted to obstruct Russian expansionist plans in the Mediterranean at all costs. The Balkan Wars of 1912–13, however, saw the decaying Ottoman Empire retreat to Adrianople, leaving the Balkan states formally independent, but severely vulnerable to Russian and Austrian aspirations.26

**THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

*The Emergence of Germany as a Leading Actor*

The late nineteenth and the early twentieth century witnessed the arrival of another prominent non-Mediterranean actor in the area: Germany. Berlin took advantage of the demise of the Ottoman Empire by increasing its influence through its commercial and diplomatic ties with the recently
established independent Balkan states. One major project conducted by the Germans was the construction of the Baghdad railway which strengthened their interests in the Levant. Germany also entered the western sector of the sea by becoming involved in the Moroccan issue against the French.27

The emergence of Germany in the Mediterranean displeased all the other actors who already had influence there. Britain was already familiar with the German ability to build up naval forces fairly rapidly, as it had done in the north. In fact, the first four decades after its unification saw Germany amass large fleets and arsenals that escalated the level of tension among its regional counterparts. Realizing that it had to counter German projections in the south early on, if its position of supremacy were not to be undermined, Britain exploited France’s similar concerns regarding Germany and signed a Franco-British solidarity pact against the Kaiser.

In 1879 Bismarck sympathized with Russia’s efforts to consolidate its position in Bulgaria, and even exploited Germany’s new role as an ally to force Austria-Hungary into line. He poured scorn on Austro-Hungarian attempts to enlist the support of Britain, Italy and Germany against Russia. Rebuffed by Gladstone, Austria-Hungary fell back on cooperation with Germany and Russia in the Three Emperors’ Alliance in 1881. This survived the crisis over the union of Bulgaria and East Rumalia in 1885, but the Austro-Russian contest for control of Bulgaria (1886–87) destroyed it. Bismarck had promised the Russians his continued support in the Reinsurance Treaty, but the ‘Mediterranean agreements’ of February, March and December 1887 between Britain, Italy and Austria-Hungary (Spain acceding in May) to resist supposed French and Russian designs in the Mediterranean and the Straits annihilated Russian influence in Bulgaria.28 Italy acceded to the Austro-German-Romanian alliance in 1888, and between 1889 and 1894 Germany, with a new emperor and chancellor, swung into line behind the Mediterranean entente. In the meantime, France drew steadily closer to Russia: the first of a series of loans was concluded in 1888 and a military convention was signed in 1894. In 1897 the Germans had abandoned the ‘New Course’, ceasing to underwrite Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and co-operating in the Far East with Russia and France. Fear of German hegemony in continental Europe and across the Mediterranean persuaded Britain to settle its longstanding colonial differences with Russia in 1907 and, together with the French, they later formed the Triple Entente. Italy also relaxed its ties with both Germany and Austria after realizing that its interests in the Mediterranean were not being safeguarded through such alliances. Sharing similar ambitions with Britain and France over the future of Libya, Egypt and Morocco, Italy sought a policy of rapprochement with London and Paris to make up for the loss of German and Austrian support.

At the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth century,
intrusive system relations in the Mediterranean shifted significantly. The Mediterranean became even more of a conflict-based zone as intrusive actors aligned themselves according to the already divisive patterns of relations among the indigenous states. This continued in the run up to and during the course of the First World War. As the number of external actors with an interest in the Mediterranean increased, the degree of competition intensified. The division of Europe into two rival alliances (France, Britain and Russia against Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) resulted in a four-year conflict between 1914 and 1918 which weakened further the local powers of the region. The external powers were still able to exercise a large measure of control over the area after the war, mainly due to the large number of colonies and micro-states which they possessed.

The close relationship between transnational and intergovernmental forces discussed earlier in the Roman case-study becomes even more apparent when compared to the much less co-ordinated system that existed at the end of the First World War. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 did little to quell disputes and tensions rampant in the Mediterranean area. Diplomatic channels of communication were not powerful enough to cope with the ramifications of the Ottoman Empire’s collapse. As a result, the great powers found themselves at loggerheads over territorial and political control of the Mediterranean basin. One consequence of this was that the European powers were somewhat taken by surprise by an incipient, but significant, Arab nationalism from Asia Minor to Algeria. Ideas of autonomy, encouraged by the revival of Arabic literature and campaigns to reform the language, gradually gained currency, particularly during the reign of Abdul-Hamid II (1876–1909).

In addition, the flexibility of the indigenous countries was also restricted because the victorious external powers in the basin sought to co-operate with each other. While revolutions swept through Russia, Germany and Italy, the centuries-old Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires crumbled into collections of smaller, new states. By 1925 Britain felt reassured that its position in the eastern sector of the Mediterranean was as secure as ever. The signing of a treaty with Egypt guaranteeing access to the Suez Canal and the termination of hostilities between Greece and Turkey were two factors that promoted this positive outlook. The fact that Italy controlled Libya, France managed Syria, and the British were granted a mandate in Palestine, convinced London that its access to oil and rubber in the area, and its commercial links with India and Australasia were stable for the foreseeable future.

The maverick behaviour of Italy soon proved that Britain’s optimism was premature. Disputes and tensions among the intrusive system’s participants again increased and were reflected in the tense conditions within the Mediterranean area. Regional strife soon took over. Uncomfortable with the status quo, Fascist Italy launched an ambitious
programme of Mediterranean expansion that constituted a threat to the security of many of the regional powers. Italy attempted to press Greece into invading Yugoslavia and Albania, in the hope that it could then use the area as a base to launch further military expeditions into the Levant. In 1935 Italy invaded Abyssinia and then went to the rescue of Franco in Spain, thus gaining footholds in two strategically important locations. Mussolini’s next major conquest was his seizure of Albania in 1939.

The six-year Second World War again plunged the Mediterranean into a period of fierce rivalry and destruction, with Britain, and later the United States, employing all their available resources to prevent the Mediterranean from falling to the Axis powers. Not only did Europe experience its last hegemonic war, but it also endured an episode that in many ways resembled previous hegemonic struggles. Parallels can, for instance, be drawn with features of the Napoleonic campaigns: rapid continental victories, efforts to invade Britain and, once these failed, an attempt to push eastward, against Russia. In both cases mastery of the Mediterranean emerged as one of the decisive factors in thwarting imperial design. The one significant difference between the Second World War and previous hegemonic wars in the region was that in 1945 both Europe and the Mediterranean were so exhausted from the campaign that non-Mediterranean powers found themselves in command and control of the security of both continental Europe and the Mediterranean.

The Cold War

The United States and the Soviet Union were not the only external powers that influenced the intrusive system functioning in the Mediterranean. Secondary and middle powers also pursued their interests and therefore also affected the balances in both the intrusive core and the Mediterranean as a whole. Britain, for example, still found itself able to play a role in the security of the region, even if it was a rapidly diminishing one. In spite of its declaration in 1947 of no longer being in a position to guarantee the security of the eastern Mediterranean, Britain retained control of a number of strategically significant bases that included Cyprus, Malta and Gibraltar.

France also retained an interest with its control of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. In contrast, Italy’s military defeat in the Second World War led the Italians to focus on putting their own house in order and this resulted in Rome’s withdrawal from Mediterranean affairs. The involvement of these and other secondary and middle powers in the region initially weakened co-operation among the main actors in the intrusive system. But this predicament was soon to change.

Throughout the 45 years of superpower rivalry the Mediterranean sustained a series of developments that affected the internal dynamics of
the region. In the first decade of the bipolar international system, the Mediterranean testified to the commencement and bolstering of the United States’ commitment to contain Soviet expansion in the littoral. It sought to realize this policy both directly, by establishing bases in the basin, and indirectly through political parties which challenged the communists, whose support had increased dramatically in countries such as Italy and Greece.

No assessment of foreign policy orientation during the Cold War would be complete unless it included an analysis of the alliance network that developed. After the Suez fiasco in 1956, which saw the diminution of both French and British interests in the area, the two superpowers had a monopoly over the intrusive system. They dominated international regional politics in all global relations, including the Mediterranean. After the breakdown of communications in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the United States and the Soviet Union gradually built an elaborate global communications system that enabled them to penetrate the peripheral sector further. Superpower politics thus gave rise to an intricate network of patron-client relationships in the Mediterranean. Bilateral contacts were nurtured through the string of client states that both Moscow and Washington fostered in the basin, and encouraged interchange among the region’s elite.

Advances in land, sea and air transportation facilities and the progress registered by the mass media also influenced the nature of communications around and across the Mediterranean area by helping the intrusive sector maintain its grip on regional affairs.

During the Cold War the two superpowers were unwilling to establish a consortium in the Mediterranean and unable to resort to direct confrontation because of the danger of a nuclear holocaust. As a result, three trends of Soviet-American interaction are discernible: mutual non-involvement, unilateral abstention and restrained mutual involvement. Mutual non-involvement means that neither superpower participates in a politically direct manner in the area or state under assessment. Although mutual non-involvement was not adopted in the basin as a whole, the superpowers did follow this approach within peripheral sectors of the region. This was, for example, the case in relations with countries such as Malta and Cyprus who, motivated to pursue an independent foreign policy in the 1970s, became members of the non-aligned movement.

Unilateral abstention describes a situation in which one of the superpowers has not involved itself in a region, or at least has refrained from becoming involved in one of the zones of that area. In southern Europe, the United States involved itself in the core sector, with the Soviet Union concentrating its resources in eastern Europe and only involving itself in individual peripheral countries, such as Libya, for example.

Unilateral abstention often tends to be less stable than mutual
non-involvement. This is because the participation of one superpower in a region usually leads to the involvement of the other since there are few incentives for a superpower to abstain. The only incentives to abstain which may exist are: the fear of stretching one’s resources too thinly (which could undermine foreign policy objectives elsewhere); the risk of escalating competition to a level that could result in outright conflict; and the lack of a convenient inroad into an area.

The third pattern of superpower involvement in the intrusive system is restrained mutual involvement. In this case, both superpowers accept the authority structure (the governing body and its opposition) in power in a particular country or regimes in a certain region and seek to gain influence by working within existing power structures. The parameters that the superpowers operate within are much wider in such circumstances. For example, in the Middle East the two superpowers settled for a type of ‘division of labour’ formula as they tolerated the acquisition of client states by one another. As time went by, the superpower glue hardened and a kind of institutionalizing process that reinforced mutual involvement dominated the politics of the region.31

As indicated earlier, the influence of the European powers in the Mediterranean suffered a severe setback in 1956 when French and British endeavours in the Suez crisis proved futile. The British Prime Minister Anthony Eden had long been waiting for an opportunity to teach President Nasser a lesson, in large part due to the latter’s anti-Western traits (in 1955 Nasser had received armaments from Czechoslovakia, the first Arab nation to do so; in May 1956 Egypt recognized communist China; Nasser’s affiliation to the non-aligned movement did nothing to improve his image in the West). In October 1956 an opportunity seemed to present itself. Nasser had nationalized the Suez Canal Company in July 1956, following the American abandonment of his Aswan Dam scheme, which seemed to be vital to help combat Egypt’s endemic poverty. The British and the French responded by calling up 20,000 reservists for an invasion of Egypt, with Malta and Cyprus designated as jump-off points.

By late October Britain and France were ready to take action. Though American support could not be assured beforehand, London assumed that Washington would either help when the time came or at least turn a blind eye. But Britain’s calculated risk backfired. Just as the Suez stratagem appeared to be tipping in Britain’s favour, the United States warned that it could exploit sterling’s fragile position on the international money markets. Eden was left with little choice. He immediately withdrew British forces from the area and resigned. France withdrew its Navy from the isthmus in 1959. Thus the Suez fiasco marked the abatement of the role these secondary powers were to play in future Mediterranean politics. The incident also, in one sense, marked the end of the British Empire and the rise of US hegemony.
There was little doubt that the writing was also on the wall for Britain’s Mediterranean policies when Eden’s successor Harold Macmillan ordered a defence review upon taking office. The decolonization process which had really commenced in 1947 with the granting of independence to India, snowballed after a series of speeches by the French and the British head of state. In an address on 16 September 1959, de Gaulle announced that he was ready to recognize ‘self-determination for Algeria’. Macmillan echoed this theme six months later, during an official trip to Africa. In his speech to Parliament in Cape Town he concluded on the theme that the ‘wind of change is blowing through this continent’.

The dissolution of the British Empire removed one of the most important rationales for a British military presence in the Mediterranean, and hence helps to clarify the relatively rapid rate at which the British disengaged from the region. The Secretary of State for Colonies in 1959–61, Iain McLeod, shed further light on the reason for the rapid rate of disengagement from the area in a statement in 1964, when he remarked that the British approach to colonial problems underwent a metamorphosis in the latter months of 1959.

The key to this lies partly in Macmillan’s belief, confirmed by his election victory earlier that year, that the Conservative Party could sustain itself in power only by developing a modern and progressive profile. Facing topical and profoundly contentious decisions on policies towards Europe and nuclear deterrence, Macmillan was ruthlessly determined to shed the colonial albatross which his opponents were striving to clamp around his neck. His African trip in early 1960 was therefore a skilled reconnaissance, prior to a clinical act of disengagement. The granting of independence to Cyprus that year and the blanket decolonization process that followed reflect this change of mood within the Tory ethos.

As Britain gradually disengaged from the area, the United States’ 6th Fleet became the paramount force between 1956 and 1965. In fact, to all intents and purposes, by the mid-1960s it had transformed the basin into an American lake.

By 1965 the process of decolonization in the Mediterranean had come to a conclusion. This resulted in the rise of autonomous political units along the southern shore and the emergence of a number of new actors whose interests and demands now impelled the actions of intrusive, core and peripheral actors. The geopolitical equation in the region became even more complex in the late 1960s as the Soviets began to deploy naval forces in the area and also introduced a vigorous outreach programme directed towards the Arabs. The West in general and the United States in particular deemed this development as a credible threat to Western shipping and oil supplies that either originated or passed through these sea lanes.
A succession of events in the 1970s—the oil crisis in 1973, the process of détente and the suspension of Soviet military expansion in the basin—led the West to reappraise completely its position in the Mediterranean. This re-evaluation developed a character of its own once it became clear that the European Economic Community (EEC), and southern European littoral countries were attempting to distance themselves from Washington’s policies in the area. This is exemplified by the launching of the EEC’s Global Mediterranean Policy in the 1970s and the series of bilateral agreements that were signed between European countries and their Arab counterparts.

The Cold War is therefore a period when intensive patron-client relationships developed in the Mediterranean area. Despite the variance in their forms of intervention, the external powers always succeeded in having some degree of influence on its future development. The superpowers could intensify or reduce both co-operative or conflictual relations in the area. Their involvement could promote regional integration or lead to disintegration. In the Mediterranean the superpower strait-jacket limited regional cohesion and helped to spur centrifugal tendencies. The pattern of relations was intergovernmental political, military and economic dominant. The superpower era illustrates the extensive role external actors can play in the international politics of regions.

The Post-Cold War World

In the post-Cold War era great powers have three policies from which to select, as they attempt to implement a stable form of multipolarity. They can act unilaterally, they can advance bilateral relations, or they can engage in multilateral collaboration. Most great powers employ a mixture of the three in their foreign policies.

Unilateral great power action has decreased in the 1990s. Two reasons help to explain this trend. First, the escalation in the cost of mounting foreign campaigns makes it preferable to seek other great powers to share in the expense. Secondly, any great power acting unilaterally in a faraway region runs the risk of being isolated by the other main actors in the system. Unilateral action is thus usually reserved for situations where a great power is under direct threat of attack.

Contact continues at a bilateral level as great powers extend their alliance network on a one-to-one basis. However, in volatile areas such as the Levant it seems impossible to develop comprehensive bilateral relations with all the countries in the region, as the position of the US illustrates. As a result, great powers have become much more selective in their bilateral candidates, exempting those relations that will not further their self-interest in a specific region or sub-region.
An assessment of the types of interaction that may occur between the littoral states of the Mediterranean and their external allies reveals that interaction is political and economic dominant. Intergovernmental forms of co-operation are mainly concerned with these types of links although some progress has also been registered in the environmental field, as evidenced by the Rio Summit and the Barcelona Convention on the Mediterranean. Cultural and military ties remain *ad hoc*. No progress has been made to establish regular cultural contacts between western Europe and the Middle East (particularly between the southern European, Maghreb and Levant sub-regions) or with the external actors in the area. For example, no concerted European effort has been made to encourage academic exchange visits between the Maghreb and western Europe, perhaps on the lines of existing European Union cultural exchange programmes, which is necessary if out-of-date perceptions and information inherited from a colonial past are to be overcome. As a result, external actors are often forced to base their assumptions on regional configurations without a first-hand understanding of the social fabric or cultural dynamics at work within these regions.

An attempt has been made to detect shifts in intrusive approaches toward regional groupings since the end of the Cold War. Wriggins accurately describes the regional dynamics at work between external and internal actors during the Cold War. The process of seeking external support explains the facility with which the superpowers could intervene in regional affairs. The ‘pull’ of the invitations from the regional states was supplemented by the ‘push’ of the external powers, either pursuing self-interests or acting out their mutual rivalry.37 Although Wriggins’s analysis is concerned with regional relations in south Asia, his summary on the regional effects of major power support can be translated to Mediterranean relations.38 External support alters regional balances in favour of the client, often giving the dependent a temporary or sometimes decisive edge over its rivals in the vicinity, as the Arab-Israeli situation demonstrates. External assistance encourages the client’s regional rivals to seek help from alternative patrons to check against the emergence of a regional power centre, as the Cold War patron-client relationships between Syria and the Soviet Union, and Israel and the United States demonstrated. A constant supply of external assistance often intensifies regional rivalries and may also provoke a regional arms race, if not outright conflict. The US-Israeli partnership and Soviet support for Syria were again characteristic of this trend. External military assistance may also tempt regional leaders to attack a neighbouring country, as Libya did in the case of Chad.

Outside support prolonged stalemates throughout the Cold War as rival major external powers sought to preserve the regional status quo. The Cold War also witnessed instances when ‘clients’ had substantial leverage
over their patrons. Soviet relations with Libya and Syria and US squabbles with Greece and Spain over military base rights illustrate this point.

East-West détente has forced regional leaders to reassess their sources of external support. The change from a bipolar to a more multipolar international system creates a more advantageous situation for external actors in the region. Their assistance becomes more effective in influencing regional dynamics. That is, the more competitive environment for international capital in the 1990s means that only those regional actors who are deemed as politically stable and economically productive will be extended the lines of credit required to make a difference to their international position. The conditions attached by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) to its debt-rescheduling package for Algeria in mid-1995 demonstrates this fact clearly. The countries of the Maghreb are currently attracting less foreign capital than those in east Asia and even less than some others in Latin America. This is due to a number of reasons that include political uncertainty, administrative obstruction, a comparatively unskilled labour force and an inadequate infrastructure.

Arms transfers also affect domestic politics, benefiting those sectors of society obtaining large consignments of military hardware. However, too high a profile of military relationships with major external powers may sometimes give rise to an increase in domestic resistance activities, as the Algeria-France and Morocco-US relationships illustrate. Substantial shifts in domestic political regimes are also frequently followed by changes in alignments with major powers, as post-Cold War relations between Malta and western Europe show.

The disappearance of the Soviet Union leaves the US as the predominant external military actor in the Mediterranean, and has allowed it to consolidate its position in the area. The presence of a single power could help to moderate local crises, as Washington mutes rivalries by cutting off supplies to mavericks in the basin. As an economic hegemon in the area, the European Union could assist the US in this sector by complementing American military power with economic support. But such co-ordination will not be easy to achieve given the more competitive nature of trans-Atlantic relations in the post-Cold War era.

At a bilateral level, the US and France remain the two dominant great power states in the Mediterranean. The US is the leading external actor in the area with strong political, economic and military ties to its southern European allies in NATO. It also has comprehensive agreements with Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Tunisia and Morocco. The sheer economic and defensive power that the US possesses ensures that it will continue to attract the attention of Mediterranean countries at the start of the next millennium. While the post-Cold war period has seen the Americans become more concerned with events in the eastern sector of the basin,
French links in the Mediterranean remain predominant in the western one. As an external great power the United States can act more independently in the area than the internal great power of France, which is much more vulnerable to retaliation from action in the Maghreb, given its geographical proximity to the area and its large Maghrebi emigrant community. Nevertheless, both powers influence the balance of power within the sub-regions bordering the Mediterranean, as US support for Israel and French assistance to the Algerian authorities make clear. Both powers also fuel perceptions of neo-colonialism across the southern shores of the Mediterranean, a hardly surprising finding given the asymmetry between the economic and military presence of the Americans in the Levant and the French in North Africa and that of other powers, such as Britain and Germany. In sum, the key distinction between internal and external great-power roles in international regions is that the latter is much more physically detached from the area in question and, in theory, can therefore adopt a more unilateral stance when it comes to taking action. The Mediterranean case tends to reinforce this observation, especially if one compares the much more flexible approach the Americans have been advocating vis-à-vis the Algerian crisis than that pursued by the French, particularly during the initial stages of the civil war. In any case, the internal and external great power distinction does not change the basic fact that intrusive actors can influence regional dynamics but they cannot dictate patterns of relations within international regions. The US experience in Lebanon and the more recent French endeavours in Algeria demonstrate this point.

More limited bilateral contacts occur between Mediterranean states and individual European Union member states. Spain and Italy have comprehensive political and economic links with Morocco and Tunisia, respectively. Mediterranean countries also have commercial links with Germany and Japan, and are attempting to supplement foreign direct investment from these donors with capital from the Asian power-houses of Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea. To date such efforts have had little success. The entrance of central and eastern Europe on to the investment circuit, coupled with the increase in domestic instability across North Africa, has made it more difficult to obtain funding from potential investors than was the case during the Cold War.

Trends in the aftermath of the Cold War suggest that the roles external powers will play in the Mediterranean will differ in important ways from previous phases of history. In areas of marginal interest, the disappearance of Cold War zero-sum competition for global influence is likely to lead the great powers to disengage from those states disinterested in resolving internal conflicts and introducing reforms to promote democracy and respect for human rights. The challenges confronting North African countries fall within this taxonomy. Unless states such as Algeria attempt
to carry out the reforms cited above, external powers are more likely to opt out of becoming involved in the crisis.

Operations such as the US campaign in Somalia in 1992–93 and the French expedition in Rwanda in 1994 have shown that external powers, including the last superpower, can at best encourage humanitarian policies. Yet it is the internal dynamics and actions of regional governments and non-government leaders that will ultimately control the timing and success of such reforms.45

To summarize, here is a synopsis of the types of great-power action and their influences on the development of international regions. External support has sometimes helped weaker states to preserve their security interests and acted as a deterrence against regional hegemons. The positions of Israel and Egypt in the 1950s illustrate this trend in the eastern sector of the Mediterranean. In certain situations external powers can help to moderate local tensions. In the eastern sector of the Mediterranean, where the rivals Greece and Turkey both receive assistance from a single power—the US—the intensity of their rivalry has been muted by the diplomatic activity of their supplier. More recently, the European Union has also assumed a similar role in the area, as demonstrated by its intervention in the Cyprus affair.

External support often encourages a client’s regional rival to seek assistance from an external power rival of its neighbour’s patron; for example, Syria linked itself with the Soviet Union to counter the United States’ ties with Israel. In contemporary international relations several clients are having to compete for financial assistance from similar donors: Israel’s and Egypt’s position vis-à-vis the US perhaps best illustrate this trend.

The availability of assistance from major power rivals may intensify regional tensions. For example, large transfers of military supplies to the Middle East helps to fuel the arms race in this region and could again provoke an outbreak of hostilities. Arab-Israeli conflicts demonstrate this reoccurring pattern of relations. Current ties between states in the Mediterranean and great powers such as the US, Russia and China may therefore lead to an escalation of regional tensions.

External support can assist in prolonging stalemates. The continuous supply of economic and military supplies removes the necessity to offer concessions to regional rivals. The Moroccan-Algerian stalemate in the western Sahara illustrates this tendency.

External support is sought by both the weaker and the stronger states in an international region as a way of preserving and improving their relative positions. This helps to explain why countries in the Maghreb and Levant have recently sought to form alliances with the West (Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia with western Europe and Jordan with the US).

External assistance can also help to bolster the political faction
receiving supplies. Military regimes are thus able to consolidate their positions, although too high a profile with external actors could result in a domestic backlash. The cases of Spain and Greece in the 1970s reflect this trend. Egypt’s ties with the US in the 1980s and the early 1990s also illustrates this pattern of relations.

Occasionally, clients find that they have substantial leverage when dealing with patrons who were competing for the allegiance of smaller states to help to consolidate their spheres of influence. The American experience with Israel and the Soviet experience with Libya reflect this tendency. The end of the Cold War has seen the number of potential client-states multiply, thus diminishing their bargaining power.

The autonomous nature of indigenous, regional dynamics is reflected by the fact that changes in domestic political regimes are frequently followed by changes in alignments with external powers. Such shifts occur to serve the clients’ own interests.

The state of flux that the international system has been in since the collapse of the Cold War has led all the actors in the international system, including the great powers, to be much more flexible in their foreign policy endeavours than during the period 1945–89. Such flexibility is another factor regarded by many theorists as a hallmark of effective great power concerts. In situations where the direct interests of the non-regional states are concerned they will react decisively as demonstrated by the US in the Gulf War of 1990–91. The collapse of the Cold War has reduced the successor states’ ability to intervene in regional affairs. Indeed, Russia has had to dedicate most of its political and military resources to securing its own borders, as the Chechnya crisis highlights. As Moscow reduces its support to countries in and around the Mediterranean, Washington may decide that it is no longer necessary for it to maintain an extensive network of contacts there. On the other hand, it can also be argued that Washington would face fewer risks of countervailing opposition if it chose to intervene more often.

In international regions where external powers’ interests have largely been derivative from their mutual rivalry, one may expect a decline in their intrusive actions. The implosion of the Soviet Union has already led to US military reductions in western Europe, a trend which is likely to continue. A reduction in superpower overlay will allow regional dynamics to function even more independently. Other things being equal, it may be expected that in asymmetrical international regions, such as the Middle East, aspiring pre-eminent regional power centres will pursue hegemonic goals, and the smaller states in their vicinity will be more prepared to acquiesce. In reality, things are never equal. The collapse of the Soviet Union has upset the foreign policy establishment of many countries in the Mediterranean area that benefited from Soviet support. Without Soviet support long-time rejectionist countries such as Libya and Syria could
adopt more collaborative regional policies. Without the luxury of any serious alternatives, regional powers are likely to seek closer economic and political relationships with the US and western Europe.

The diminution of Soviet influence in the Mediterranean area has resulted in a gradual increase in regional ties with the West in general and the United States in particular. Countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Greece and Turkey already benefit from monetary and defence arrangements with Washington. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Malta and Cyprus are also seeking closer ties with the European Union. However, continued domestic instability in many of these countries is impeding the attainment of far-reaching agreements with great powers. Future external relations in the Mediterranean area will depend less on the activity of the non-regional powers and more on how riparian states consolidate their power and perceive their geo-strategic interests. For example, arms flows to the eastern and the southern sector of the Mediterranean basin are likely to continue at a steady pace in spite of events such as the Arab-Israeli peace process. Regional powers in these Middle Eastern sub-regions will be even more determined to shore up their defences now that patron support can no longer be taken for granted.

The termination of the Cold War has therefore forced regional powers to reassess their foreign policy aims. One outcome that is already noticeable is that the regional challenges of the future lie more in the economic and financial battles for markets than the military battles for territory. One incentive for regional states to end border conflicts (Arab-Israeli, Greece-Turkey-Cyprus) is so that they can participate in international financial markets without any restrictions. The globalization of economic activity which is characterized by the growing frequency of cross-border transactions, the ever-increasing volume of international trade, the growing strength of international investment, and the enhanced complexity of the international division of labour, is therefore likely to increase centrifugal tendencies throughout the international system and especially in less developed areas such as the Mediterranean.

CONCLUSIONS

There are numerous, well-researched chronological and historical accounts of Mediterranean history. For this reason, this chapter does not include any extensive narrative account of them. Instead, the scheme of analysis is applied in a chronological manner with the main aim of providing some insight into how the Mediterranean has evolved as a region (Pryor, 1988). Such a review of the Mediterranean reveals that general tendencies towards regional transformation have been prevalent throughout. In an attempt to identify the characteristics that influence
regional sea-changes, this concept has been approached as a unit of analysis in itself. In order to examine this entity systematically, particular attention was given to several regional modalities that have dominated patterns of relations in the area throughout the ages.

The first era discussed was that of classical Greece and the Roman Empire. The eighth century BC saw the beginning of two hundred years of colonial expansion by the Greeks that largely served as a blueprint for the Romans. Even after Greek civilization had been irreparably damaged, its spiritual and intellectual legacy permeated every aspect of Roman life. The Hellenic phase saw the establishment of transnational and intergovernmental relations in the Mediterranean area.

The Romans succeeded in uniting the basin at the height of their conquests, controlling the main trade routes that would guarantee them the necessary resources to ensure their superiority. Their mostly self-contained trading system, providing roads, ports, currency and security, is an example of a high degree of cohesion (social, economic and organizational) and an elaborate network of alliances. Fragmentation of the Roman Empire did not result in the complete disintegration of this system of governance in the area.

In the second era examined Rome’s hegemonic grip was replaced by a system that was bipolar in nature, with the Christians commanding the northern shores of the Mediterranean and the Arabs controlling most of the southern coastline. The Mediterranean became a boundary zone and later a conflict-based region between two civilizations. Although the balance of power shifted from time to time, particularly when the Arabs registered a series of victories that saw them advance into continental Europe and establish a foothold on the Iberian peninsula, no sole power could repeat the same federal feat of the Romans.

The emergence of the Italian city-states in the eleventh century provided one of the case studies that help us to understand the internal dynamics of the peripheral sector. Their erratic foreign policy agenda demonstrates the fluid nature of this classification: at times they approached the core sector (when they co-operated with Rome), and at others they shifted to the periphery (when they were aligned with the Arabs). A gradual, but definite devolution of power was hence under way. Much smaller actors now possessed the ability to influence the course of developments. Their main concern nevertheless remained to ensure their own survival in this erratic intergovernmental and transnational type of regional system.

The third era witnessed the expansion of the European nation-states in the Mediterranean that resulted in a multipolar squabble, with Britain emerging as the dominant player. During the seventeenth and the eighteenth century Britain developed a complex network of intergovernmental relations throughout the Mediterranean. In several ways this period
illustrates the forms of intrusive sector penetration into regional patterns of interaction.

From an historical perspective, European states did not project power in any significant way before 1500, the exception being medieval Europe’s brief Crusading campaign in the eastern Mediterranean during the twelfth century. Like other centres of civilization, Europe was thus predominantly self-contained.

British supremacy in the Mediterranean was a unique development in the sense that, for the first time, a non-Mediterranean power supervised the waterways that linked the Atlantic to the Levant. In addition to recognising early on that the Mediterranean would have to be its main priority if it wanted to remain unchallenged, Britain’s success must also be attributed to its ability to delegate tasks to other regional actors. Having skilfully understood the internal dynamics at work in the Mediterranean of the eighteenth century, London established the necessary alliances with the core and peripheral sectors that would ensure its dominant position.

In the section dedicated to developments in the twentieth century, specific attention was given to the features of the intrusive system during the Cold War, that is, the rich western and northern countries against the poorer eastern and southern powers. In addition, this analysis of the antagonism and co-operation inculcated within the Mediterranean by the two superpowers also provides a comprehensive panorama of the pattern of relations operating in the area until 1989. This also serves as essential background information to the final section that examines the process of regional transformation in the post-Cold War period.

After experiencing two world wars, the Mediterranean again found itself under the scrutiny of a non-Mediterranean power. Initially the United States was reluctant to fill the vacuum being created by Britain’s gradual withdrawal from the Mediterranean area. A proactive foreign policy was, however, adopted, shortly after it became apparent that it would prove costlier in the long run if they had to return in a crisis situation.

As with interaction within every international region, international politics in the Mediterranean area were eclipsed by the actions of the two superpowers. While the secondary and middle powers of the region (France, Italy, Greece and Israel) formed a weak core that was subordinate to the intrusive system, the smaller littoral states (the peripheral sector) either pledged allegiance to one of the superpowers or else opted for the alternative of non-alignment. Intergovernmental relations therefore developed along geopolitical lines.

Throughout history, concerns of international stability have been paramount in the process of region-building. Stability has meant the preservation of peace and the maintenance of a certain distribution of power. The Mediterranean and its surroundings were quite often a battlefield where opposing interests and ambitions clashed. Every power in
the regional matrix tried to expand its influence while carefully ensuring that its position in the system was not threatened.

In the classical Mediterranean context, regional variation often consisted of the core (Greece and Rome), dominating its peripheral sector (the entire basin and coastlines), with little or no influence from the intrusive system (Persia). In the medieval Mediterranean context regional modification witnessed the intrusive system (in particular Britain and later Germany) commanding both the core (France, Italy and the Ottoman Turks) and peripheral sectors (the rest of the basin). Once the region fell into the European continental orbit, Britain employed its superiority at sea to advance further its more general global interests.

In the post-war Mediterranean context, regional transformation again saw the intrusive system (the superpowers) control the international relations of the core (their client states in the littoral) and the peripheral (the non-aligned, colonies and minor states) sector. Thus, once Europe was absorbed into the bipolar Cold War system, the Mediterranean again shared a similar destiny, on this occasion with the United States substituting for Britain as the main actor (see Table 11.1).

In the contemporary Mediterranean context regional change has somewhat ironically acquired the meaning of preserving the status quo. Most of the regional actors are content with the position they currently hold and lack the means and the will to undertake major destabilizing actions in the area. Throughout, mastery at sea has been one of the decisive factors that has contributed to successful campaigns, from the Punic Wars to the Second World War. During the inter-war years the Mediterranean was often referred to as a region. The Cold War saw the Mediterranean divided into three regional blocs, namely western Europe, eastern Europe and the Middle East. In the post-Cold War period several authors discuss Mediterranean affairs through sub-regional prisms, namely southern Europe, the Levant and the Maghreb (see Table 11.2 for a summary of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dominant Patterns of Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian/Muslim</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian city-states</td>
<td>Transnational/intergovernmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain (European)</td>
<td>Intrusive intergovernmental dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>Intrusive intergovernmental dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Cold War</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.1: Dominant patterns of relations in the Mediterranean
these perceptions of regionality in the Mediterranean area during the twentieth century).

Table 11.2:
Literary perceptions of regionality in the Mediterranean area during the twentieth century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Mediterranean Area</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-War 1919–39</td>
<td>Mediterranean Region</td>
<td>Silva, Newbigin, Polson, Vannutelli, Petrie, Aymard, Boveri, Hummel and Siewart, Greenwall, Monroe, Ludwig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As its name suggests, the Mediterranean is a ‘sea among lands’ and the continental factor has on numerous occasions played a significant role. While a number of the leading players have been maritime powers (Carthage, Venice, Britain and the United States), others have led their expeditions from the land (Rome, the Arabs, Spain and the Ottoman Turks). This further suggests that no single factor has influenced the pattern of regional transformation in the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean evolved from a comprehensive international region in Hellenic times to a federal system under the Romans. The arrival of the Christian/Muslim world resulted in the relegation of the Mediterranean from this category. The Mediterranean initially became a frontier between the North and the South. As patterns of interaction intensified the area developed into a conflict-based region. The rise of the Italian city-states saw the revival of transnational patterns of trade extending throughout the area. The dominance of Britain in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century is a clear example of an intrusive dominant sector in international regional politics. Intrusive intergovernmental patterns of relations superseded contacts between littoral states, as first the Europeans and later the two superpowers dominated Mediterranean politics. As this trend
became a permanent feature of international relations across the Mediterranean, the notion of a Mediterranean international region became more of an historical reality. Comprehensive-type relations in Hellenic times developed into centralized exchanges under the Romans. The collapse of the Roman Empire saw the fragmentation of these relations along both the west-east and later the north-south axis (see Table 11.3 for parametric shifts in the Mediterranean).

Table 11.3:
A historical perspective of parametric change in the Mediterranean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Dominant Constellation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Mediterranean</td>
<td>Comprehensive international region</td>
<td>Hellenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Mediterranean 600–1517</td>
<td>Empire</td>
<td><em>Pax Romana</em> Spain, Austria/Ottoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro nation-state</td>
<td>W/E</td>
<td>Spain/Austria/France/Ottoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th and 17th century</td>
<td>W/E–N/S</td>
<td>Britain/Ottoman/FR/RU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th century</td>
<td>W/E–N/S</td>
<td>Britain/Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th and 19th century</td>
<td>W/E–N/S</td>
<td>France, Britain/Italy/Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 20th century</td>
<td>W/E–N/S</td>
<td>US/USSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War 1945–89</td>
<td>W–N/E/S</td>
<td>US, Europe/Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Cold War</td>
<td>(WN)/(ES)</td>
<td>US (Japan)/Europe/Russia/China?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st century</td>
<td>W/N/E/S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parametric Definition

*Note:*
Hellenic: comprehensive international region
*Pax Romana:* Federal Empire
Christian/Muslim W/E–N/S: West/East divide; North/South conflict region
Rise of European nation-state W/E: West/East divide;
16th and 17th century W/E–N/S: West/East divide; North/South European divide
18th century W/E-N/S: West/East divide; North/South European divide
19th century W/E–N/S: West/East divide; North/South colonial race
Early 20th century W/E–N/S: West/East divide; North/South colonial empires
Cold War W–N/E/S: West-North/East divide; West-North/South Third World
Post-Cold War (WN)/(ES): West, North synonymous/East, South synonymous
21st century W/N/E/S: West/North (Europe)/East (China)/South underdeveloped
Whether the Mediterranean area will again revert to a more intergovernmental or even transnational, international-region type of modality in the post-Cold War world now that superpower overlay has been lifted is open to debate. What is certain is that the emergence of a more multipolar international system in the last seven years has seen an increase in multilateral intrusive behaviour in the world. Great powers are eager, at least to appear, to be acting multilaterally in foreign policy endeavours. The United States’ emphasis on obtaining a UN mandate before it acts outside its borders as it did in the Gulf War in 1990–91, Somalia in 1992–93 and Haiti in 1994 illustrates this trend.

An assessment of post-Cold War regional dynamics in the Mediterranean area reveals that the end of the Cold War, the process of European union and consistent efforts to secure a durable peace in the Middle East have changed the parameters of Mediterranean regional politics. One significant shift is that Mediterranean littoral states are much more interested to develop active relations with the rest of the world. Although they are still apprehensive about the implications of an enhanced American or European role in the area, they actively seek relations with the West now that competition for foreign direct investment has increased.

A United States security presence in the vicinity as a balance against the revival of old or new hegemonic threats, or new terrorist threats under the guise of Islamic fundamentalism, is also still favoured among the majority of countries in the basin. Appeals to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone or to establish a multilateral security forum may find their place in the future, but so far both remain symbolic aspirations.

Post-Cold War considerations have led outside powers and international organizations to re-evaluate their policies towards the Mediterranean. Conversely, regional leaders have had to explore new external alignments in the light of sea-changes in the international system since 1989. Two recent changes in the dynamics of the Mediterranean regional politics may affect the nature of intrusive influence in the Mediterranean. First is the Arab-Israeli reconciliation process. The peace treaties signed between Israel and the PLO and Israel and Jordan in the early 1990s may become preliminary steps towards establishing a cooperative pattern of intergovernmental relations in the Levant. Rapprochement between Israel and the Arab countries has the additional benefit of removing one of the stumbling blocks that has prevented closer relations between the Levant and other Middle Eastern sub-regions such as the Maghreb. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) international financial meetings held in Casablanca, Amman and Cairo in 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively, highlight the potential that peaceful relations could bring to this international region. If relative stability persists, and this is no foregone conclusion, attracting foreign direct investment to the area may become a more feasible enterprise.
POLICY AND STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The second shift in Mediterranean politics is both internally and externally motivated. After years of being accused of marginalizing and isolating its southern flank, the EU has proposed establishing a free-trade zone in the Mediterranean area through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Process that was launched in Barcelona in November 1995. The free-trade area is supposed to incorporate Europe with the Levant and the Maghreb. At first, it might appear that the EU is on the path of establishing some kind of co-prosperity sphere or an outer zone of suzerainty in the Mediterranean. In reality, it must be stressed that the EU has yet to formulate a coherent vision of its long-term goals that could justify such possibilities (Calleya, 1997b). In addition, the EU does not have the necessary resources to contend with the disparities that exist across the Mediterranean. At most, the EU’s most recent free-trade proposal can promote economic interaction among states in the area and indirectly promote political exchanges. It is unlikely that its free-trade plan will elevate or even address cultural, environmental or military relations.

If successful, this extra-Mediterranean-led effort to enhance economic co-operation between Europe and the Middle East could indirectly benefit trans-Mediterranean initiatives. The evolution of an interdependent Mediterranean economy would make it more difficult for actors in the basin to upset the balance of power due to the economic consequences they would have to confront as a result. Economic interdependence could eventually lead these riparian states to unite on certain issues and to put additional pressure on their extra-regional principal trading partners.

Given the lack of unity in the perceptions of the countries in the Mediterranean and those powers with an interest in the area, it is unrealistic to assume that a single international organization can contend with the security challenges across the Mediterranean. A more realistic alternative is one in which a single international organization, for example the EU, is assisted by others which have an interest in the area. As the international organization with the largest proportion of Mediterranean member states and the most active socio-economic actor in the Mediterranean, the EU seems well positioned to lead European initiatives in the south. In comparison with other organizations with an interest in the area, the EU is perceived in a much more positive fashion by the majority of countries in the Mediterranean. For example, NATO’s Cold War military record makes it an unattractive partner to several countries in the Middle East. An increased NATO presence in the Mediterranean could even increase accusations of ‘neo-imperialist’ designs by Arabists and Islamists and thus fuel support for the already very active Islamic fundamentalist groupings operating throughout the Middle East region. American participation in both NATO and the OSCE also makes both organizations appear more like vehicles of great-power
interests than ones concerned with advancing Mediterranean causes. Without the creation of a trans-Mediterranean international forum, which would certainly be perceived as much more representative of Mediterranean regional interests and not some self-referenced or great-power interests, the EU appears the most acceptable international organization across the Mediterranean that could intensify co-operative patterns of relations throughout this area.

Post-Cold War international affairs show that multilateralism has failed to address effectively the increase in domestic regional hostilities. Over the last seven years most regions of the world have been touched by a resurgence of such intolerance based on traits that include ethnicity, language and religion. The Mediterranean space is no exception. The ad hoc and often ineffective international response to many of these crises has cast a question mark on the relevance of the multilateral mechanisms designed to contend with different types of problem, that is, of an international nature. Civil conflict and regional tensions are not the only security issues that need to be addressed in the Mediterranean. Yet international organizations must adapt their modus operandi if they are to play a pivotal role in diffusing such contentious issues as environmental degradation, economic disparities, migration, weapons proliferation and narcotics trafficking.47

The United Nations remains the principal international organization for achieving such multilateral endeavours. The UN is, however, already suffering from over-stretch and cannot be expected to focus on such an extensive list of challenges on its own. Other institutions and agencies in the area such as NATO, the EU, the WEU, the OSCE, the Arab League and the UMA will also have to play a supportive role to the UN if an effective, multilateral, Mediterranean mechanism is to emerge. In a world without a political, ideological or geographical strait-jacket, each institution or agency can play on its comparative advantages to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Multilateral agencies must, however, be cautioned against expecting rewards from their efforts in the short to medium term. In an area as diverse as the Mediterranean, regional co-ordination and co-operation are probably the most that can be initially achieved. For example, a more active OSCE in the Mediterranean can lead to an increase in political, social and environmental exchanges. Non-member OSCE states in the Mediterranean have already shown a keen interest in co-operating in this forum and there has also been a call to extend associate membership to this area (OSCE Mediterranean Seminar Report, 1997). Such multilateral governmental action could lay the groundwork for similar exchanges at a transnational level. If supplemented by non-governmental organizations that are already active in the area, existing disparities between the west
European and Middle Eastern international regions may be gradually bridged.

Several countries bordering the Mediterranean have sought external support to help to create a single institutional framework in which discourse and dialogue on Mediterranean issues can take place. On the other hand, states such as Libya and Syria remain reluctant to engage themselves actively in such endeavours for a number of reasons: sometimes because of animosities dating back to former colonial days and also due to mutual rivalry among themselves for spheres of influence. The superpower track record in the Mediterranean offers two cautionary notes in this respect. First, external actors can only influence and not dictate regional dynamics. International organizations such as the EU must therefore read and decode the mixed signals originating in the Mediterranean if they do not want their efforts to consolidate a sphere of influence across this waterway to result in a conflict-based international region. If cross-border economic measures are introduced in consultation and agreement with the Mediterranean states, the EU free-trade scheme could act as a catalyst toward regional collaboration in other areas.

The Mediterranean’s dependence on EU commercial markets is an important factor in this equation. It affects the foreign policy agenda of the littoral countries that depend on EU trade to spur economic growth. The majority of Mediterranean states have trade and investment links which already make them an integral part of the European trading zone. Nevertheless, the EU will have to advance carefully if it is not to upset the concept of ‘balancing’ in relations between Mediterranean states and their external patrons. If non-regional actions are perceived as attempts to dominate intra-Mediterranean patterns of interaction, the Mediterranean states could retaliate by uniting and becoming less co-operative in their dealings with external actors who have substantial political and economic interests in the area. This would certainly be the case if such a trans-Mediterranean backlash included the key oil and gas producers.

In the post-Cold War period domestic politics play a major role in foreign policy considerations. This trend is likely to continue as internal interest groups become more assertive. This is especially the case in countries across the Maghreb, particularly Algeria, where Islamic movements are already constraining government policies. If current Arab regimes are not pressured by external actors at both a bilateral and a multilateral level to establish working relationships with other political activists within their boundaries, the aspiration of nurturing more intense co-operative patterns of trans-Mediterranean relations will surely recede.

It is a truism that the end of the Cold War has released the superpower grip on the Mediterranean. But the indicators discussed above suggest that one type of intrusive dominant system (bipolar superpower model) has been swept aside only to make room for a different type (multipolar...
great-power model). This more multipolar design is reflected in the increase of activity registered by international organizations in regional relations. The more non-Mediterranean multilateral organizations come to dominate patterns of relations in the Mediterranean area, the more they are likely to stifle a resurgence of intra-Mediterranean patterns of relations. As a result, contemporary European international organization involvement in the Mediterranean is best seen as a boundary management exercise, which aims at safeguarding the regional dynamics of integration in western Europe from those of fragmentation which are active in the Middle East.

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If there is a Mediterranean vortex into which navies and merchant mariners have sailed over the centuries, it is culture—not a single culture, but the interstices and fringes of the many cultures which render the Mediterranean the crossroads of civilizations. In this semi-enclosed transit basin, sea travel has enabled dominant and appurtenant cultures to penetrate and influence many indigenous peoples. Distinct populations and cultures became proximous through travel, trade and war. This has long had implications for strategy, policy and commerce. If cleavages among civilizations represent flash points, they have actually clashed in few arenas so circumscribed as the limited and intense space of the Mediterranean.

In 1850, the French writer and poet Théophile Gautier visited Malta during his circum-ambulation of the Mediterranean. He was struck by the intensity of culture meeting culture and amazed by the capacity of civilizations to meet, absorb, meld and move on. It was the ebbing and flowing of cultures through the Lascaris Gate at Valletta above Malta’s Grand Harbor in the absence of great incidents that inspired Gautier to write, ‘Par cette porte, va et vient une foule bigarrée et cosmopolite; des Tunisiens, des Arabes, des Grecs, des Turcs…et les Européens de différents pays.’

From Malta, the flotsam and jetsam of Mediterranean and other civilizations was and remains observable. Western civilization occupies the northern rim of the basin. Just east are orthodox and Islamic civilizations, to the southeast are Islamic and Judaic cultures, with Islamic civilization occupying nearly the full southern rim. And there are other sub-regional identifications, such as the Maghreb, the Levant and the linguistically distinguished states of Mediterranean Europe. For centuries, most of these cultures encountered one another via the sea. Seafaring civilizations
dominated the region. Clashes among distinct cultures occurred, but these were but one feature of the broad sweep of Mediterranean history.

At the end of the twentieth century as Western scholars searched for a post-Cold War paradigm to appraise international relations, the Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington postulated that henceforth civilizations will clash. He wrote, ‘The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural... The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.’2 Huntington more fully elaborated this theme in his 1996 book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.*3 He wrote that ‘culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilizational identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration and conflict in the Post-Cold War world.’4 Huntington issued a clarion call:

>a civilization-based world order is emerging: societies sharing cultural affinities co-operate with each other... The survival of the West depends on... Westerners accepting their civilization as unique not universal and uniting to renew and preserve it against challenges from non-Western societies.5

If diverse cultures represent challenges, conflict and war, then what are the prospects for the Mediterranean, where so many distinct cultures thrive and project themselves on and into one another in such a limited space? Does the contemporary reality of Mediterranean life support Huntington’s theory?

A level-headed appraisal begins by returning to the axiomatic basis of all civilizations; the concept of culture. Culture is a society’s customs, traditions, tools and ways of thinking. It is a process driven by the individual seeking to fulfill basic human needs. For the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski ‘culture comprises inherited artifacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values’.6 It is the human activity by which people define their relationship to their universe. Thus the analysis of culture is an ‘interpretive task encompassing an ongoing search for meaning’.7 One must sort out operational codes, myths and flows of social discourse. The exercise reveals that civilizations are complex, messy and manifest, overlapping and conflicting perspectives.

Coursing the veins of every culture are perspectives. These are what make cultures distinct. Perspectives are formed by individual and group identifications, their expectations and demands.8 Viewing cultures and civilizations via a horizontal optic alone reveals only surface identifications. With a vertical examination the full complexity of overlapping and conflicting identifications accompanied by expectations and demands become apparent. ‘Clashes’ among civilizations are conflicts
among collective demands, at times born of cultural identifications and community expectations.

Animating every culture are value processes. These often correspond to the values of the environing community. When one community, such as a state, comprises multiple cultures community mechanisms mediate value outcomes in the common interest. Thus, while a particular culture may shape perspectives about power, wealth, rectitude and other values, the wider culture establishes authoritative arrangements for decision-making about these and all value processes. Thus a culture and its value processes are a continuing process of redefinition both temporally and spatially, and in which individuals behave collectively for the common interest. As Malinowski noted, ‘co-operation is the essence of every cultural achievement’.

A culture cumulatively describes ‘the most distinctive patterns of value distribution and institutional practice to be found in the world community’. There are often gaps between value goals and outcomes; between what is aspired to and what is achieved. Every culture assigns value priorities in a distinctive manner. These priorities may be observed in their institutional manifestations. ‘Institutional practices vary greatly from culture to culture and from value to value.’ Value priorities differ among cultures. And institutional practices vary greatly from culture to culture, within and across civilizations. A country identified as part of Islamic civilization may share more with Western civilization in value-outcomes than with more culturally traditional neighbors.

Expectations and demands are shared across cultures and across civilizational divides. Values such as power and wealth are shared and shaped in ways consonant with the greater cultural myth. This is accomplished via decisions deemed by the community to be authoritative and controlling. This process has come to be termed ‘law’—a means of making choices about dividing up the weal and woe of life. Law is fundamentally a process of decision which mediates value processes within and between cultures, across and among communities.

Legal process bears the imprint of the culture that spawned it. If the indigenous culture was influenced by an external culture, that culture’s legal system may have more in common with a distant approach to law than a neighboring one. Thus, rather than shari‘ah or civil law, Malta has a common law system. Many communities, although not amounting to civilizations, consist of more than one culture while having a single legal system. This is because legal process reflects the expectations of the entire community and not merely component cultures. Thus, law performs another important operation—it clarifies the common interest.

The long-run efficacy of a legal system depends upon the common interests of the participants in the system. They must recognize their interests as common and these must be reflected in continuing predispositions which
support the arrangements, prescriptions and procedures comprising the system. Ascertaining law in any community, from micro to Mediterranean to global, requires the appraising of the common interest and its fluctuations. This requires a vertical examination of social processes. Reactions to the Koran may be more indicative of a finding of ‘law’ than a secular constitution. The myth of legal positivism will surely be less relevant than the reality of the US 6th Fleet. Some law, lex imperfecta, is uneven and has no teeth. Other artifacts which appear to have legal force may merely be lex simulata, or simulated law, so termed because elites do not intend its application. Hence, what appears on the surface may be neither authoritative nor controlling, and therefore not law.

Civilizations incorporate states, and some states incorporate several civilizations. But not every phenomenon labeled a ‘civilization’ can be construed as the operational code for the people and nations it presumes to contain. Much of what is described as civilization may be myth. The reliability of a myth system for normative guidance will vary according to the community and culture. The real operational code may be an unofficial, normative system, existing wholly apart from the myth. But in any social context a myth may be the subject of intense expectations and demands. Myth and mythic symbols have marked Mediterranean identifications through the centuries. They become especially salient when disputes are settled by violence. Communities have rallied under the effective symbols of the cross, the Koran and national banners manifesting other myths of identification. But symbols of myth may obscure cultural, and hence civilizational dynamics. Thus how much of the Algerian Islamic civilization is myth and how much is operational code? Would the mix be similar in Egypt? What is the symbolic effect of the Koran in Turkey? Does the symbol of jihad resonate as effectively in Tunisia as in Libya? Who and how many would choose to die for the myth?

Much description of civilizations in the ‘clashing’ construct is really of identifying symbols. This is why the ‘clashing civilizations’ thesis sacrifices a vertical analysis for a horizontal one. A vertical look at any civilization reveals identifications with neighboring and even distant civilizations. Symbols are shared and contemporary operational codes often displace traditional myths. There are more minarets and chadors in France every year; the southern Mediterranean rim presses for closer trade relations and exchanges with the north; the peoples of the Orthodox world clamor for membership in, or association with, the European Union; and each civilization is penetrated by CNN, the BBC World Service, Coca-Cola and MTV. But there are reactions—the garrisoning, the self-reference effect accruing from encounters with the ‘other’—the rise of Le Pen in France and his followers on the continent, and the violence of Islamic militantism expressed as jihad. The clash-of-civilizations thesis reinforces the self-reference effect.
But there is a trend which in degrees now permeates Mediterranean and all traditional civilizations. This is the spread of ‘scientific civilization’. The application of science to industry has engendered a global community which now shares technologies to improve an increasingly common eco-niche. Its values are distinctly individualistic and are conveyed about the planet by highly sophisticated, informational conduits. Vast numbers of members of civilizations defined by traditional culture now participate in scientific civilization. Because of access to the Internet and related technologies, scientific civilization has a far greater reach than what Huntington calls the ‘Davos Culture’ in which the same 8,000 businessmen descend on Davos in Switzerland for the World Economic Forum every year. Thus value processes are no longer bounded by the cultures which produce them. They ooze and in so doing generate common interests culturally unbound. Expectations and demands are shared across cultures and across civilizational divides.

Scientific civilization permeates traditional civilizations largely because of what the New Haven School of Jurisprudence terms the ‘maximization postulate’. According to this principle of human behavior, people pursue actions in ways calculated to leave them better off than if they had not pursued those actions. Thus advanced technological tools such as computers are found in traditional villages. Previously insular communities connect to a world beyond, enhancing their enlightenment, skill and wealth. Communities resort to law rather than war as a strategy for the achievement of preferred outcomes. And an international legal regime spans the Mediterranean regulating security, transit, trade, the environment, narcotics, migration and dispute settlement. Mediterranean states, comprising single or multiple cultures and part of formerly antagonistic civilizations, now find such arrangements to be in their interests. The basin, and its bordering region, is a small space and the problems are too large for any single player. The maximization postulate displaces the clash of civilizations.

One gauge of clashing perspectives and civilizations is by the settlement of disputes. Are disputes settled by mediation, arbitration, good offices or war? While the Mediterranean is marked by the resolution of disputes by war, there is also a long history of dispute settlement by designated peaceful mechanisms. Around the basin these have been employed to maximize positions despite, or perhaps because of, cultural friction. Such channels, arrangements and mechanisms pre-empt civilizational clashes.

Radically distinct cultures notwithstanding, it has been the common interest of Mediterranean states to engage in trade. Trade brought contact between cultures and civilizations but it also brought war. When disputes arose from the trading relationship, as opposed to circumstances ancillary to that relationship, peaceful mechanisms to resolve those disputes became crucial. Thus more than 300 years ago the Consolato di Mare flourished in
the Mediterranean as an authoritative arrangement for the settlement of maritime disputes. Substantive and procedural rules were drafted and codified and thereafter applied by judge-consuls in the great trading ports beginning in the fifteenth century. Dr David Attard observes that the Consolato di Mare emerged as a process ‘to establish a uniform maritime law throughout the Mediterranean not by domination, but by a consensus emanating from the commercial sense which characterized the flourishing trading centres of the period’.15 This consensus-building was the product of nations and merchants maximizing their positions and settling disputes by means other than war because it was in their common interest to do so.

A Mediterranean trading relationship is likely to include very diverse cultures. For example, a French buyer may acquire goods from a Libyan seller. To say these merchants represent different cultures is to say that they are equally of very different legal cultures. One is shaped by values embodied in the Napoleonic Code and the other by the Koran. The moment the businessmen shake hands and seal the deal they bring centuries old traditions to the table, often unwitting as to the implications until something goes wrong. Goods may be lost at sea, or the contract may be breached in good faith, bad faith or no faith at all. Will the French party be pleased to submit the dispute to the Libyan shari‘ah system? Will the Libyan be eager to pursue the claim in the French civil code system. What if one trading party is a state? When such a deal goes sour, mythic symbols of identifications can reshape and intensify demands, convoluting earlier expectations.

In trans-Mediterranean dispute settlement, an operational code emerged. The outcome-determinative effect of each party’s legal culture was tacitly admitted. Thus disputes are now removed from the constraints and biases of legal cultures and submitted to an external entity having its own procedures and control mechanisms. These were often ad hoc, but now they are by design endowed with institutional longevity. These arrangements have evolved as modern international arbitration; ‘a legally authorized method of dispute resolution, which is optional to the parties, subject to legal regulation, and contingent on jurisdictional supervision and enforcement’.16 In short, ‘arbitration is a delegated and restricted power to make certain types of decisions in certain prescribed ways’.17

International arbitration is not new to the Mediterranean. Regional businessmen have resolved disputes using a variety of arbitration regimes and generally choosing London, Paris or Geneva as the place of arbitration. An arbitration center was established at Cairo. But owing to concerns about stability and violence the Cairo center has experienced difficulty in attracting business. The newest and most promising venue is now Malta. The Malta Arbitration Centre is the newest Mediterranean dispute-resolution facility. It brings the Consolato del Mare full circle and
full forward, 300 years later. It was established by legislation first introduced in the Maltese Parliament in 1996. The purpose is ‘to encourage and facilitate the settlement of disputes through arbitration in Malta, to establish the Malta Arbitration Centre as a centre for domestic arbitration and international commercial arbitration, to make provisions regulating the conduct of arbitration proceedings and the recognition and enforcement of certain arbitral awards’. The venue is particularly well suited for the settlement of disputes among parties of the distinct legal cultures of the Mediterranean.

The Maltese have been trans-Mediterranean and cross-cultural traders for centuries. There is a pool of local commercial experience reaching as far as Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United States. The well-entrenched common law system with English roots is congenial to business people and lawyers from Islamic or civil code systems. Owing to the Maltese finesse in accommodating many cultures, including their legal and business practices over the centuries, the Malta Arbitration Centre inherits a legacy of meeting the special requirements relating to disputes born of distinct cultural perspectives. This will go a long way to douse Mediterranean flash-points of civilizational clashes.

In concluding international contracts, parties and their counsel plan for the eventuality of a dispute by inserting a clause to arbitrate. A critical operation in planning for dispute settlement is preparing for jurisdiction and the selection of a venue or arbitral *situs*. Concerns include the stability of the forum regime, the integrity of the judicial system, the legal culture, the potential for judicial intrusion into an award, and the possibility of review and set-aside. These are issues in many Mediterranean states which may otherwise be suitable arbitral fora candidates. And if an arbitration clause calls for the payment of interest, most Muslim states of the Mediterranean would view the clause and award as a nullity. The Maltese arbitration legislation meets the needs of contracting parties by closely tracking and incorporating the widely accepted Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). The UNCITRAL model law provides guidance to nations which adopt national arbitration laws so as to ensure uniformity in arbitral procedure, enforcement and review.

Malta has taken concrete steps to insure the trans-border currency of arbitration by adopting and ratifying the UN Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (the New York Convention). This a kind of international full-faith and credit instrument by which signatories recognize and give force to foreign arbitral awards. The New York Convention is a state’s ultimate manifestation of assent to be bound by the authoritative arrangements and outcomes of an arbitration system which is becoming a principal strut of global commerce.
As a general matter, arbitral awards enjoy greater currency than do the individual judgments of national courts. An arbitration award can be brought into the court of any of the more than 100 New York Convention signatory states, reduced to a judgment and enforced. That is, the award can be turned into money. Any award rendered in Malta can be executed and enforced in any other signatory state of the New York Convention. Nearly any matter may be arbitrated in Malta and a resulting award can be reduced to a judgment by a Maltese court. Most jurisdictions whose governments have adhered to the New York Convention, including the United States, now take the position that the defense of sovereign immunity to the attachment of national assets is precluded by accession to the Convention. Hence mixed state-private party arbitration, which characterizes many maritime disputes, is greatly facilitated. Resort to international arbitration is growing with respect to all categories of dispute.

A full and fair opportunity to be heard, predictability and speed are desirable and key dispute resolution features. Full fairness in the arbitration hearing is ensured in large measure by the applicable arbitral rules. The Malta arbitration law, by incorporating the UNCITRAL Model Law, provides that ‘The parties shall be treated equally and each party shall be given a full and fair opportunity of presenting his case.’ Predictability turns on the substantive law applied. A well-crafted arbitration clause includes a choice of law provision agreed upon by the parties well before the dispute arises. The Malta arbitration act provides, in keeping with relevant provisions of the UNCITRAL Model Law, that parties are free to choose the substantive law to be applied to the dispute. Thus, although the arbitration venue is Malta, the parties may decide to apply the rule of any legal system singularly or in combination, including relevant conflict of laws rules. Parties are also free to agree on the rules of procedure. Formal rules of evidence are usually not used although the parties may decide otherwise. Normally, each side selects one arbitrator and the two select a third who serves as chairman. Alternatively, parties may decide that the arbitral panel shall consist of as few as one.

The national legislation of the place of arbitration, or the lex arbitri, determines the level of involvement by the courts in the conduct of the arbitration and its aftermath. Parties who choose arbitration do not want to find themselves later in court litigation. Thus where lawyers and business people will closely scrutinize Malta as the lex arbitri is in any possible intrusion into an award by the Maltese judicial system. Part VI of the Maltese legislation is devoted to ‘Powers of the Court with respect to Arbitrations’. Judicial intervention is limited. The grounds to set aside an award are extremely narrow and track Article 34 of the UNCITRAL Model Law. Thus, to set aside an award, the applicant must prove to the satisfaction of the Maltese Court of Appeal, that:
(1) a party...was under some incapacity to enter the arbitration agreement,
(2) the agreement was legally invalid according to the laws by which it was drafted,
(3) the notice to arbitrate was not made,
(4) a party’s participation in the proceedings were impeded,
(5) the award is of a dispute not contemplated by the parties,
(6) the award concerns matters beyond the scope of the arbitration, in which case those matters are severable,
(7) the composition of the tribunal or the arbitral procedure was not in accordance with the agreement of the parties.

These narrow set-aside grounds provide protection to the parties who could otherwise fall victim to fraud, duress or unfair practice. The Maltese legislation maintains an important balance by ensuring the integrity of arbitration proceedings, while eschewing a level of court intrusion that has rendered other venues less attractive.

Administrative support is an important practical consideration in the selection of an arbitral venue. The quality of the support an arbitration institution musters can have a direct impact on the efficiency, speed and even the fairness of the proceedings. The support available in Malta is of the highest quality. The services are comparable to European venues. Funds for the arbitration can be freely transferred in and out of the country, and documents can be imported into and out of Malta. Communications infrastructure are advanced and a modern international airport and seaport provide easy Mediterranean and European connections. The government has designated the Malta Arbitration Centre among its highest priorities. The Maltese Bar includes many practitioners who have been trained in England, the United States and the European continent and who have legal and commercial experience from every side of the Mediterranean. As it has since the time of the Knights of the Order of St John, Malta is turning its geography to advantage.

The growth of trans-Mediterranean alternative dispute resolution indicates that sharply differing identifications which are culturally based are set aside when expectations and demands about decision-making arrangements are commonly shared. Distinct cultures do not inevitably lead to clashing civilizations. Appraising identifications, by which civilizations are described, must include an appraisal of expectations and demands. In the Mediterranean demands for solutions to common problems now transcend civilizations. For example, demands for security were the catalyst for the Euro-Mediterranean process launched in November 1995.22 ‘New’ security issues such as migration, narcotics and the environment, along with traditional security concerns are now becoming integral to the process. As with alternative dispute resolution, it
is more typical that demands for solutions to problems rather than clashes reflect the common interest spanning the Mediterranean. Such evidence fails to support Huntington’s construct. The continuing identification and nurturing of commonality pre-empts the clashes of civilizations in the region.

Amid the cultural intensity of the circum-Mediterranean civilizations have clashed. When a collective value was under attack or its proponents caused it to proliferate, wars would result. Such Mediterranean wars were predominantly over the values of power and rectitude. And when the dispute involved wealth, the remedy was often plunder. Yet while such disputes were accompanied by civilization’s symbols, they were not always clashes between civilizations. There were other agendas in play.

Huntington’s clarion call does not account for the many agendas obscured by the symbols of culture. He asserts that societies sharing cultural affinities must co-operate with one another. Thus with the civilization artifact he sets the boundaries of community despite the fact that furrows run across whole civilizations. However, shared universals exist. For every culture, including those amounting to civilizations, there are value processes resulting in preferred and unpreferred outcomes. Power, well-being, wealth and respect are a few values shared by every civilization. It merits emphasizing that the processes are shared although the outcomes may be different. What is distinct are the institutional manifestations of values. Institutions, such as those specialized to legal process, are often civilization-specific. To examine the institutions in the absence of the underlying values is an exercise in drawing lines. This has diacritic consequences, one of which is the exclusion of certain civilizations and cultures from evolving trans-civilizational institutions. To draw lines around civilizations only reinforces any lingering garrison effect of cultural insularity.

The fact is that people and peoples engage in conduct calculated to maximize their value positions. Late-twentieth-century tools for the improvement of an ever-expanding eco-niche require a sharing in the application and increasingly in the development of technologies. Lines around civilizations are meaningless as every culture in some degree is permeated by scientific civilization and individual cultural participants demand modern tools to solve both persistent and new problems. A common need to solve problems yields co-operation across civilizational divides. This co-operation to devise shared solutions for shared needs has come to include a consensus over alternative dispute settlement mechanisms when anticipated goals are not achieved.

Arbitration arrangements accommodate the myths of distinct civilizations and component cultures. But they reflect a common interest which demands and expects that disputes be peacefully, fairly and predictably settled. They serve to clarify interests across cultural divides.
while fostering new shared identifications. Participants use arbitral institutions to maximize the fulfillment of value outcomes integral to the wider Mediterranean social process. This is evidence of a trend away from clashing civilizations, and it is a factor reducing the likelihood of future clashes. As Gautier’s mid-nineteenth century lines engraved at the entrance to Valetta’s Grand Harbour suggest, the trend of the flotsam and jetsam of the circum-Mediterranean civilizations will continue without great incident, but with common purpose.

NOTES

This paper is dedicated to the late Brother James X. Collins, FSC.

1 ‘Through this gate comes and goes a motley and cosmopolitan throng of Tunisians, Arabs, Greeks, Turks...and Europeans of different countries.’ Théophile Gautier, Constantinople (Paris: La Boîte à Documents, 1990), p. 45.
2 Samuel P. Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’, Foreign Affairs, 72 (Summer 1993).
4 Ibid., p. 20.
5 Ibid., p. 21.
12 Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations, p. 57.
13 Lasswell and McDougal, Jurisprudence for a Free Society, Vol. 1, p. 363. The maximization postulate affirms that choices are made ‘which are expected to yield net value advantage’.
16 W. Michael Reisman, W. Laurence Craig, William Park and Jan Paulsson, International Commercial Arbitration: Cases, Materials and Notes on the


18 Record of the Parliament of Malta, A 71, Act No. II of 1996.


20 Malta has also adopted and listed as a schedule to its arbitration law, the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States. This important instrument provides for the dispute settlement between states and non-state nationals under the auspices of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

21 UNCITRAL Model Law, Ch. V, Art. 18.

Mediterranean States and Migration

Michael S. Teitelbaum

The Mediterranean basin forms a kind of gigantic geographical cauldron for the economics, politics, and passions that surround international migration. The Mediterranean Sea straddles an economic and cultural fissure at least as deep as that running along the US-Mexico border. For perhaps similar reasons, the issues of migration across both of these boundaries are highly contentious and increasingly politicized.¹

Yet for the Mediterranean region almost no generalizations can be made about migration patterns, for the Mediterranean includes nearly every sort of migration setting imaginable:

- primary destination countries such as France;
- primary origin countries such as Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Algeria and Morocco;
- transitional countries that simultaneously are both destinations and origins for international migrants (Italy, Spain, Portugal);
- transit countries (Greece, Italy, Spain) that serve as intermediate destinations for migrants intending to move to France, Germany, etc.;
- former communist countries (former Yugoslavia, Albania) where political and economic instabilities, civil wars, and anarchic violence have produced convulsive mass outflows; and
- a set of Middle Eastern countries including Israel and Lebanon that have experienced substantial migrations of a diaspora or refugee-like character, attributable to the special circumstances of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Jewish and Palestinian diasporas, and the Lebanese civil war.

While it therefore is dangerous to generalize about international migrations in the Mediterranean, three themes or leitmotifs may be seen:
1. Most migration movements in the Mediterranean have been largely unintended and unanticipated.
2. These movements have had significant demographic impacts.
3. They have evoked intense political responses in many countries and in numerous forms.

**UNINTENDED AND UNANTICIPATED**

Much of the migration that has occurred in the regions was unintended and unanticipated by anyone. This includes the migrations of Algerians to France, the consequence of the ‘guest worker programs’, and experiences with provisions for asylum.

**Algeria-France**

During the 1950s and the 1960s there was a series of relatively discrete migration movements within and across the Mediterranean region. Most prominent among these was a series of migratory waves from Algeria to France, during and following the movement for Algerian independence from France from 1954 to 1962. Algeria was technically not a French colony but part of Metropolitan France, comprising three French départements. At the time of Algerian independence from France in 1962 there were more than 1 million colons (European settlers, mostly French) living among 8.5 million Algerian Muslims. Most of these, known as the ‘pieds noirs’, migrated from newly independent Algeria to France. Subsequent migration to France on the part of Algerians of Algerian Muslim origin continued largely without restraint for nearly another decade, until the Algerian government, offended by anti-Algerian incidents in France, placed limits upon the departure of its nationals.

**Guests Who Came to Stay—the ‘Gastarbeiter’**

Also beginning in the late 1950s and accelerating through the 1960s there was a second, and largely unrelated, set of migratory flows of ‘guest workers’ (Gastarbeiter) from the southern European countries bordering on the Mediterranean. These workers were actively recruited by the then far more prosperous northern European countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands. Responding to perceived ‘labor shortages’ driven by post-war reconstruction and the related economic boom, employers (and in some cases governments) in these countries undertook the organized recruitment of such workers from less prosperous Mediterranean European countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. Toward the end of this period, recruitment shifted toward other, even poorer Mediterranean countries, especially Turkey and Yugoslavia.
By the late 1960s and early 1970s more than one million such workers were being admitted each year to western European countries in such ‘temporary’ categories. By then, however, it was beginning to become obvious that substantial numbers of such temporary migrants were becoming long-term residents, as employers sought to avoid the recruitment, transportation and training costs of worker rotation, and as migrants and their domestic supporters argued against the coercive return of workers and their families. In the words of one expert on the subject, ‘There is nothing more permanent than a temporary worker...’. And in the memorable aphorism penned by Max Frisch, ‘We sent for workers, and people came.’

By the early 1970s the destination countries had begun to experience political controversy about the growing stock of foreign workers and, with the sudden economic crisis following the oil price rises of the early 1970s, most governments acted to slow or halt further recruitment. However, there were by then substantial numbers of long-term settlers and the numbers of additional migrants did not decline much, since family reunification was allowed to proceed. Some 800–900,000 people entered each year through the late 1970s and the early 1980s.2

Asylum

During the late 1980s these same destination countries experienced large influxes of asylum seekers, in some cases from the same Mediterranean countries from which many ‘gastarbeiter’ had come, such as Turkey, Morocco and Algeria. The numbers of such asylum-claimants rose to nearly 700,000 in 1992, and then declined in the years following, due primarily to legal changes in Germany (which accounted for 438,000, or nearly two-thirds, of all asylum claims in Europe that year). As the numbers of asylum claims rose, the ‘recognition rate’—the percentage of claims judged to be valid—declined, and such rates rarely exceeded 10 per cent of claims. However, though most asylum claims are not recognized, it is also the case that most rejected asylum claimants have been allowed to remain as unrecognized residents.

DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACTS

One common way to examine the demographic impacts of immigration on a destination country is to compare the size of the migrant flow to the size of the population base into which it is moving. To give two prominent examples in the Mediterranean region, the official estimate of net lawful migration into Greece in 1991 was 152,000 against a Greek population base of about 10 million, implying that net legal immigration added about 1.5 per cent to the Greek population that year.3 Similar
estimates for Italy suggest a net legal immigration in 1992 of 173,000 against a population base of nearly 60 million, implying a migration-caused population increase of less than 0.3 per cent. Even if these official estimates were adjusted substantially upward to take account of the undoubtedly large under-counts of true net migration to these countries, both lawful and unlawful, net migration still would represent small percentages of their total population bases. (It should also be noted that a 1.5 per cent annual increase in a population is quite a high rate for industrialized countries.)

While the above ratios are relevant and widely-noted, in assessing demographic impacts it is equally important to consider net migration in relation to ‘natural increase’ (that is, the difference between births and deaths) being experienced by the population of the receiving country, and this comparison is rarely reported. The relevance of such measures is especially high for some of the immigrant-receiving Mediterranean states of Europe such as Italy and Greece, which in recent years have been experiencing the lowest fertility levels in the world. (No causal relationship should be assumed, even though the rise in immigration to these Mediterranean countries was accompanied by declines in their fertility rates.)

As the rates of these countries declined, while net immigration flows increased, net immigration flows came to represent increasing, and in some cases very large, components of the demographic change they experienced. In Greece the rate of natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) in 1992 had declined to 0.08 per cent, while the rate of net international migration had risen to 1.48 per cent. In Italy, the comparable figures for the same year were 0.05 per cent natural increase as against 0.30 per cent net migration. (For purposes of comparison, Turkey’s rate of natural increase was 2.20 per cent and net migration rate 0.12 per cent.) Since the sum of these two rates equals the average population growth rate, this implies that 95 per cent of the Greek population increase and 85 per cent of the Italian, was accounted for by international migration. (For Turkey, the comparable calculation works out at about 5 per cent.)

The general message is clear: in the very-low-fertility countries of Mediterranean Europe even minimal estimates of net migration represent very large proportions of the demographic change they are experiencing. Data for these and other OECD countries are in Table 13.1.

Asylum

By 1994 the number of asylum claims registered in European countries had declined by half from the peak of 1992. At the same time, there were concerns that illegal immigration had been rising over the same period.
Table 13.1:
Maghrebian, Turkish and former Yugoslav residents in selected European OECD countries, 1993 (000s and % figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total foreign population</th>
<th>Total numbers¹</th>
<th>Of which:</th>
<th>Former Yugoslavia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>920.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>189.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3,596.6</td>
<td>614.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6,878.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>987.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>779.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>162.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>430.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>507.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1,260.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total foreign population</th>
<th>Number of workers</th>
<th>Of which:</th>
<th>Former Yugoslavia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria¹</td>
<td>277.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium²</td>
<td>196.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France³</td>
<td>1,541.5</td>
<td>237.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany⁴</td>
<td>2,183.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy⁵</td>
<td>507.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands⁶</td>
<td>219.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain⁷</td>
<td>115.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland⁸</td>
<td>725.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1 Data are from population registers for all countries except for France (census).
2 Annual average of valid work permits. Unemployed and self-employed are not included.
3 Data are from 1989. Data exclude the unemployed and the self-employed.
4 Data are derived from the labour force survey.
5 Data are for June and refer to salaried workers only. Covers only western Germany.
6 Data are for 1992. Valid work permits.
7 Estimates. Include frontier workers, but exclude the self-employed, family members and the unemployed.
8 Valid work permits. Workers from the European Union are not included in total.
9 Data are counts of the number of foreigners with an annual residence permit or a settlement permit (permanent permit), who engage in gainful activity.

Sources:
Austria: Österreichische Statistisches Bundesamt, Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales;
Belgium: Institut national de statistique, ministère de l’Emploi et du Travail;
France: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques;
Germany: Statistisches Bundesamt, Bundesanstalt für Arbeit;
Italy: Ministero dell’ Interno;
Netherlands: Central Bureau of Statistics;
Spain: Instituto National de Estadística, Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social;
Switzerland: Office federal des étrangers.
### Table 13.2: Components of total population growth in OECD countries, 1982–92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1982–86&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1987–91&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NI: Natural increase</strong></td>
<td><strong>NI</strong></td>
<td><strong>NM</strong></td>
<td><strong>NI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>1,855</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>2,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1,656</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>1,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>–8</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>–2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>–105</td>
<td>–10</td>
<td>–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>–18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Europe</strong></td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>–33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>–4</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nordic countries</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>–4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oceania</strong></td>
<td>153</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OECD Europe</strong></td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1,898</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>617</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total OECD</strong></td>
<td>4,435</td>
<td>949</td>
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**Notes:**
1. As a percentage of population at the beginning of the period. The sum of the two components gives the average growth rate of the total population over the period.
2. Average over the period.
3. Eastern part of Germany is included from 1992 on.
4. 1991 data.
5. Mid-year estimates.


Table 13.2: continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average annual growth (%)</th>
<th>Total population 31-12-92 (thousands)</th>
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<tr>
<td>NI</td>
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<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>NM</td>
<td>0.81</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.58</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>258,190</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.62</td>
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<td>−0.02</td>
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<td>−0.09</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0.30³</td>
<td>39,083³</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.09³</td>
<td>0.48³</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.37³</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
All estimates of illegal immigration are necessarily weak, given the desire of such migrants not to be noticed or counted. Available estimates for 1994 ranged from 2.5 to 4 million.\(^5\)

With respect to migration from the Mediterranean region, France and Germany continued to attract the largest volume of such movements. However, the Mediterranean origin countries differed sharply for the two destination countries. Moreover, there are important differences and deficiencies in the reported data that make firm analyses difficult.

France reported approximately 3.6 million ‘foreign’ residents in 1993, versus Germany’s 6.9 million (see Table 13.1). Of the French total, nearly 1.4 million (or nearly 40 per cent) emanated from the Maghrebian countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, compared with about 200,000 or 5 per cent from Turkey. Of the German total, only 122,000, or 18 per cent, came from these Maghrebian states, whereas 1.85 million (or 27 per cent) emanated from Turkey. Italy too reported significant numbers of Moroccan and Tunisian foreign residents, as did Spain for Moroccans.

The data reported above have significant weaknesses that may seriously mislead unsceptical users. First, none of the data includes illegal immigrants, of which there are at least several million in Europe, many of whom have come from the Mediterranean region. Secondly, French nationality law provides for the rather easy naturalization of foreign migrants; once naturalized, even recent migrants are removed from the ‘foreigner’ category. Moreover, French-born children of foreign residents are generally counted as French. Meanwhile, German law makes naturalization slow and difficult and German-born children of foreign residents continue to be counted as ‘foreign’.

Finally, within the current decade, the disastrous collapse of another Mediterranean state, Yugoslavia, led first to the emigration of nearly 100,000 Croatians, subsequently to the internal displacement of 1.3 million persons within Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the emigration of some 800,000 more, and most recently to the traumatic departure of perhaps 1 million from Kosovo. Germany responded positively to appeals for temporary protection by admitting the largest numbers of Croatians and Bosnians; most of those so admitted have now returned to their homelands. Albania and Macedonia have admitted most of the Kosovars on a temporary basis.

**MIDDLE EAST MIGRATION PATTERNS**

Meanwhile, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean there were largely unrelated flows—all still from, to or within the Mediterranean region—that were related to political developments and conflicts in the Middle East: the movement of several hundred thousand Palestinian Arabs to
Jordan and eventually to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in part as a result of the founding of the state of Israel and subsequent violent conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors; the exodus of several hundred thousand Jews from the Arab-dominated states of North Africa after the 1967 Arab-Israel War; and the recent influx to Israel of several hundred thousand Jews from the former Soviet Union.

In addition, there were from time to time some significant movements within the ‘South’ (that is, the developing) countries of the Mediterranean basin, especially of Tunisians, Palestinians and Egyptians into oil-rich Libya. In recent years, however, much of this movement has reversed, as the government of Libya has periodically expelled groups of Palestinian, Egyptian and Sudanese workers, for both political and economic reasons.

**MIGRATION AND ISLAM**

One of the most contentious demographic impacts of the past several decades of migration movements has been the appearance of a substantial Islamic population resident within western Europe. Following the early migrations of Algerians to France, there were substantial movements of Moroccan migrants to France, Belgium and Germany; of Asian and sub-Saharan African migrants to Mediterranean states such as France and Italy, accompanied by transit migrations from the same origin countries through Italy and Spain to northern Europe; and Albanian migrations to Italy.

By 1996 there were an estimated 10–13 million Muslims settled in western Europe, largely in four countries: France (5 of 57 million); Germany (2 of 81 million); the UK (1 of 58 million); and the Netherlands (750,000 of 15 million). Most of those in France and Germany emanated from the Mediterranean region: in France from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and in Germany from Turkey (those in the UK came primarily from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; those in Netherlands from Morocco and Indonesia). The OECD summarized the trends as of 1995 as follows:

the presence in Europe of foreigners from the Mediterranean basin (the Maghreb, Turkey, former Yugoslavia) has changed... Although France remains the principal host country for North Africans and Algerian immigration is concentrated almost entirely there, Moroccan and Tunisian migrants are going in greater numbers to other host countries. Already present in Belgium and the Netherlands, Moroccans have widened the range of their destinations and now form important communities in Germany, Italy and Spain. After France, it is in Italy, followed by Germany, that the most important Tunisian communities are to be found... The Turks, who are most
numerous in Germany, have also established themselves in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

POLITICAL RESPONSES

International migration from and to the Mediterranean has become a highly visible political topic. In general, the governments of the destination countries have tended toward reduced inflows of both temporary and permanent legal immigrants (other than those from fellow members of the European Union, which now provides for free labor movement); measures to strengthen asylum systems against abusive claims; the containing of illegal entries and visa overstays; and a variety of measures ranging from foreign assistance and trade policies to direct military intervention (for instance, by Italy in Albania and by NATO in Kosovo) intended to limit departures from origin countries. As noted, these migration experiences have evoked intense political responses in many countries.

In France opposition to immigration trends and their perceived impacts has been the core theme underlying rising political support for the intensely nationalist National Front led by Jean-Marie Le Pen. For many years, immigration policies long advocated by the Front were rejected by the mainstream French political parties—of the left, center and right alike. In recent years, as the Front began to gain political strength, some of the mainstream parties began to incorporate more moderate versions of these positions into their own positions, much to the alarm of defenders of longstanding immigration policies and advocates of immigrant rights.

In recent elections the National Front won mayorships in four southern French cities. In the first round of the 1997 National Assembly elections, the Front attracted 15 per cent of the national vote, although under the French electoral system it acquired only one seat in the final round election of 1 June 1997. During these elections the Front split the conservative vote that might otherwise have gone to the center-right governing coalition led by Premier Juppé, and where Front candidates did not progress to the second round it urged its supporters to vote against the government parties, thereby contributing to the fall of the Juppé government and the rise to power of a Socialist-led coalition. The new government promptly announced its plans to modify the Pasqua and Debré laws adopted by the previous government with the intention of deterring illegal immigration. Subsequently, the government commissioned Patrick Weil, a leading French expert on immigration and former leader of the Young Socialists, to prepare a comprehensive set of policy revisions. Many of its recommendations were promptly drafted into legislative proposals by the Juppé government and were enacted into law in early 1998.
In Italy political debate about migration continues to be highly visible. It is widely agreed there that there is at present no effective legal regulation of immigration, and this reality is profoundly disturbing to Italy’s EU partners who see Italy as an easy entry-point to Europe for illegal immigrants whose destinations are elsewhere on the continent. On 18 November 1997 the lower house of the Italian Parliament approved legislation that would allow the authorities to expel illegal immigrants and detain them until such expulsions could be effected. Under current Italian law apprehended illegal aliens may be issued expulsion orders unless they claim asylum, but those ordered to depart are released from custody and given 15 days to depart from the country. Italy’s EU partners, and especially Germany and France, believe that in the majority of cases such ‘expelled’ migrants do leave Italy, but travel north to Germany and France. Between January and October 1997 the Italian police reported that about 55,000 such expulsion orders were issued, but only about 20 per cent of those receiving them returned to their native countries. Many foreigners who could make claims for political asylum in Italy apparently prefer the 15-day expulsion order; of about 800 Iraqi Kurds who landed in Italy in November 1997, only 20 applied for asylum there. Many of the others accepted the 15-day expulsion order and then traveled to Germany to apply for asylum there. In addition, a serious of chaotic migrations to Italy from Albania has provoked substantial concern within the Italian political class. Within Germany itself migration trends coupled with political stalemate on the issues among the mainstream parties eventuated during 1991–92 in an outbreak of widespread and apparently largely unorganized violence perpetrated against ‘foreigners’ in Germany. To some unknown degree, both the migration and the anti-foreigner violence seem to have been associated with the re-emergence of neo-Nazi groups in Germany, evoking terrifying memories of a German past that most thought had been successfully interred.

These trends produced a profound political crisis for the German Social Democratic Party, which had for more than a decade resolutely blocked proposed changes in Article 16 of the constitution (‘Basic Law’) relating to asylum. In 1993 the Social Democrats abandoned this long standing position and Article 16 was substantially amended.

More recently, there has been active political debate in Germany about two Mediterranean migration issues: dual nationality for children born in Germany to foreign parents and the return of Bosnians granted temporary protected status. Under the dual-nationality proposals promoted by the governing coalition of Social Democratic and Green parties, such children would acquire both German and their parents’ nationalities at birth, and then would choose between them at age 18. These proposals were strongly opposed by the Christian Democrats and other opposition parties, who made them visible campaign issues during 1999. Former Chancellor
Helmut Kohl expressed his opposition in terms of the impacts such a measure might have on migration from Turkey: ‘If we today give in to demands for dual citizenship, we would soon have four, five, or six million Turks in Germany instead of three million.’

There is equally active debate in Germany with respect to the status of about 320,000 Bosnians who were granted temporary protection in Germany during the civil war. With the adoption of the Dayton Accords, the German federal government and the 16 federal Länder (states) agreed in December 1995 that Bosnians could be returned ‘in a gradual fashion’, with the Länder accorded great discretion in implementation. All Länder have offered cash departure bonuses and travel assistance funding; some (including Bavaria and Berlin, which settled large numbers of Bosnians) reinforcing such offers with proclamations that those who declined to depart voluntarily might be compelled to depart and would then be precluded from returning to Germany in the future. These policies have provoked strenuous objections from German human rights groups and from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who argue that Bosnians should not be returned unless they are able to return to their home villages as agreed at Dayton, and until there is adequate housing and employment to allow for their return ‘with dignity’. By 1999, the majority had reportedly returned to Bosnia.

Even in the United Kingdom, where immigration numbers and the debates that accompany them have been far more muted than on the continent, immigration issues were prominent in the recent elections that led to the election of a ‘New Labour’ government led by Prime Minister Tony Blair. The new government quickly announced its intentions to reverse immigration policies adopted by the predecessor Conservative government. In particular, the ‘primary purpose’ rules that required non-EU spouses of Britons to prove that their marriage was not an attempt to avoid immigration controls is to be shifted so that the burden of proof of such a marriage of convenience will be upon the government. The new government is also expected to eliminate the ‘white list’ of countries whose citizens are seen as facing no risk of persecution and hence may be returned home while their asylum claims are pending. Current British law defines countries such as Poland, Romania, India and Pakistan to fall within this category. Finally, the new government has promised not to enforce new employer sanction laws on the grounds that these might increase discrimination against ethnic minorities.

In addition to these unilateral and bilateral actions, there have been numerous multilateral actions related to Mediterranean migration. For example, the Schengen Agreement (currently adhered to by seven EU states: Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) eliminates border checks between member countries. This implies, of course, that the frontiers of some states are shifted to those of
others, which in turn requires such frontier states to assure the others that their border controls are effective. By one estimate, there are 1.7 billion entries and exits each year over this common external border, and 1.2 billion across internal national borders among the seven. There are deep differences of opinion among EU governments as to the desirability of the Schengen Agreement, and the UK and Ireland in particular have resisted strong urgings to join. The Italian government has indicated its interest in joining the Schengen group, but its entry has been delayed until the other Schengen countries agree that Italy has established more effective controls over entry across its external borders.

The Dublin Convention represents the agreement among EU states that responsibility for adjudicating asylum claims rests with the country in which the asylum-claimant might first have reasonably been expected to file such a claim. The initial goal was to reduce the incidence of multiple claims and ‘forum shopping’ by asylum-claimants, but also includes ‘safe country’ provisions requiring would-be asylum-claimants who pass through a safe country to return to that country for the adjudication of their claims.

More generally, the phenomenon of migration has frequently complicated the already difficult tasks of European integration. EU governments differ strongly on the degree to which immigration and border issues should be under the jurisdiction of the European Commission and the EU Court of Justice. The Dutch government has led efforts to shift the control of immigration matters from the purview of national states to Brussels; these efforts have generally been opposed by the UK, France, Denmark and other states. Meanwhile, successive petitions by Turkey for admission to the EU have been deflected, largely due to Germany’s unwillingness to agree to the free movement of Turkish migrant workers into Europe.

With respect to illegal immigration, recent ILO estimates suggest that there may be 2.6 million unauthorized foreigners in the EU, of whom 300,000 are in France. Political controversy about this phenomenon has been rising, especially in France, where the National Front has emphasized the removal of irregular immigrants along with opposition to further European integration.

INTRA-MEDITERRANEAN ECONOMIC POLICIES INTENDED TO MODERATE MIGRATION

There has been a high level of interest in the Mediterranean countries of Europe in measures to accelerate economic growth in origin countries as a means of restraining unwanted migration. It is widely assumed that large differentials in employment opportunities, wages and standards of living are driving rising potentials for international migration which can
therefore best be moderated by rapid economic growth in emigration countries. The argument, in essence, is that economic transfers (via aid, investment and trade) from high-income to low-income countries would be the best form of immigration policy.

However, the best evidence is that such arguments are confounded by two paradoxes. The first is the contradiction between the short-term and long-term effects of economic development upon the propensities for emigration (in discussions of migration, the ‘long-term’ implies a period of generations, that is, several decades; the ‘short-term’ is a minimum of a decade, and perhaps longer). While over a period of generations rapid economic development may be expected to moderate the migration potentials, over the shorter-run the effects of successful and rapid economic development are in the opposite direction: they increase the propensities for emigration.

Rapid development has destabilized existing social and economic arrangements, and rural modernization encourages internal migration. The rapid growth of cities that results often produces saturated labor markets and inequitable income distributions, accompanied by rising expectations and increasing access to the international migration option, especially for those who find themselves on the fringes of these urban economies. Meanwhile, costs associated with international migration decline as transportation and communication links improve, and rising incomes make migration accessible to greater numbers.

The second paradox is that, although all industrialized countries have embraced explicit policies and formal mechanisms to further economic development in Third World countries, in practice their economic policies often tend, directly or indirectly, to neutralize these efforts. Notwithstanding the concessionary financial assistance and preferential trade access they often provide to developing countries, domestic political pressures in industrialized countries often produce trade policies that restrict market access to the very products for which production in low-wage countries is competitive. Even preferential trade provisions (Caribbean Basin Initiative, Lomé Conventions) sharply limit labor-intensive products (such as shoes, garments and many agricultural products) for which the less-developed countries have an obvious comparative advantage. European governments tend to favor aid rather than trade, in part because with freer trade policies many of the emigration countries would become agricultural exporters to Europe. Meanwhile, the subsidies provided by many industrialized countries to their agricultural sectors have the unintended effect of undercutting agricultural production in developing countries by stimulating surpluses and thereby depressing world prices.
THE MEDITERRANEAN AS A MIGRATION LABORATORY

The Mediterranean region provides some of the best evidence, however, as to the possibility that narrowing wage/income gaps could, eventually, restrain migration potentials. The region includes the so-called ‘transition cases of southern Europe’, in which during the period 1962–88 emigration rates first rose dramatically, peaked and then declined: Greece, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. Faini and Venturini\(^{17}\) analysed these transition cases and found that emigration rates dropped after the mid-1970s, notwithstanding persistent and significant wage differentials between southern and northern Europe. They also found that while labor market conditions (that is, unemployment rates and employment growth) and structural shifts in labor demand in destination countries were important in explaining the decline in emigration from these countries, the most consistently significant determinant of emigration was the level of income in the origin country. This supports the observation that, when emigration countries are relatively poor, a wage increase raises the propensity to migrate; when countries become relatively better off, a wage increase works to reduce emigration pressures.

Faini and Venturini sought to quantify the level of mean per-capita income at which the ‘migration transition’ occurred in these four countries. Their estimates are that the key threshold ranges between $3,400 and $4,100 per capita in 1985 international dollar prices. While this finding may not be generalizable beyond these four cases, it is worth noting that per capita incomes in a large majority of developing countries fall below these levels.

CONCLUSIONS

There are, then, few generalizations that may properly be made about migration to, from and within the Mediterranean. On the contrary, the region has experienced a complex and highly diverse set of human movements that represent nearly the full range of possible types, including end-of-empire ‘return’ of colonialists; post-empire migration of colonials; intra-European migration for employment; ‘guest-worker’ temporary migration; economic migration, both South-to-North and South-to-South; refugee and asylum migration; and the special cases involved in the several migration streams to, from and within the Middle East.

As to the destination countries, some of which are themselves in the Mediterranean, recent experiences with international migration have been largely unintended and unanticipated, products of short-term economic policies and human rights provisions adopted for other reasons. The migration movements have been demographically significant, especially when conjoined with the low indigenous fertility that has become common
in much of Europe, and especially in its Mediterranean countries. Further complications have emerged from the appearance (or reappearance in the case of Spain) of large Islamic populations in western Europe. Overall, the effects have proved to be politically divisive and volatile, and have complicated efforts toward increased European integration.

NOTES

1 A similar fault line runs along the German-Polish border, which for much of its length tracks the River Oder. Some European wags refer to this river as the ‘Rio Oder’.
2 For a fuller discussion of these trends, see Sharon Stanton Russell, ‘International Migration: Global Trends and National Response’, *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 20 (2) (Summer/Fall 1996).
4 Calculated from ibid., Table I.1.
5 ‘Inter-governmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia’ (Geneva, mimeo, June 1995).
6 Personal communication, German Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, Bonn, October 1996.
8 The Weil Report is available on the World Wide Web at: www.lemonde.fr/debats/immigration/rapport
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 4 (6) (June 1997).
13 Ibid.
14 More formally entitled ‘The Convention Determining the State Responsible for Examining Applications for Asylum Lodged in One of the Member States of the European Communities’, signed in Dublin, June 1990.
America, France and the Algerian War: the Forgotten Conflict over a ‘Clash of Civilizations’

Matthew Connelly

While it has never been easy to prove the utility of historical scholarship to the foreign policy-making community, it is particularly difficult in the aftermath of the Cold War. Most analysts now accept Zbigniew Brzezinski’s judgment that ‘discontinuity is the central reality of our contemporary history…’1 William Zartman, of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, would sooner consult scripture than history. He writes that ‘it is enough to read the newspapers these days to realize that the earth is without form and void, and darkness is upon the face of the deep’.2 His colleagues feel that they have been cast into darkness because no theory of international relations anticipated the end of the Cold War—indeed, few even asked how it might end. The earth appears ‘without form and void’ because none of the old theories now seems to apply.3 As if to certify that we are writing on a *tabula rasa*, the US Library of Congress has assigned an entirely new call number to books such as Brzezinski’s and Zartman’s: ‘D 860’. It is is now rapidly filling with dozens of other works classified as the ‘political and diplomatic history of Europe and the world *post*-1989’.

Rather than looking for the continuities between the Cold War and the contemporary era, analysts are seeking ‘a more meaningful and useful lens through which to view international developments’, as Samuel Huntington recently put it.4 After decades of neglect, ethnicity is now a focus of their attempts to make sense of the international system. If the collapse of communism did not actually lift the lid off of latent ethnic conflicts—scholars such as Anthony D. Smith and Walker Connor had for years been asserting their manifest importance in the first, second and third worlds—it did free up dozens of international relations theorists to begin working on the subject.5
Huntington’s own work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, is probably the best-known work in the D 860 genre. Since its original formulation in 1993 as an article in *Foreign Affairs*, his argument has provoked a greater response than any other piece the journal has published in the past 50 years. In this new world, Huntington argues, ‘local politics is the politics of ethnicity; global politics is the politics of civilizations.’ Within and across borders peoples and states will rally to those who speak the same language and practice the same religion. This ‘kin-rallying’, as Huntington calls it, is creating an international system of seven or eight civilizations: Chinese, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Western, Orthodox, Latin American and—‘possibly’—African.

Huntington urges Americans both to recognize and to uphold the differences between these civilizations:

The futures of the United States and of the West depend upon Americans reaffirming their commitment to Western civilization. Domestically this means rejecting the divisive siren calls of multiculturalism. Internationally it means rejecting the elusive and illusory calls to identify the United States with Asia. Indeed, Westerners must rally against the threat posed by the rise and possible alliance of China and Islam. In his scenario of a civilizational war c. 2010, Huntington describes how the Western allies are defeated by a ‘Confucian-Islamic axis’. Hispanics take power in America, while Africa ‘disgorges hordes of socially mobilized people to prey on the remains’ of Europe. Thus the Mediterranean may be a key battleground in this ‘clash of civilizations’.

Though Huntington’s argument has won a good deal of attention, much of it has been critical on both factual and conceptual grounds. Sceptics point out that the majority of ethnic conflicts are being waged within his civilizations, not between them. Yet by conflating culture and kinship he portrays civilizations as immutable, brushing aside a vast literature branching several disciplines that demonstrates how communities are imagined and traditions invented. Indeed, by urging his readers to ‘reaffirm their commitment to Western Civilization’, Huntington wants us to reimagine and reinvent ‘the West’ at a time when the demise of the Eastern bloc and the increasing diversity of North American and European societies make this category increasingly meaningless. However dismissive, many of his critics warn that if these societies do rally along racial and religious lines his work may well prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy as Muslims, Asians and others may band together in self-defense.

Thus, both Huntington and his critics offer arguments that are as much normative as descriptive. Both look to the future for justification even
THE ALGERIAN WAR

while working to change it. That is what makes their arguments so acrimonious and difficult to adjudicate. That is also why history can help. Because what both sides have missed is how, even at the height of the Cold War, NATO leaders often conceived of international relations as a clash of civilizations. The ideas and imagery of civilizational conflict—along with ideologies of ‘development’ and ‘modernization’—helped policy-makers to uphold the idea of ‘the West’ through the Cold War and decolonization. This maintained categories that continue to pattern our ways of thinking about the world, so that even after the end of the Cold War we continue to speak of the Third World.

Of course, the tendency to distinguish ‘the West’ from ‘the rest’ by ignoring the distinctiveness and individuality of other peoples goes back much further. Indeed, Huntington’s ‘Confucian-Islamic connection’ recalls some of the more lurid scenarios in the ‘yellow peril’ literature of a century ago. The ‘clash of civilizations’ is not so much a new theory about the future of international relations, rather it is new evidence for an old theory of how Americans and Europeans have long thought about their cultural identities. ‘Orientalism’ describes how people identify and empower themselves in opposition to some essentialized and usually inferior ‘other’. Depictions of a yellow or ‘green peril’—the color of Islam—are only the most extreme examples of the ‘us-them’ dichotomies that underlie this line of thinking.

Unfortunately, practitioners of this theory rarely take the trouble to demonstrate the impact of Orientalism on specific policies in specific historical contexts. Here again, archival history can help. By examining one case, the Algerian War, with the benefit of newly declassified documents one can see how these ideas could work in a complex and paradoxical fashion. While the French used the language of civilizational conflict to rally support for the war, it also helped to create the conditions that led to its conclusion—in this case by contributing to a clash with the US. Examining how fears of racial and religious wars influenced our recent history can not only reveal some of the roots of the contemporary era, it also prompts questions as to whether the NATO allies might actually divide rather than rally in a civilizational conflict. More than a crime, basing foreign policy on such an idea may well be a blunder.

Admittedly, Algeria was a special case in the history of decolonization. Its more populated northern areas lie just 400 miles from France and were made départements in 1848—even before Nice and Savoie. According to a popular conceit, the Mediterranean separated the metropole from Algeria no more than the Seine separated the right and the left bank of Paris, A century later the Algerian départements were explicitly included in the North Atlantic Treaty and the European Community. Over one million Europeans were settled there by 1954, when the Front de Libération Nationale, or FLN, launched a war of independence. The French would
never admit it was a war, nor could they allow outside interference—
whether from the United Nations or their own allies—in what they
considered to be a purely internal problem. To do so would have been to
admit that Algeria was separate and different from France.14

But much more than the Mediterranean divided France from its
Algerian départements. Algeria differed because of the rapid demographic
growth and second-class status of its nine million Muslims, the exhaustion
of its scarce arable lands and a consequent migration to the cities, and the
cultural conflicts there between European, Arab nationalist and Islamic
reformist influences. After an eight-year war that cost as many as half-a-
million deaths, nearly all the colonists fled the country. Algeria went on to
join OPEC, the Arab League and the vanguard of Third World militancy.
Extraordinary in the intensity of its colonial experience and its dramatic
dénouement, the demographic, environmental and cultural causes of the
Algerian War actually typified a general crisis in much of the colonial
world, a crisis that continues to this day—not least in Algeria itself. So if
the Algerian War is a special case in the history of decolonization, it is
especially suited to examining how fears of civilizational conflict
interacted with the East-West contest.15

The dilemmas of dealing with both a Cold War and decolonization in
Algeria were already apparent in November 1954, three weeks after the
start of the uprising, when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles met
French Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France. Mendès-France insisted
‘long and stubbornly’ that their final communiqué should contain a
statement of American support for the French in Algeria. But Dulles would
not budge, speaking bluntly about the contradictions in the French
position: ‘if the French wanted to bring the US into the matter, this would
make it international whereas France had heretofore considered the North
African situation a purely domestic affair’. If France expected its allies ‘to
rally to support, [the] Secretary asked why Arabs could not rally in
opposition. It could not be [an] international matter for one group alone’.

Yet Dulles did not want Mendès-France to think that he was
uninterested in the fate of Algeria:

for it could be even worse than Indochina, particularly for US and
French relations. He said that he had been worried about [the] North
African situation developing like it had in Indochina. This was close to
home. He said that he did not think it was unimportant but perhaps it
was the most serious problem that we faced. He said it might get NATO, it might break NATO apart.17

What were US interests in North Africa such as to make the Atlantic Treaty a mere scrap of paper, such that it might ‘break NATO apart’? Earlier war plans designated North Africa as ‘the initial assembly area for US forces’ in the event of a Soviet invasion. But after the French approved Germany’s entry into NATO in 1954 there was no longer any chance that the region would reprise its role in World War II.18 The Americans still retained four Strategic Air Command bases in Morocco, but these became less valuable as war planners began to worry about their vulnerability to a surprise attack and rely on the aerial-refueling of bombers to target the Soviet Union direct from the US.19 America’s economic interest, on the other hand, had always been marginal. All through the Algerian War policy-makers assumed that they could not replace France’s dominant role in developing the North African economy. Yet even the French hardly profited from their position. With an ever-widening current accounts deficit and a heavily subsidized state budget, Algeria was a burden to their economy that even the discovery of Saharan oil in 1956 could not relieve.20

The Americans defined their most vital concern in North Africa, not according to its intrinsic strategic or economic value, but rather because of its relationship to their interests in the Atlantic Alliance and the Arab world. With the end of the war in Indochina it was hoped that France would finally play its appointed role in Europe, contributing the largest contingent of conventional forces to NATO defenses. A 1955 Franco-American plan envisioned a 500,000-man French Army by the end of 1956 with four divisions deploying the most modern nuclear-war-fighting equipment. By that point the French had an army that was even larger than the one earlier envisioned. But from Washington’s point of view it was facing the wrong way, fighting the wrong enemy. With barely three combat-ready divisions on the Rhine the French deployed 14 across the Mediterranean. Referring to his longstanding concern to strengthen the European nations’ conventional forces and reduce their reliance on the US, Eisenhower said ‘that if the Algerian question could be settled, these problems in central Europe would solve themselves’.21 All in all, he felt that ‘their basic trouble is that they are still trying to act as if they headed a great empire’, whereas ‘if they would center their attention mainly on their European problems...they would be a happy and prosperous country’.22

A confrontational policy in Algeria was anathema to Eisenhower, not only because it ran counter to his plans for managing the East-West contest in Europe, but also because it poisoned North-South relations. By arousing antipathy to the Atlantic Alliance it made the US vulnerable to
Krushchev’s efforts to court emerging nations. ‘The Soviets have been turned away from the military form of international action’, Eisenhower said, ‘where we are badly off is with respect to the rising Arab nations in the Middle East’.23 The Arab nations were ‘rising’ as part of an anti-colonial movement that proclaimed itself at the April 1955 Bandung conference. While a coalition of the communists and the anti-colonialists remained the worst-case scenario, Eisenhower and his Secretary of State came to view a pan-Arab or pan-Islamic movement as a potential threat in its own right.

To reconcile conflicting US interests in Europe and in the emerging Third World, Dulles subscribed to the idea of ‘Eurafrica’, which entailed European integration and co-operative development. This concept was dear to Dulles as early as 1949, when he told the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman that ‘[t]here are in Africa vast resources which can be developed to the natural advantage of Africa and West Europe…’

This North-South development, however, requires friendly collaboration between the native peoples and the peoples of Europe…[I]f dealt with in a manner that excites a Moslem holy war or race war of black against white, then the foundation of North-South development would disappear.24

After the onset of the Algerian War the Secretary of State became concerned not only for the future of ‘Eurafrica’ but also for America’s own interests around the world. If the US were too closely associated with a confrontational French policy it risked alienating ‘the great mass of mankind which is non-white and non-European’.25 As we shall see, Dulles’s fear of international racial or religious conflict helped to drive him to the point where he was prepared to try to force the French to negotiate a compromise peace with the Algerian nationalists.

Ironically, even while they moved toward open conflict, key French policy-makers shared their American counterparts’ hopes for ‘Eurafrica’ and fears of civilizational conflict. They too viewed an alliance of Communists and anti-colonialists as the worst threat. According to the enormously influential strategic doctrine of Guerre Revolutionnaire, Soviet influence would inevitably follow pan-Arabism into North Africa, thus exposing NATO’s ‘soft white underbelly’.26 In a February 1955 conference at All Souls College, Oxford, the former Resident General of Morocco Augustin Guillaume described ‘a vast, brimming movement encompassing all from Peking to Casablanca’ aiming at ‘the southern flank of western Europe’. As the communists worked through local nationalist movements the British in Malaysia and Kenya and the French in North Africa were all engaged in the same struggle. ‘All countries of western Civilization’, Guillaume concluded,
are facing the gravest threat to have ever weighed on the life and liberty of their peoples...where should we find our salvation? To begin with, certainly in remaining faithful to our ideals, our civilization, all that gives meaning to life. But this won’t be enough. The one and unique solution rests in our unity. Divided we are weak, united we are strong...27

Why, one might ask, did ‘Western civilization’ need Guillaume to summon it to unity and self-defense in the face of such an obvious threat? In fact, his portrait of a global coalition of communists and anti-colonial movements, however fanciful, was precisely what was needed to make ‘western civilization’ seem like a valid geopolitical concept.28

This was not just one man’s view. The whole French propaganda campaign was based on presenting the Algerian War as part of a larger civilizational conflict. Thus, in a dispatch to all embassies preparing for the 1957 General Assembly debate, the Quai d’Orsay explained that ‘[o]ur troubles in Algeria inscribe themselves in a great conflict that, since the end of the war, has set the East against the West. It is about more than the clash of different political visions: it is a clash of two civilizations.’ Best represented by Egypt, the authors described ‘the East’ as where ‘resurgences from all of Asia’s past cultures are mixed together, and which is characterized by the pre-eminence given to the collectivity over the human individual’.”29 According to the Quai d’Orsay’s briefing book on Algeria—what the diplomats called their ‘bible’—‘The motor of the anti-French revolt in Algeria is the same as in the rest of North Africa and the Middle East: pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism.’30 Similarly, when the Defense Ministry’s official review ran a special issue on Algeria its editorial asserted that the revolt was launched by a religious appeal: ‘holy war, the terrible jihad of Islam’.31

What is most surprising about such statements is that they hardly referred to the role of the Soviets. But some felt obliged to reconcile the apparent contradiction represented by an alliance of the Bandung and the Soviet bloc in a world increasingly divided by race and religion. Thus, in explaining how this ‘anti-Western Asiatic tide’ might be led by the Soviets, André Siegfried, a renowned political scientist and member of the Académie, wrote in his introduction to L’Année Politique, 1955 that they were ‘an intermediate society, half-Western, half-Asiatic, doubtless white but having renounced white solidarity’. In combination with ‘the crusade of Islam’, ‘the mounting tide, coming from the East...threatens all Western civilization’.32 But others hoped that Russians might rally against ‘the crusade of Islam’ (Siegfried was apparently oblivious to the oxymoron.) Thus in March 1956 Mollet claimed that ‘there were indications that the Russians were worried about the spread of Pan-Islamism’. He reported that Ambassador Sergei Vinogradov had told him that, ‘As regards this
business of yours in Algeria, it would be bad if Islam were to sweep all over Africa.’

Of course, Mollet was quite mistaken about the Soviets, who would soon be attacking French conduct in Algeria as they strengthened ties with Nasser. But it should be stressed that the view of the Algerian War as a civilizational conflict was more than rhetoric, as important as that was in patterned the way Mollet and other important decision-makers thought about it. The idea also expressed itself in the way they managed the policy-making process and some of the most important decisions that it produced. For instance, after the beginning of the uprising in Algeria the Conseil Supérieur du Renseignement formed a ‘Commission on Muslim Information’ to track Islamic issues through regular information exchanges and meetings between police agencies, the Service de Documentation extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage (SDECE), the military and several ministries. When the Mollet government conceded independence to moderate nationalists in Tunisia and Morocco in March 1956 officials did so with the hope that their governments ‘would represent [a] break in [the] “religious front” of Moslem hostility to France…’ This approach could also be applied to Algeria, as Foreign Minister Christian Pineau explained to Ambassador C. Douglas Dillon: ‘if [the] problem could be limited strictly to Algerian nationalist aspirations, [the] government felt confident that [a] solution could be reached’, since they were ‘prepared to make far-reaching concessions’.

However if [the] problem became one of Islam versus the French, partaking the aspects of a holy war, it was clear that the French could never find a solution and [the] eventual results were impossible to foresee.

Pineau stressed that they would ‘need all the understanding and help they could possibly get from [their] allies [and] especially [the] US’, in order ‘to prevent Egyptians from fanning the flames particularly now when France had a government which was really determined to reach [an] agreement with [the] Algerian nationalists’. Mollet’s government actually showed far less determination in pursuing peace negotiations than in confronting Egypt, which he viewed as the center of a nascent ‘empire of Islam’. Following Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal, a direct strike at Cairo began to appear to even a relative moderate such as Pineau as the only way to bring the Algerian rebels to terms. ‘Our conviction on this point is so strong’, he told Dulles and Selwyn Lloyd, the British Foreign Secretary, in August 1956, ‘that even if the Americans refused us their moral support and the English their concrete co-operation, we would be obliged to act militarily.’ He explained that Nasser’s influence was so great that, ‘according to very reliable
information, we have only several weeks left to save North Africa. Obviously, the loss of North Africa would be followed by that of Black Africa, and thus the European role and influence in Africa would disappear.\textsuperscript{38}

As we have seen, as early as 1949 Dulles warned one of Pineau’s predecessors that, in the event of a ‘Moslem holy war or race war of black against white…the foundation of North-South development would disappear.’\textsuperscript{39} He did not disagree about the nature or the magnitude of the threat, but rather the proper response to it. In speaking to Congressional leaders two weeks after his meeting with Mollet and Pineau, the Secretary warned that Nasser wanted to ‘unite the Arab world and if possible the Moslem world, and to use Mid-East oil and the Suez canal as weapons against the West’. He asserted that he was ‘an extremely dangerous fanatic’ and admitted that, ‘if Nasser gets by with this action, the British and French are probably right in their appraisal of the consequences’. But Dulles and Eisenhower judged that attacking Cairo would only help Nasser to claim leadership of all Muslims. When Eisenhower met his advisors to decide the American response, the CIA director Allen Dulles warned that such an attack ‘would arouse the whole Arab world. The President enlarged this to the whole Moslem world.’\textsuperscript{40}

In November 1956, after it became apparent that the British and the French were proceeding with their plan, Eisenhower presided over a dramatic meeting of the National Security Council. Dulles announced that they had to decide the future of colonialism. They could no longer walk the tightrope between the competing demands of their allies and the emerging Third World. If they did not assert leadership the Soviets surely would. ‘Win or lose’, Dulles warned, ‘we will share the fate of Britain and France’, and ‘the British and French would not win’.\textsuperscript{41}

Rather than rallying to the side of ‘the West’ in a confrontation with ‘the whole Moslem world’, Eisenhower and Dulles used economic diplomacy to force the British and the French to back out of Suez.\textsuperscript{42} But it did not stop there. The crisis exacerbated France’s budget and balance of payments deficits, leaving it vulnerable to continuing American coercion—now directed against its position in North Africa. In March 1957 Dulles rebuffed a secret mission by Robert Marjolin intended to sound him out about possible financial aid. He said that there were two obstacles standing in the way of US help. The first was that the Americans thought France could be self-sufficient if its government took the necessary action.

The second was the problem posed by the continuation of hostilities in Algeria which seemed like a never-ending drain on French resources. While the US realized the difficulties of the problems involved, it had
no suggestions to offer for a solution. Nevertheless, it was difficult to contemplate financial assistance while this drain was continuing.43

When Jean Monnet finally secured a $650 million loan in January 1958 the French had to agree to a 15 per cent cut in military expenditures and the demobilization of 150,000 troops. But a series of clashes with Tunisia—which the FLN was using as a sanctuary from which to launch raids into Algeria—showed that the war was not only continuing but might even spread to neighboring states.44

After the French bombed a Tunisian border town and provoked an international uproar Dulles sought to compel Paris to settle the border conflict. At the same time he began to prepare an ultimatum demanding that France begin peace negotiations with the FLN under American auspices. ‘It is indispensable’, he warned Ambassador Hervé Alphand, ‘that you look for a political solution while there is still time...whatever may be the French determination to continue the fight...financial conditions could, at some point, stand in their way.’ ‘Never’, Alphand wrote back to Paris, ‘has the Secretary of State expressed himself with such force on this subject.’45

Throughout the crisis the Secretary continued to justify his actions based on his old dream of ‘Eurafrica’ and his nightmare of an international race war or Islamic jihad. Thus he told Pineau that he ‘could not overstate the importance of North Africa for Europe’, but speaking ‘as a friend of France more than as a Secretary of State’, he said that “[T]he prospect of seeing the hostilities spread beyond North Africa from Algeria to the Persian Gulf—with the Communists providing logistical support and armed aid’ was ‘terrifying’ to him.46

But the French government was caught between this irresistible force and an immovable object: the military’s determination not to permit what the Resident Minister in Algeria Robert Lacoste called ‘a diplomatic Dien Bien Phu’.47 Like Guillaume, the most important military leaders conceived of the war as a fight for Western civilization and the future of Eurafrica. In April 1958 General Paul Ely, chef d’Etat-major général, warned that ‘we are threatened with seeing the fight against the Algerian rebellion lose its character as a conflict particular to France, to transform itself into a war against the whole Arab world itself supported by the Communist world’. But whereas Dulles recoiled from this prospect and urged appeasement, Ely argued that this was all the more reason to harden their stance. ‘The application right away of liberal measures in Algeria’, he insisted, ‘would lead inevitably to a secession with all the consequences that would have for France, the West and Western civilization.’ Yet he admitted that ‘we have no chance of keeping Algeria if the entire world is against us and if we appear to be behind by 30 to 40 years’. He therefore called for redoubling efforts to rally allied support and institute a liberal policy toward
Sub-Saharan Africa. Algeria could then become ‘the center of gravity of a sort of Eurafrican federation’.48

Dulles needed no convincing of the danger of civilizational conflict or the allure of Eurafrica. Less than a week later he repeated for a French newspaper correspondent his vision of North Africa ‘as a kind of pool of raw materials for western Europe like the western states were for the thirteen colonies during the formation of our republic’. Yet he continued to fear that the fighting would lead to ‘grave dissension between the West and Islam’. The Secretary of State was therefore absolutely correct when he concluded that ‘our objective is the same as that of the French government. What we doubt are the means employed until now to attain these ends’.49

Three weeks later, when a new government that appeared to favor a negotiated settlement came to power, the settlers in Algiers stormed the American cultural center and sacked government house. The military leadership joined them in forming a committee of public safety and calling for the return of de Gaulle. It is ‘only a slight exaggeration’, as Michael Harrison has argued, to view the events leading to the collapse of the Fourth Republic as ‘an anti-American revolt’.50

The fury of French responses to US opposition in North Africa cannot be entirely explained by legalistic arguments about the constitutional status of Algeria or its inclusion in the Atlantic Treaty, but also arose because the Americans appeared to be race traitors to an embattled white community. Thus, a Councilor of the French Union railed against what he called the ‘Anglo-Saxon master plan of an anti-colonialist afro-Asiatic union’, arguing that it had ‘opened the way to aggressive displays by peoples of color against the white race…’51 This idea of a civilizational conflict also served to legitimize military dissidence. A year before the May crisis Ely had written that the ‘implacable judgment of history will …not absolve [the Army] for attempting to escape its responsibilities when the fate of our civilization [is] at stake’.52

The Fourth Republic may therefore be seen as, in part, a casualty of a clash of civilizations, or rather clashing French and American responses to what both perceived as the danger of a civilizational conflict. While no one can pretend to render the ‘implacable judgment of history’, establishing the deep roots of such attitudes does help us to understand their resonance today. Thus, when the former Secretary-General of NATO Willy Claes said that it needed to prepare for a confrontation with Islam it was not just a faux pas. Rather, it represented an idea that has long been influential and must be taken seriously, if only the better to refute it. In particular, the history of the Algerian War leads us to ask whether redirecting NATO to face south rather than east may actually divide rather than rally the allies. Indeed, as both American and European societies become more ethnically diverse—and particularly their armies, as more make the transition to all-volunteer forces—basing their foreign policies on the idea of defending
Western civilization may prove internally divisive as well, even if it were possible.

Over the centuries civilizations have clashed, commingled and sometimes ignored one another across the Mediterranean. As we consider its future we ought not to forget the richness and continuing resonance of its history, a history that does not foreclose any one of these possibilities while constantly reminding us that individuals—and not civilizations—will decide whether we shall have one or another.

NOTES
7 Ibid., pp. 28, 45–7.
8 Huntington, Clash of Civilizations, pp. 307, 316. It is important to note—as does Huntington himself—that while he has attracted the most attention at least eight other authors have advanced the same or similar arguments, ibid., p. 324.
9 Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso/New Left Books, 1983), along with Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s edited volume The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) are classic arguments against the ‘primordialism’ attributed to Smith and Connor. It should be noted, however, that no specialist scholar of ethnicity shares Huntington’s vision of a future ‘clash of civilizations’.
10 The September/October 1993 issue of Foreign Affairs featured several critiques of Huntington’s article, but perhaps the most powerful was Richard E.Rubenstein and Jarle Crocker’s ‘Challenging Huntington’, Foreign Policy, 96 (Fall 1994): 113–28.
11 Heinz Gollwitzer’s *Die Gelbe Gefahr* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) is still the standard work.


13 On this point see also Dane Kennedy’s inspired attempt to connect ‘Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24 (September 1996): 345–63.


17 Dulles-Mendès-France memcon, p. 1504.


192. This also reflected the official NSC policy, according to which ‘France’s future would appear to lie primarily in its European role’, NSC 5721/1, 19 October 1957, FRUS, 1955–57, Vol. 28, p. 189.


28 The British Colonial Office was unreceptive to this approach. H.T. Bourdillon, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, had written the previous year that ‘the whole idea of subordinating Colonial policy to foreign policy or of forming a defensive alliance with other Colonial powers is repugnant to us.’ The Foreign Office tried to be conciliatory but did not differ on the substance of the issue, Bourdillon minute, 21 April 1954, David Goldsworthy (ed.), *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire, 1951–1957* (London: HMSO, 1994) Series A, Vol. 3, Part I: International Relations, No. 119.


30 ‘Algérie’, 1956, MAE, Série ONU, dossier 549.


34 Unsigned memorandum to Seydoux, Ministre Plénipotentiaire attached to the Résidence Générale, 2 February 1955, MAE, Tunisie, 1944–55, dossier 377.

35 Dillon to Dulles, 2 March 1956, US National Archives (USNA), College Park, MD, RG59, Central Decimal Files, 651.71.

36 Dillon to Dulles, 4 February 1956, USNA, RG59, Central Decimal Files, 751S.00.


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39 See n. 24.
41 302nd Meeting of the NSC, 1 November 1956, DDEL Ann Whitman File, NSC Series..
43 Memcon Dulles-Marjolin, 20 May 1957, USNA, RG 59, Central Decimal Files, 851.10.
49 Alphand to Pineau, April 25, 1958, MAE, Série Mission de liaison algérien, dossier 24 (provisoire).
51 He even suggested that eventually a third, Asian-based power would threaten both of ‘the two blocs of the white race’, ‘Proposition [No 193] tendant à inviter le gouvernement à mettre en oeuvre une politique de défense eurafricaine à long terme…’, M.Schneider, a copy of which is in the AN, Georges Bidault Papers, 457AP, Dossier 108.
INTRODUCTION

The first question that all students of Mediterranean affairs must ask themselves upon approaching the problems of this geographical area is an existential one, that is to say, whether the Mediterranean should be accredited with regionality just because it possesses a clear geographical coherence. Subjective perception, of course, plays a great part in answering that question. In international relations little attention can be expected to be given to the Mediterranean as a whole unless a consensus of national and international actors exists. A cursory look at several points in history will show that the acceptance of Mediterranean regionality has always been dependent upon the subjective perception of states at any given time. Riparian or external powers did so when they made mastery of the Mediterranean their foreign policy objective. From Habsburg Spain and Ottoman Turkey in early modern history, to Britain in the nineteenth century, to Italy in its Fascist imperialist era, to the superpowers in the Cold War era, powerful international players invented and reinvented Mediterranean regionality, even as the gulf between riparian actors continued to expand. These international players all had one thing in common: an appreciation of a fact so obvious that many tend to ignore it, which is to say, that the Mediterranean is, before being anything else, water.

To commercial and naval powers, the liquid nature of the Mediterranean is as decided a link between the shores that surround it as it is an interruption of continuity to land-bound communities. Such powers have long insisted on the principle that, national territorial proximity notwithstanding, freedom of navigation especially in strategic waters is a matter of international concern that consequently calls for an international
regulatory regime. The complex history of the Turkish straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosporus is a case in point and has been at the centre of many contests among interested powers.

In more recent times, changes in the structure of international economic relations, developmental concerns of coastal states, and new technologies have combined to create a demand for a more thorough regularization and codification of national rights and obligations vis-à-vis each other and the international community. As a result, the Mediterranean may be said to have become ‘high sea’ in terms of freedom of navigation by merchant fleets and navies alike, but the private property of the riparian states in terms of economic resources in the water and beneath it.

Because of its geographical and geological make-up, the Mediterranean constitutes at once one of the most complex and suitable case studies for the application of international legislation concerning the sea. To the east the sea is bounded by some of the richest oil resources in the world. Unlike coal, its predecessor as the essential fuel for industry and transport, oil is not always available within the territory of the developed economies. By pipeline or tanker, its transport is considered by the developed economies of the world as a matter of national security and thus of international concern. This combination of national economic and security perceptions has frequently gone beyond the appeal to international law and produced military action, such as the international engagements in the two Gulf Wars.

Beyond the tension between the national interest of coastal states on the one hand and the rights of international users of the sea on the other, technological innovation and the urge of coastal states to maximize their resources have necessitated a clarification of the rights and obligations of neighbouring coastal states vis-à-vis each other. With 21 states huddled together around a relatively small sea, oil in particular has also been at the centre of bilateral claims and sometimes disputes concerning the exploration of the seabed, especially those involving riparian neighbours who regard actual or potential oil deposits as crucial to their economic well-being. Economic reasons are not the only ones that are at stake here. As with land boundaries, political and security considerations also play an important part in a country’s acceptance or non-acceptance of formulae for the delimitation of maritime boundaries. Indeed, there is one essential difference between the delimitation of land and of sea boundaries. Whereas the former are the result of geographical contours, ‘natural’ limits, the historical process of settlement and, more often, warfare, the endeavour to delimit maritime frontiers rests on international law, which can only be effective by international or at least multilateral understanding. It would seem that the coming into operation, as opposed to the mere codification, of the Law of the Sea represents a decided
contribution to the achievement of Mediterranean regionally, this time round in the perception of the regional states themselves.

THE NEW LAW OF THE SEA

The 1945 US Proclamation with Respect to the Natural Resources of the Subsoil and Seabed of the Continental Shelf precipitated a series of jurisdictional claims throughout the world's oceans. This unilateral act, which has been characterized as the 'starting point of positive law on the subject', declared that a state had an original, natural and exclusive right to the continental shelf resources adjacent to its coasts. The Truman Proclamation marked a turning-point in the law of the sea as it encouraged other states to establish economically-inspired, maritime, jurisdictional claims. It provided a plausible precedent for states that wished to gain exclusive control over desperately needed marine resources.

It is noteworthy that while the US Proclamation attempted to balance the newly claimed coastal state rights with those enjoyed by the international community on the high seas, the same cannot always be said for the bolder initiatives the Proclamation provoked. Consequently, for many years following the Second World War the international community faced numerous (at times extensive) maritime jurisdictional claims, largely for resource-exploitation purposes. These claims, generally in defiance of the established law, led to considerable controversy and disputes. In Latin America, for example, states claimed exclusive maritime zones which extended up to a distance of 200 nautical miles from their coasts. An example of this practice is the 1952 Santiago Declaration on the Maritime Zone signed by Chile, Ecuador and Peru. In this Declaration it was held that:

1. Governments are bound to ensure for their peoples access to the necessary food supplies. 2. It is therefore the duty of each Government to ensure the conservation and protection of its natural resources and to regulate the use thereof to the greatest possible advantage of its country. 3. Hence it is likewise the duty of each Government to prevent the said resources from being used outside the area of its jurisdiction so as to endanger their existence, integrity, and conservation to the prejudice of peoples so situated geographically that their seas are irreplaceable sources of essential food and economic materials.

The signatories went on to proclaim:

as a principle of their international policy that each of them possesses sole sovereignty and jurisdiction over the area of sea adjacent to the
coasts of their respective countries, to a minimum distance of 200 n.m. from the said coasts.

Understandably, such claims faced tremendous opposition on the grounds that they were contrary to international law.\(^6\) Even the relatively more modest fishing claims of Iceland attracted strong and naval protests from the United Kingdom and Germany.\(^7\)

By the time the First United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was convened in 1958 the delegates faced maritime claims ranging between 3 and 200 nautical miles in breadth. Maritime and distant-fishing states claimed that the 3-nautical-mile limit for the territorial sea and any marine resource zone was imposed by customary international law. This position was strongly opposed by certain Latin American states and newly independent states. The eventual failure by the Conference to agree on the maximum breadth of the territorial sea and that of the exclusive fishery zone signaled the need for dramatic changes that were to occur in the law of the sea. Another attempt to settle the question met with a similar failure at the 1960 Second UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.

More progress at the 1958 Conference was made with respect to the continental shelf regime. The US position—as reflected in the Truman Proclamation—prevailed over all others and was codified in Article 2 of the 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf. The Convention also established the continental shelf limits.\(^8\) The relevant provisions were later declared by the International Court of Justice to reflect customary international law.\(^9\)

The law of the sea faced new pressures as the newly independent states of the 1960s and 1970s demanded its revision. The rapid advances in technological development, particularly in the offshore oil industry, also generated pressure for further extensions of the continental shelf limits. By the mid-1970s, the 1958 Convention’s limits were abandoned by a considerable number of states. In response to mainly economic aspirations, developing states claimed 200-nautical-mile maritime zones wherein they exercised control over all economic resources, a trend which eventually led to the establishment of the exclusive economic zone.\(^10\)

The adoption and entry into force of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea\(^11\) marked an important achievement in the process to codify and progressively develop the law of the sea. Essentially it may be considered as a constitution regulating humankind’s uses of the seas. The drafters of the Convention believed that the legal stability it provided would contribute to the strengthening of peace, security, co-operation and friendly relations between states.\(^12\) Its fundamental goal is that of establishing a maritime legal order which—while paying due regard to the sovereignty of all states—facilitates the international uses of the sea;\(^13\) promotes the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources;\(^14\) and
provides for the protection and preservation of the marine environment. It is hoped that the Convention will contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security as it replaces ‘a plethora of conflicting claims by coastal States with universally agreed limits on the territorial sea, on the contiguous zone, on the exclusive economic zone, and on the continental shelf’.

The following Mediterranean countries are parties to the 1982 Convention: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Slovenia, Tunisia and Yugoslavia.

THE 1982 UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

In this part it is proposed to examine the various jurisdictional zones which may be established under the 1982 UNCLOS. Particular reference will be made to the practice of states in the Mediterranean which is defined—for the purposes of this study—as the Mediterranean Sea proper, including its gulfs and seas bounded to the west by the meridian passing through Cape Spartel lighthouse, at the entrance of the Strait of Gibraltar, and to the east by the southern limits of the entrance to the Dardanelles between Mehmetick and Kumkale lighthouse. This area constitutes a unique semi-enclosed sea. The coastline surrounding this sea is divided among 20 states and varies dramatically in length and configuration. Three states—Spain, Italy and Greece—represent three great peninsulas which effectively divide the sea into sub-regions.

There are no coastlines of any two states which are more than 400 nautical miles apart. This generally means that the establishment of economic maritime zones of up to an outer limit of 200 nautical miles by Mediterranean states faces serious overlapping claims which need to be delimited. This process needs to take account of the frequent presence of islands. The different cultures, economic levels of development and political rivalries which plague the region complicate further the attainment of agreement. These ingredients present fertile ground for delimitation disputes with great conflict potential. In the light of this it is proposed to review the relevant practice of Mediterranean states.

**The Territorial Sea**

Under Part 2 of the 1982 Convention, every coastal state has a right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles. The outer limit of the territorial sea is the line every point of which is at a distance from the nearest point of the baseline equal to the breadth of the territorial sea. Within the territorial sea, the coastal state enjoys sovereignty which extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil. Most Mediterranean states claim a
12-nautical-mile territorial sea. These include Albania, Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia.\textsuperscript{22} There are, however, a number of Mediterranean countries which claim a limit below the maximum breadth recognized by the Convention: Greece (6/10 nautical miles), Jordan (3 nautical miles) and Turkey (6/12 nautical miles). Syria is the only Mediterranean state which claims a 35-nautical-mile territorial sea.\textsuperscript{23}

**Contiguous Zone**

Under Article 33 of the 1982 Convention, coastal states are allowed to establish a zone contiguous to the territorial sea wherein they may exercise:

- the control necessary to:
  - prevent infringement of its customs, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws and regulations within its territory or territorial sea;
  - punish infringement of the above laws and regulations committed within its territory or territorial sea.\textsuperscript{24}

Under the Convention, the contiguous zone: ‘may not extend beyond 24 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured’.\textsuperscript{25}

A considerable number of Mediterranean states do not claim a contiguous zone. These include Albania, Algeria, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Monaco and Turkey.\textsuperscript{26} The Mediterranean states which have established a contiguous zone all claim a 24-nautical-mile limit generally in accordance with the provisions of the 1982 Convention; these include Egypt,\textsuperscript{27} France, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia.\textsuperscript{28} Syria claims a 6-nautical-mile contiguous zone beyond its 35-nautical-mile territorial sea.\textsuperscript{29}

**Continental Shelf**

Part VI of the 1982 Convention defines the continental shelf of a coastal state as comprising the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance.\textsuperscript{30} Over the continental shelf, the coastal state exercises sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources.\textsuperscript{31} These rights are exclusive in the
sense that if the coastal state does not explore the continental shelf nor exploit its natural resources, no one may undertake these activities without the express consent of the state. Furthermore, such rights do not depend on occupation, effective or notional, or on any express proclamation.

Mediterranean state practice with respect to the continental shelf’s outer limits generally adopts the criteria found in the 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf wherein the term ‘continental shelf’ is used as referring (a) to the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas adjacent to the coast but outside the area of the territorial sea, to a depth of 200 metres or beyond that limit, to where the depth of the superjacent waters admits of the exploitation of the natural resources of the said areas; (b) to the seabed and subsoil of similar submarine areas adjacent to the coasts of islands. Albania, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Spain, Syria and Tunisia have legislation which adopts the 1958 definition and criteria. It is noteworthy, however, that a number of Mediterranean states have not expressly proclaimed a continental shelf. These include Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Monaco, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey.

Exclusive Economic Zone

The exclusive economic zone regime, established by the 1982 UNCLOS, allows the coastal state inter alia, sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds. Concomitant jurisdiction is also provided with regard to the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures; the conducting of marine scientific research; and the protection and preservation of the marine environment. The zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the territorial sea is measured. Within the zone all states enjoy the freedoms of navigation, over-flight, communication and other international lawful uses of the sea related to these freedoms. The exercise of these freedoms, however, is without prejudice to the rights granted to the coastal state. Essentially, the Convention establishes an intricate mechanism which attempts to balance and accommodate the often conflicting rights and legitimate uses of the zone by the coastal state and the international community.

It is generally accepted that, unlike the continental shelf regime which exists ipso facto, the exclusive economic zone has to be expressly declared for the existence and enjoyment of the zone rights. It is interesting that a
number of Mediterranean states—which include Egypt, France, Morocco, Spain and Turkey—have claimed a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone. However, the majority of these claims have not been implemented with respect to the Mediterranean coast. France, for example, adopted in 1979 Decree Number 77/130 which established an economic zone off the French coast bordering the North Sea, the English Channel, and the Atlantic from the Franco-Belgian border to the Franco-Spanish border. It would seem that the policy of France is not to establish an economic zone in the Mediterranean unless other states claim such zones adjacent to their own Mediterranean coasts.

The status quo which has prevailed in the Mediterranean until now may be about to change. On 26 August 1997 the Council of Ministers of Spain approved a decree which established a fishing protection area in the Mediterranean. Under Act 15 of 1978 Spain promulgated an exclusive economic zone applicable to the Spanish coasts facing the Atlantic Ocean and the Bay of Biscay. The law provided for its future application to other areas of the Spanish coast. In fact, the 1997 Decree is a manifestation of this power and was motivated by the need to protect living resources outside the Spanish-Mediterranean territorial sea. Excessive fishing by foreigners has generated a situation of confrontation with Spanish fishermen, causing resentment and tension among the Mediterranean coastal communities of Spain. In the light of this, and the absence of any credible international regulation, Spain established a zone adjacent to its Mediterranean territorial sea wherein it claimed sovereign rights for the purpose of conserving, managing and exploiting the living resources therein. The outer limit of the zone was based on equidistance.

Upon ratification of the 1982 Convention, the Egyptian government made a declaration which stated that from the date of ratification, Egypt would start to exercise the exclusive economic zone rights in the areas adjacent to its territorial sea in the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea. The declaration also undertakes to establish the outer limits of its exclusive economic zone in accordance with ‘the rules, criteria and modalities laid down in the Convention’. Furthermore, Egypt declared that it will take the necessary action and make the necessary arrangements to regulate all matters relating to the exclusive economic zone. In 1990 Egypt issued a Presidential Decree establishing the baselines from which its territorial sea in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea is measured. In 1997 the Egyptian National Maritime Committee undertook work towards the preparation of negotiations concerning the delimitation of the Egyptian exclusive economic zone in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. In the light of these developments, the Mediterranean may soon be subject to a new wave of claims establishing national exclusive economic zones. The restraint shown in the past was largely due to a number of factors, including the complexities of the delimitation of overlapping claims and the fact that the
two major resources of paramount concern to Mediterranean states, that is, the non-living resources of the continental shelf and living resources, were already covered by existing laws. It would, however, seem that the dangers of over-fishing by foreigners is putting pressure on Mediterranean states to further their claims through the establishment of the exclusive economic zone.

THE POSITION UNDER CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW

As not all Mediterranean states have yet adhered to the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, it may be useful to review the position under customary international law. Generally, the relevant provisions of the 1982 Convention reflect this law. It would seem that states are entitled to claim a territorial sea with an outer limit of 12 nautical miles, a contiguous zone with an outer limit of 24 nautical miles, and an exclusive economic zone with an outer limit of 200 nautical miles. Given the relatively confined area of the Mediterranean, the emergence of the 200-nautical mile distance criterion regulating the outer limit of the continental shelf under customary international law is of particular importance. This criterion, which appears in Article 76 of the 1982 Convention, detaches the legal continental shelf from the criteria found in the 1958 Shelf Convention. Consequently, the depth and exploitability criteria—adopted by a number of Mediterranean states in determining the continental shelf limits—would have to be considered in the light of this development, particularly when a dispute over the delimitation of the shelf arises. Furthermore, it may be pertinent to point out that the 1982 UNCLOS prevails, as between state parties, over the 1958 Convention.

An institution found in customary international law is the exclusive fishery zone. Within this zone, which may extend up to 200 nautical miles, the coastal state is entitled to claim sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the living resources therein. It is difficult, however, to conclude that the right of land-locked states and geographically disadvantaged states to the living resources of other coastal states—as for example provided in the 1982 Convention—is part of customary law. Three of the Mediterranean states claim an exclusive fishery zone: Algeria (32/52 nautical miles), Malta (25 nautical miles) and Spain. Many others do not make specific claims but claim exclusive fishery rights beyond the territorial sea. The provisions relating to bays in the 1982 Convention do not apply to so-called ‘historic’ bays. This issue is regulated by rules of customary international law. It is generally agreed that a state may validly claim title to a bay on historic grounds if it can show that it has, for a considerable period of time, claimed the bay as internal waters and exercised therein effective control and authority. It is important that such a claim receives
the acquiescence of other states, particularly specially affected states. Once such a claim is established, the coastal state is entitled to draw a closing line across the mouth of the bay, which line would then constitute the territorial sea baseline. There appears to be no rule determining the maximum length of such a line. One of the important consequences of such a claim is that it shifts considerably seawards the maritime claims of a state.

In the Mediterranean there are number of ‘historic’ bay claims which have attracted, at times, widespread protest. On 19 October 1973 Libya announced that the Gulf of Sidra, located within its territory and surrounded by land boundaries on its east, south and west side, and extending north offshore to latitude 32 degrees and 30 minutes, constitutes an integral part of its territory and is under its complete sovereignty. The Libyan announcement stated that throughout ‘history and without any dispute’ Libya had exercised its sovereignty over the Gulf. Furthermore, it stated that its claim was necessary to ensure its security and safety. This Libyan claim has met with protests from a number of states, including Australia, France, Germany, Malta, Norway, Spain and the United States. The conflict potential of this claim is reflected in the US determination to demonstrate its objection to the Libyan claim by exercising high-seas freedoms despite Libyan protests. In 1981 this dispute led to an incident where two Libyan aircraft were shot down by US forces.

An ‘historic’ bay claim is also made by Italy with respect to the Gulf of Taranto. In 1977, through a Presidential Decree, a baseline was drawn across the outer points of this Gulf. This claim has also elicited protests from a number of states, including the United Kingdom and the United States who do not agree that the Gulf can be considered an ‘historic’ bay.

**DELIMITATION OF MARITIME CLAIMS**

**Territorial Sea Boundary**

The 1982 Convention contains provisions concerning the delimitation of the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf. With respect to the territorial sea, the Convention provides that:

where the coasts of two States are opposite or adjacent to each other, neither of the two States is entitled, failing agreement between them to the contrary, to extend its territorial sea beyond the median line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial seas of each of the two States is measured. The above provision does not apply, however, where it is necessary by reason of historic title or other special circumstances to
delimit the territorial seas of the two States in a way which is at variance therewith.71

The 1982 Convention does not provide for the delimitation of the contiguous zone. However, parties to the 1958 *Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone* are bound by Article 24(3) which, failing agreement, imposes the median line:

Where the coasts of two States are opposite or adjacent to each other, neither of the two States is entitled, failing agreement between them to the contrary, to extend its contiguous zone beyond the median line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial seas of the two States is measured.

There exist a number of agreements delimiting territorial sea boundaries in the Mediterranean. The first is found in the *Treaty Concerning the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus* in 1960.72 This obliges Cyprus not to claim a territorial sea with respect to the two areas adjacent to the British ‘sovereign base area’ in Akrotiri and Dhekelia. In this respect boundaries were drawn enclosing the maritime zones adjacent to the said areas. The exceptional nature of this treaty is reflected in the strong influence which political and security factors have exerted on the delimitation process. Consequently, only certain segments of the boundaries are based on equidistance. It may be pertinent to refer to the maritime boundaries agreed to between Turkey and the former USSR in the Black Sea, bearing in mind that Turkey has a Mediterranean coast and has faced considerable jurisdictional problems in the Aegean Sea.73 In 1973 both states established a territorial sea boundary which departs from equidistance and seems to be influenced by the general direction of the land boundary.74 In 1978 the parties agreed to delimit the continental shelf in the Black Sea ‘based on the principles of equity, taking into consideration the relevant principles and norms of international law’.75 The reference to equity is a reflection of the general Turkish position on maritime delimitation, particularly in respect to its delimitation problems in the Aegean. The 440.1 nautical-mile boundary, in fact, essentially employs equidistance modified due to geographic considerations.76 Through an exchange of notes, the parties agreed that this continental shelf boundary should also delimit their exclusive economic zones.77 It is submitted that the practice of these two states, the coasts of which surround a semiclosed sea, with their contrasting political and economic systems could serve as a useful model for the delimitation of maritime zones in the Mediterranean. While it is important to point out that the configuration of these coastlines did not provide any insurmountable
problems, it is clear that the desire to consolidate their good neighbourliness and friendly co-operation prevailed.78 Furthermore, while there is no compelling reason to state that under international law the continental shelf boundary and that of the exclusive economic zone should be coincidental,79 this practice confirms the view that the advantages of an identical boundary for the shelf and the zone could lead states to a single maritime boundary.

In 1975 Italy and Yugoslavia established a territorial sea boundary which took into account the principles established by the 1958 Territorial Sea Convention.80 It would seem that navigational considerations were taken into account when determining the boundary.81 The boundary subsequently gave rise to fishing disputes and led to the creation of a common fishing zone in the Gulf of Trieste which was established through the exchange of the diplomatic notes on 18 February 1983. The zone overlaps the territorial sea boundary.82 In 1991 the Croatian Parliament declared that international agreements concluded and acceded to by the former Yugoslavia should apply to Croatia, provided that they did not conflict with the Constitution and legal system.83 In 1992 a Slovenian declaration that it acceded to the 1975 Treaty was noted with satisfaction by Italy.84 The boundary delimiting the adjacent coasts of Slovenia and Croatia has not yet been settled.

In 1986 Italy and France concluded an agreement relating to the delimitation of the maritime boundaries in the area of the Strait of Bonifacio.85 This agreement delimits the opposite territorial seas in the area. Essentially, the boundary is based on equidistance;86 due regard is, however, given to a previous agreement signed between the two states for the purpose of determining exclusive fishing zones for French and Italian fishermen, respectively, in the waters between Corsica and Sardegna.87 It is noteworthy that the 1986 Agreement provides for the establishment of a common fishing zone ‘by way of neighbourly arrangement, to allow French and Italian coastal fishing vessels to continue their activities in the traditional fishing areas...’88

**Continental Shelf Boundary, by Agreement**

The 1982 Convention contains provisions relating to the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone89 and the continental shelf.90 The Convention provides that the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone or the continental shelf between states with opposite or adjacent coasts shall be effected by agreement on the basis of international law, as referred to in Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, in order to achieve an equitable solution.91 This provision, which differs from Article 6 of the 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf,92 has been criticized on the grounds that it does not offer any positive assistance to the parties to
the dispute. As Judge Oda has aptly observed, it does not provide any specific designation of which principles and rules from the entire panoply of customary, general, positive, and conventional law are of particular significance.\textsuperscript{93} It is therefore reasonable to expect that disputes concerning maritime zones will be settled by recourse to the rules of customary international law,\textsuperscript{94} even between parties to the 1982 Convention.

With respect to the delimitation of the continental shelf, practice in the Mediterranean has been varied and, at times, turbulent. Italy has been particularly successful in delimiting a number of maritime boundary agreements. In 1968 it signed a continental shelf agreement with the former Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{95} The agreed boundary adopts a median line which is modified in order to take into account the case of small islands lying in the delimitation area. A strict median line application would have resulted in a disproportionate division due to the random locations of these islands.\textsuperscript{96}

Italy concluded an innovative continental shelf agreement with Tunisia in 1971.\textsuperscript{97} The boundary is essentially a median line which takes into account islands, islets and low-tide elevations with the exceptions of Lampione, Lampedusa, Linosa and Pantelleria. These latter islands are closer to Tunisia and caused a modification of the equidistant boundary by creating semi-circles around them, the radius of which is 13 nautical miles (Lampione which is uninhabited has 12 nautical miles). Essentially, therefore, these islands are granted a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea and a 1-nautical-mile continental shelf. It is generally understood that the Italian concession with respect to the continental shelf of these islands was part of a general agreement designed to resolve the serious fishing problems between the two countries.\textsuperscript{98} Indeed, on 20 August 1971 the two countries concluded a bilateral fishing agreement which allowed Italian fishing in Tunisian waters upon the payment of an annual fee.\textsuperscript{99} Italy signed a continental shelf agreement with Spain in 1974.\textsuperscript{100} The boundary, which is 137.19 nautical miles long, is based on equidistance.\textsuperscript{101} France has declared that it is not bound by this agreement.\textsuperscript{102}

In 1977 Italy signed a continental shelf agreement with Greece on the principle of the median line with ‘mutually approved minor adjustments’.\textsuperscript{103} Another continental shelf boundary based on equidistance was concluded between Italy and Albania. It would seem that in implementing the equidistance method, only some minor adjustments were made.\textsuperscript{104} In all Italy’s agreements the boundary ceased before reaching the meeting point of the other possible shelf boundaries of neighbouring states.\textsuperscript{105}

**By Judicial Settlement**

Two continental shelf boundary disputes were settled through their submission to the International Court of Justice. The first concerned the
delimitation of the continental shelf boundary between Libya and Tunisia. In 1982 the International Court delivered its judgment wherein it took into account mainly the geographical situation and coastal configurations in achieving an equitable solution.\(^{106}\) The method of equidistance was substantially disregarded by the International Court.\(^{107}\) On 8 August 1988 the parties concluded a treaty which implemented the boundary proposed by the said judgment after the Tunisian request for a revision of the first judgment had been turned down by the Court.\(^{108}\) On the same day the parties signed an agreement establishing the ‘Seventh November JointExploration Zone’ which overlaps the agreed boundary.\(^{109}\)

In the Malta-Libya dispute the Court delivered its judgment on 3 June 1985.\(^{110}\) In this case the median line was employed as a provisional step in achieving a final boundary by shifting the line northwards through 18 minutes of latitude in Libya’s favour.\(^{111}\) The Court felt that, in the light of the relevant geographical circumstances of the case, its transposition of the median line achieved an equitable solution.\(^{112}\) The area delimited was restricted by the meridians 13 degrees 50 minutes, and 15 degrees 10 minutes after Italy’s application to intervene was rejected by the International Court,\(^{113}\) which, however, decided that the judgment must be limited in geographical scope so as to leave the claims of Italy unaffected.\(^{114}\) It is noteworthy that in the Malta-Sicily Channel a provisional continental shelf boundary based on the median line seems to be respected by Malta and Italy.\(^{115}\) On 10 November 1986 Malta and Libya concluded an agreement implementing the judgment of the Court.\(^{116}\)

**CASE STUDIES**

Under a certain light the law of the sea attempts to apply to the water concepts that are normally applied to land, while recognizing the substantial difference in the properties of land and sea. Applying a logical and mutually acceptable system of law is rendered additionally complicated, therefore, when sea and land intercept each other, as in the occurrence of a water strait or a group of islands. Of course, in international relations subjective perceptions of what is equitable are critical in determining the efficacy of international law. In bilateral or multilateral disputes national claims are not always, certainly not only, based on law. Historical interpretation, perceptions of fairness, appeals to common sense, and ultimately a calculation of the other’s ability or inability to defend and enforce claims are important determinants.

*The Aegean*

Not only the complex geography of the waters between Greece and Turkey, but the equally complex history of the relations between these two...
countries makes the Aegean a particularly thorny issue in terms of the Law of the Sea. Here is a case where geography clearly favours one party, Greece, whereas the frustration of its bigger neighbour, Turkey, is easy to comprehend. Turkey is many times larger than Greece in territory and population, yet most of the sea flanked by the two states is virtually the property of Greece, by virtue of the possession by the latter of most of the three thousand odd islands that litter the region. Greek possession of these islands has been achieved in the course, and at the expense of, the long agony of the Ottoman Empire, of which the war of Greek independence in the 1820s was an early manifestation. Greco-Turkish relations reached their nadir in the immediate post-World War I years when the Greeks, like others among the victorious allies, descended upon Asia Minor in a race to snatch as much of Turkey’s carcass as possible before others did. For a while, Greek leaders entertained the megali idea, the dream of the reconquest of the lands of the Byzantine empire.

Atatürk’s resistance and ultimate preservation of Turkey and his regional policies, combined with Greece’s coming to terms with reality, ushered in an uncharacteristic period of good neighbourliness. Politically, both Greece and Turkey came to be seen as sharing a common geostrategic destiny. After the Second World War, good neighbourliness received a new, if short, lease of life as a result of the fear of communism, internal in the case of Greece and external in the case of Turkey. The two states became the object of the first US commitment to the defence of non-communist Europe, articulated in the Truman Doctrine of 1947. They joined NATO together in 1952 and collaborated with Yugoslavia to set up a Balkan Pact in the context of the West’s strategy of Soviet containment. The project became paralysed soon afterwards, partly because Tito resisted a scheme that should have seen Yugoslavia roped into the Western alliance, but more importantly because of the Cyprus crisis which, although seemingly resolved by the independence package of 1960, returned to poison permanently the relations between the Aegean neighbours. Although removed from the Aegean Sea, the Cyprus question itself is just one example, albeit the most outstanding, of an island where the sheer geographical proximity to Turkey stands in stark conflict with the ethnic and historical affinity to Greece.

It has been remarked that Atatürk could never have signed the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne had he anticipated what sort of maritime jurisdictional claims would arise later in the century. Be that as it may, with few exceptions, Turkey does not contest Greek sovereignty over the Aegean islands. What it does contest is the implication of applying standard criteria with respect to territorial sea and continental shelf delimitation to a sea where it has vital strategic as well as economic interests. However legitimate the sovereign rights of Greece on the Aegean islands are, the Turkish invocation of common sense is too strong to be ignored,
considering that Greek ownership of the islands extends Greek jurisdiction over the sea around them and the seabed beneath it, to say nothing of the airspace above with the equally thorny issue of air corridors.

The dispute between Greece and Turkey concerns both the issue of territorial sea and that of continental shelf delimitation. The two are not unrelated. The essence of the dispute is that, while Turkey tolerates the actual state of affairs, where both Turkey and Greece, including the islands, enjoy a 6-mile territorial sea, it is not prepared to tolerate an extension to 12 miles, which extension Greece claims is within its rights under international law to effect, should it so choose. In the present regime the sum total of Greece’s territorial sea jurisdiction constitutes 35 per cent of the Aegean, as against Turkey’s 8.8 per cent. Should the territorial sea limit double to 12 miles, Greece’s jurisdiction would extend to 63.9 per cent, and Turkey’s only to 10 per cent. This would also have the effect of reducing the proportion of high sea in the Aegean from 56 per cent to 26.1 per cent, meaning that ships sailing from Turkey’s Aegean ports into the Mediterranean would have to pass through the Greek territorial sea, an unacceptable proposition to Turkey, notwithstanding that even so Greece would not be entitled to deny such passage. Additionally an extension of the territorial sea would have important implications for international naval activity. For although this would still allow for free ‘innocent passage’ of international shipping, including warships, notably in the passageways between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea—since the area is considered as an international strait according to the Montreux Convention—most of the sea would not be available for naval manoeuvres and submarines would have to sail on the surface. This factor is of particular relevance to NATO, which periodically conducts naval exercises there, thus representing an added item of discord between Greece and NATO on account of the former’s disagreements with Turkey.

As regards the continental shelf the Greek position is that islands are entitled to their own shelf, not just a territorial sea. By this criterion, Greece would possess rights over the entire Aegean continental shelf, but for a narrow band immediately off the Turkish coast. Greece bases its claim on the 1958 Geneva Continental Shelf Convention, to which it is party but Turkey is not. The Convention appears to give advantages to archipelagic states in a confined sea and is the basis of many bilateral agreements between states. Turkey, on the other hand, takes the view that the median line in the Aegean must be equidistant between the respective mainland coastlines, making allowance only for a 6-mile territorial sea for each island, thereby rendering Greek islands within the Turkish area, east of the median line, as ‘enclaves’. This claim constitutes another reason, in addition to the issue of sovereignty, why Turkey will not accept Greece’s right to extend its islands’ territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles. Turkey
bases its claim on the argument that the Aegean continental shelf is the natural prolongation of the Anatolian peninsula. While the dispute over the territorial sea is of a hypothetical nature, as long as Greece retains its present 6-mile limit, the possibility of Greece’s calling Turkey’s bluff remains a factor of confrontation, especially as Greek rhetoric often hints that Turkey’s objections are not the reason why Greece has not yet extended its territorial waters.

There are good reasons why Greece, despite repeated utterances, has not actually declared a 12-mile territorial sea limit. The Turkish warning that such a course would constitute a *casus belli* has been quite unequivocal, and the experience of Cyprus contains ample advice against calling Turkey’s bluff. Moreover, warlike situations between the two countries have repeatedly been contained by NATO mediation and by the issue of United States military aid to both countries, which time and again has come into play to manage explosive situations brought about by both Greek and Turkish brinkmanship.

Greece’s claim seemed to acquire new legitimacy, at least in its own perception, with the coming into force of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, which Greece belatedly signed but Turkey did not. As the date approached, Turkey responded to official talk, that Greece intended to extend its territorial waters, once again by threatening war, and both countries proceeded to conduct naval exercises in Aegean international waters. The crisis appeared serious enough for the US President to intervene personally as mediator. In June 1995 the Greek government accompanied its ratification of the Convention by stating that it now felt free to extend the Greek territorial sea ‘whenever it saw fit’. Again, Turkey responded by holding exercises, this time with combined land, naval and air forces. Reconciliation was not brought any closer by an incident in January 1996, in which a Turkish vessel ran aground near the island of Imia-Kardak, which both countries claimed as their own, having abandoned talks over it in 1953. Again both countries rushed to deploy warships in the area, and once again withdrew after the intervention of the US President.

Prudence has been even less in evidence where the question of the continental shelf is concerned. When in 1970 Greece granted oil exploration concessions in the eastern Aegean, Turkey responded by despatching the survey ship *Candarli* under naval escort to the same area. As such expeditions were repeated in the following years, tension escalated, with Greece in 1974 remilitarizing the Dodecanese islands (demilitarized by the Treaty of Lausanne) and Turkey responding by ostentatiously building an offensive capability in Ismir. A breakthrough seemed within sight when, early in 1975, Greece proposed and Turkey agreed to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice. Turkey, however, soon after revised its position to the effect that it preferred to
settle the continental shelf dispute out of court through bilateral negotiation. The dispatch of another Turkish research ship *Sismik I* in 1976 was again immediately countered by Greece’s dispatch of its own *Nautilus*. Further escalation was averted through the appeal of the UN Security Council, which Greece invoked on the grounds that Turkey’s action was a violation of Greece’s rights over the Aegean continental shelf, thereby constituting a threat to peace and security. Sidestepping the merits of the dispute, the Security Council adopted Resolution 395, appealing to both sides to reduce tension and negotiate, possibly by taking the dispute to the International Court of Justice. Turkey’s position was that it had no objection to the suggestion of going to the International Court, provided that both parties sought a solution by mutual understanding first, and only submitted to arbitration those issues upon which no agreement could be reached by consent. Meanwhile, however, Greece resorted to the International Court unilaterally. In addition to asking the Court to delimit the respective rights of the two countries over the contested continental shelf, it requested it to order a moratorium on all exploration and research as well as on related military measures, as an interim measure to safeguard peace between the two countries. Turkey, however, refused to recognize the Court’s jurisdiction or abide by any eventual ruling. Despite the Greek argument that Turkey had already earlier committed itself to refer the matter for the Court’s arbitration, the International Court in January 1979 ruled that it possessed no jurisdiction as long as Turkey withheld its consent for the Court to decide.

Closely related to the question of the territorial sea as well as the continental shelf in the Aegean was the question of airspace jurisdiction, which emerged as a major bilateral dispute in the wake of the rapid deterioration of relations following the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus and the concurrent incidents in the Aegean during 1974. A regional conference of the International Civil Aviation Organization in 1952, to which both Greece and Turkey subscribed, decided that the airspace over the Aegean, except for the sky over Turkey’s narrow Aegean territorial sea, should for air-traffic control purposes come under the control of the Greek Flight Information Region. The arrangement worked well, but in 1974 Turkey issued a notice, NOTAM 714, to the effect that all flights east of the Aegean median line of equidistance were to report to Turkey air-traffic control. Turkey justified this notice on security grounds, to be able to distinguish between civilian and hostile aircraft approaching its territory. Greece responded by declaring the Aegean routes to Turkey unsafe due to the possibility of conflicting control orders. Irrespective of the real reasons behind the emergence of this new twist to the Aegean dispute, the positions of Greece and Turkey over the sky above reflect accurately their respective positions over the sea below, including the feature that Greece started off in an advantageous position which Turkey
was now trying to reverse. During the 1980s it was the dispute over air corridors that mainly engaged Greece and Turkey in disagreement. Due to the way the dispute had started and developed, it was normally Greece that intermittently protested against Turkish invasion of Greece air space. Under Andreas Papandreou’s Socialist government meanwhile, such alleged violations became customary grounds for Greece’s refusal to participate in NATO exercises in the Aegean and for sustaining the ratio of 7:10 in the award of United States military aid to Greece and to Turkey, respectively.\textsuperscript{130}

The Central Mediterranean

The central Mediterranean offers a markedly different geopolitical and historical setting from the Aegean. Whereas the Aegean has the nature of an enclosed sea, the central Mediterranean is an area halfway across the sea involving not two, but four\textsuperscript{131} sovereign actors—Libya, Tunisia, Italy and Malta—among whom no deeply ingrained hostility exists.

Italy has been involved, often at the forefront, in every European initiative aimed at building bridges between the European and the non-European Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{132} While it is true that Libya officially harbours resentment against Italy on account of its colonial past, and despite the fact that Italy is a member of NATO, whereas Libya is the most radical of the North African states, Libya has enjoyed better relations with Italy than it has with most other Western countries during the past 30 years. Tunisia has pursued a policy of moderation compared to its immediate land neighbours and, untypically for a North African state, never interfered in the affairs of other states, while it has always been receptive to plans for intra-Maghreb co-operation, as well as cross-Mediterranean dialogues. Libya, in contrast to Tunisia, has repeatedly been active beyond its borders and is not positively regarded in the West. Nevertheless, if relations between Tunisia and Libya have undergone bouts of strain, notably as a result of repeated Libyan overtures for unification and Tunisian claims of Libyan interference in its internal affairs, the relations between the two countries have survived both cross-border clashes and abortive merger proposals, and today the two are members of the Arab Maghreb Union. Malta has been a pioneer in promoting the idea of a Mediterranean identity and common destiny and advertises its neutrality as an instrument of Mediterranean security and co-operation. Its relations with Italy, on the one hand and Libya, on the other, can be said to be generally excellent, with Italy being since 1981 the guarantor of Malta’s sovereignty and neutrality, and Malta being probably the most friendly nation to Libya outside the Arab world. Relations between Malta and Tunisia are generally amicable.

The potential for dispute over marine rights is not therefore unduly
complicated by latent hostility, as is the case in the Aegean, and such
disagreement as there has been was mainly motivated by economic aims.
And although where Libya is concerned one can detect protagonistic
political aims also, it cannot be said that such aims are intrinsically hostile.
Furthermore, beyond the occasionally harsh rhetoric, contested claims
have ultimately been resolved after mutual agreement to submit the issue
to the International Court of Justice. In itself, the recourse to the
International Court implies a readiness, however begrudging at times, to
abide by the norms of international law, a particularly noteworthy feature
considering the wide perception of Libya as a state that defies international
norms of practice. Also unlike the case of the Aegean, contestation over the
respective jurisdictions of states over the continental shelf is not
complicated by the issue of territorial waters, since the neighbourhood
states are comfortably distant from each other in that respect. Finally, all
the central Mediterranean states have signed the 1982 UN Convention on
the Law of the Sea, in contrast to the Aegean neighbours, where only
Greece has signed.133

As in the case of the Aegean, but to a much smaller extent, continental
shelf delimitation in the central Mediterranean is complicated by the
presence of islands lying in between one state coastline and another. Three
groups of islands are involved. One is the Italian Pelagic islands of
Lampione, Lampedusa, Linosa and Pantelleria, which involves the median
line between Italy and Tunisia. Another is Tunisia’s Kerkennah islands and
Djerba, which involves that between Tunisia and Libya. A third is Malta
and its islands of Gozo, Comino and Filfla, flanked by Italy to its north,
Libya to its south and Tunisia to its west, this group being notably different
from the others by dint of its constituting a sovereign state in itself.

In this sub-region of the Mediterranean, Italy is the most economically
developed state, and certainly not dependent on offshore oil for its
economic well-being. Libya indisputably has the biggest oil deposits, with
its economy overwhelmingly dependent on them. Tunisia is a much poorer
country with aspirations to discover wealth by exploring the seabed. The
small island of Malta, though reasonably advanced economically,
entertains similar hopes of an offshore oil bonanza.

Italy is in many respects a protagonist in the issue of continental shelf
delimitation in the Mediterranean, having been party to no fewer than six
out of the just 11 boundary agreements reached in the Mediterranean.134
These include an agreement with Tunisia, but not with either Libya or
Malta. However, the non-existence of delimitation agreements with its
southern neighbours is not an indication of dispute, but rather of a lack of
enthusiasm to look for one. Italy’s approach has generally been
characterized by a non-confrontational attitude, in contrast with the
processes which led to the resolution, finally or partly, of the disputes
between Libya and Tunisia and between Libya and Malta.135
In August 1971 Italy and Tunisia reached an agreement concerning the median line between them, taking due account of the Italian Pelagic islands southwest of Sicily. The agreement gave the islands a continental shelf of 13 nautical miles, that is, one mile beyond the actual territorial waters. The geographical positioning of the islands meant that their continental shelf remained contiguous to the Sicilian continental shelf. Thus, while Italy did not, on the grounds of the possession of these islands, claim to establish the median line halfway between the islands and the Tunisian coast, the agreement did not produce ‘enclaves’, of the type envisaged by Turkey with respect to the Greek islands within the Tunisian shelf.

Italy has no formal dispute with Malta to its immediate south over the two countries’ continental shelves. The bilateral treaty of 1981, which provides for Italian economic aid and affords Malta an Italian security guarantee, represents a relationship of excellent neighbourliness. Although offshore oil prospecting has been carried out, neither Malta nor Italy has crossed the line of equidistance between them, strongly implying at least a tacit acceptance of an equidistant median line. The same can be said of Italy and Libya. Nevertheless, in 1983, when Malta and Libya referred their own dispute over the continental shelf to the International Court of Justice, Italy did submit to the Court, albeit unsuccessfully, a request to intervene as a third party on the grounds that the Court’s decision might have a bearing on Italy’s own rights over the continental shelf. The Court rejected Italy’s claim, but then in its 1985 ruling over the Malta-Libya case declined to pronounce itself over the entire width of the disputed area, leaving for the future a resolution of the area further east, wherein Italy might have claims of its own. In applying to intervene, Italy was echoing a similar application by Malta, submitted in 1981 and also rejected, to intervene in the Libya-Tunisia case, the only other such dispute in the Mediterranean that was submitted to the International Court of Justice.

Libya has had disputes over the delimitation of the continental shelf with both Tunisia and Malta. In both cases the dispute represented the most serious impediment to the maintenance of good-neighbourly relations. In both cases, too, Libya has demonstrated a jealous regard for what it considered as its legitimate sovereign rights, in the face of the mostly moral argument of its interlocutors that they were in need of offshore oil much more than Libya was. In both cases Libya has agreed in principle to submit its disputes to the International Court of Justice, has been hesitant to ratify the agreements, but ultimately ratified, and accepted the judgment of the Court. In the course of its relations with both countries, Libya has also exploited the periodic crises that ensued in order to achieve other political objectives. In the case of Tunisia, Libya has indicated by its apparently vacillating attitude that the dispute need not exist if bilateral relations were placed on a different plane altogether, that is
to say, by the unification of the two countries, on their own or together with third countries. In the case of Malta, where relations have normally been excellent, Libya has demonstrated a clear interest in Malta’s programme, begun during the 1970s, to terminate the British base there and survive as a neutral and non-aligned country. Conversely, both Tunisia and Malta have been happy to seek and maintain friendly relations with Libya, provided that such friendship was mutually advantageous, and not achieved only on Libya’s terms.

The disputed continental shelf in the Gulf of Gabes, known to contain large oil reserves, represented a standing source of strain in the relations between Libya and Tunisia throughout the 1970s. The dispute revolved around Tunisia’s claim that the border line of the continental shelf should take into consideration Tunisia’s island of Djerba and the Kerkennah islands, thus extending its share of the shelf beyond the line based only on the mainland. In 1973 Libya rejected a Tunisian proposal to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice, but in August 1976 both countries agreed in principle to do so, in an attempt to restore friendly relations after these had become particularly strained in the intervening years, among other reasons due to a failed attempt at merging the two countries in January 1974. Despite this agreement, in January 1977 Libya issued a licence to the Italian company SAIPEM to prospect for oil in the disputed area, interrupting the operation the following May. Immediately after, however, the Libyan National Oil Corporation contracted the American company Reading and Bates to drill in the disputed area, deploying Libyan naval vessels to escort the oil rig. The crisis was resolved, after much recrimination, by another agreement to take the issue to the International Court of Justice, an agreement which Tunisia ratified much sooner than Libya. Following further signs of improved relations, which survived another failed merger proposal that was to include Algeria also, the instruments of ratification were exchanged in February 1978. The dispute was submitted to the International Court at the Hague in December 1978. Relations between Libya and Tunisia did not for that reason immediately improve, for at the beginning of 1980 Tunisian insurgents, presumed to have been trained in Libya, launched an armed attack on Gafsa, to be followed soon after by the dispatch of a Libyan oil prospecting platform to the disputed sea in the Gulf of Gabes.

In February 1982 the International Court of Justice issued its ruling, which both parties agreed to abide by, demarcating a boundary line partly along that observed by France and Italy at the time when Tunisia and Libya fell under their respective colonial rule. Rejecting a plea by Tunisia to the effect that consideration should be given to its relative poverty in oil, the ruling appeared to favour Libya’s original position, since the disputed areas where Libya had previously granted controversial prospecting concessions were now placed within Libya’s jurisdiction.
When Tunisia and Libya submitted their case to the International Court of Justice, an application to intervene was unsuccessfully filed by Malta, on the grounds that any eventual ruling might have a bearing on its own standing dispute with Libya over the continental shelf. Malta maintained very good relations with Libya, especially since, from 1971, the newly elected Labour government changed the hitherto pro-Western course of foreign policy in pursuit of a non-aligned Mediterranean policy. The new policy kicked off with a renegotiation of the terms of the Anglo-Maltese defence agreement, which had accompanied independence in 1964, and which included the retention of a British naval base in Malta. The new agreement resulted in an increased rent and a scheduled closure for 1979. In the initially hard and protracted negotiations with Britain, Malta enjoyed the backing of Libya, where Qaddafi’s fledgling regime welcomed the prospect of an end to a Western base on Libya’s doorstep. The closeness of relations with Libya supported Malta in various ways, including a supply of oil at preferential prices, in addition to the bargaining dividend accompanying the tacit message to western Europe that indifference to the island’s development needs might lead to political estrangement. The Maltese-Libyan relationship pivoted on the premise that Malta’s new course of policy, which would deprive the island of much needed funds traditionally generated by the foreign naval base, merited the material support of the one country in the neighbourhood which benefited most from its new Mediterranean policy. In the run-up to the scheduled closure of the base, the Maltese government sought and obtained renewed reassurances of Libyan aid. Nevertheless, Libya became progressively more circumspect on the one contentious issue of the continental shelf between the two countries, where Malta was claiming, and Libya objecting, that the area should be divided by an equidistant median line. Malta’s median line claim would have entitled it to an area extending 95 nautical miles to its south. Libya, claiming consideration of the nature of its own Gulf of Sidra as well as the extensive length of its coastline in contrast with Malta, laid claim to two-thirds of the area to its north, stopping at 65.5 nautical miles south of Malta.

As the closure of the British base drew near, the issue became urgent in two ways in particular. On the one hand, the prospect of discovering offshore oil promised a handsome substitute for the foreign income hitherto derived from the British base, thus sustaining the island’s political as well as its economic independence. On the other, in the absence of a defence agreement with another country, Malta had few means of enforcing its claims against a much bigger contender. The only safe and effective means of appropriating rights on the continental shelf was through a settlement with Libya, either in or outside court.

In 1976 Malta and Libya reached an agreement to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice by not later than the end of June 1980.
The deadline was missed because Libya did not ratify the agreement. Thereupon, in July 1980, the Maltese government gave the green light to the American Texaco Oil Company to drill for oil on the Medina Bank, 68 nautical miles to the southeast of the island. The following month Texaco chartered the oil rig SAIPEM-II from the Italian state-owned oil corporation ENI on behalf of the Maltese government and began prospecting in the disputed area. Libya acted decisively, using naval units to order the oil rig away. The incident created a serious rupture in Maltese-Libyan relations, drawing angry reactions from the Maltese government which called a military alert and appealed to the UN Security Council. Although it did nothing to secure for the island the right to continue offshore drilling, Malta soon after remedied its condition of defencelessness by signing a treaty with Italy wherein the latter provided a package of security guarantees and economic aid.149

In the absence of other serious bones of contention between the two countries, and against a background of increasing international isolation of Libya—notably manifested in two incidents in 1981 involving jurisdiction over territorial waters and airspace150—relations gradually reverted to normal. In March 1982, Libya finally ratified the 1976 agreement to take the continental shelf dispute to the International Court of Justice.151 The Court gave its ruling in June 1985. Refuting both Malta’s claim of dividing equally the distance between the two countries, and Libya’s of dividing it on a ratio of 2:1 in its favour, the ruling set the median line at 18 nautical miles further north, taking into consideration the fact that the relevant Libyan coastline was 192 miles long, as against Malta’s 24 miles.152 In its ruling the Court limited itself to the area which concerned Malta and Libya only, excluding consideration of the areas to the west and the east where Italy might also have claims.153 Meanwhile, by 1984, relations had improved sufficiently for Malta and Libya to sign a comprehensive five-year treaty of economic and security co-operation.154

CONCLUSION

Because of the small size of the Mediterranean area, claims of sovereign rights far beyond national shorelines give common, marine and submarine borders to otherwise distant neighbours. Where the sea lying between lands might represent distance, the acquisition of such ‘borders’ might in theory promote regionality. The application of a single system of law to a marine region surrounded by lands should also, in theory, enhance regionality, but only in the event of a universal acceptance of such law, or a supranational force willing and able to enforce it.

In the short term, denunciation or even selective acceptance of the law can have a fragmentary, rather than a regionary, impact on the Mediterranean. Otherwise a factor, that in theory should enhance the
regionality of the Mediterranean, the proximity of Mediterranean riparian states, can and does result in conflicting claims—boundary claims—that, because of the relative novelty of the economic-orientated regime in the new Law of the Sea among other reasons, can promote bad neighbourliness and hence perpetuate regional fragmentation. Under a certain light, the coming into being of international legislation on the sea may even be counterproductive in the short term and, indeed, as has been pointed out, ‘certain of today’s disputes are the results, not of pressure, but of attempts to produce a system for avoiding disputes’.\textsuperscript{155} In the Mediterranean the coming into being of the Law of the Sea has been both an occasion for good-neighbourly definition of boundaries and for the exacerbation of deep-rooted disputes. In fairness to the law, however, it cannot quite be said that disagreements over its interpretation have been the cause of the disputes themselves, any more than civil legislation is the cause of litigation in civil society.

Certainly the limited experience of the Mediterranean, in time and in extent of application, confirms that, to be effective, law presumes the preexistence of a disposition to abide by it, as evidenced by the cases reviewed. Other than that, it has to be said that, despite liberal displays of gunboat diplomacy, no shot has been fired in anger in the Mediterranean over contested offshore jurisdiction, at least not between riparian states.\textsuperscript{156} It is much more than one can say of land boundaries, few of which have been settled historically by the mere recourse to international law.

NOTES

1 Fernand Braudel himself, even as he underlined the inseparability of disciplines such as geography and history, never lost sight of the question, and warned against neglecting or taking for granted such an essential foundation upon which to conduct area studies. Fernand Braudel, \textit{The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II} (London: Fontana/Collins, 1972–73), preface to the first edition.


6 See, for example, the US opposition in \textit{United Nations Legislative Series}, Vol. 1 (ST/LEG/SER.B1, 1951) p. 7.

7 This dispute later culminated in 1973 \textit{Fisheries Jurisdiction Judgments} delivered by the International Court of Justice; see \textit{ICJ Reports} (1973), p. 3; (1974), p. 3.
See Article 1; see also above, pp. 348–9.

Ibid., ICJ Reports (1969), para. 63.

See further above, pp. 350–2.

Hereafter referred to as UNCLOS.

Preamble.

See, in particular, UNCLOS, Part VII but also Part II, III, IV, V and VI.

Ibid., Part V, VI, VII, and XI.

Ibid., Part XII.

Remarks made by T.B. Koh, the Conference’s President, at the 1982 Final Session, reproduced in the Official Text of UNCLOS, p. xxxiii.


See Article 1(1) of the 1976 Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution.

See Article 3.

See Article 4.

See Article 2.

See Limits in the Seas (No. 36, 7th Revision, January 1995), published by the US Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, hereafter referred to as Limits.

Ibid.

Article 33, Contiguous Zone.

Ibid.

See LOSB (No. 23, June 1993).

It is interesting to note that Decree concerning the Territorial Waters of January 15, 1951, as amended by the Presidential Decree of 17 February 1958, claims in Article 9 powers within the contiguous zone for the purposes of enforcing security.

Ibid.

See Decree No. 304, of 28 December 1963 which includes a claim to security jurisdiction.

See Article 76.

See Article 77.

Ibid.

Ibid.

See Article 1. The following Mediterranean States are parties to this Convention: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Malta, Spain and Yugoslavia. See LOSB (No. 2, December 1983).

Cyprus adopts only the exploitability criterion.

Israel adopts only the exploitability criterion.

See LOSB (No. 23, June 1993).

See Article 56.

Ibid.

Article 57.

See Article 58 and Article 56(2).

See Article 58(3).

See Attard, EEZ, pp. 46–61.

Ibid., pp. 54–61.

Morocco, through Act No. 1/81, of 18 December 1980, established a
200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone but seems to have applied it only for its Atlantic coast. Turkey established its exclusive economic zone only for its Black Sea coast through Decree No. 86/11267.

49 26 August 1983.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Presidential Decree No. 27 concerning the baselines of the maritime areas of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 9 January 1990. See also the Note Verbale of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations of 2 May 1990 reproduced in the LOSB (No. 16, December 1990). The United States has protested against this claim. See LOSB, No. 36, 7th Revision (No. 116).
54 See above pp. 346–8.
55 See Attard, EEZ, pp. 275–309.
56 See above pp. 349–50.
57 Ibid.
58 See UNCLOS, Article 311.
59 See Attard, EEZ, pp. 285, 287.
60 Articles 69 and 70; It is interesting to note that Slovenia, in its declaration upon ratification of the 1982 UNCLOS, made the following statement, ‘Proceeding from the right that State parties have on the basis of article 310 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Republic of Slovenia considers that its Part V “Exclusive economic zone”, including the provisions of Article 70, “Right of geographically disadvantaged States”, forms part of general customary international law’; LOSB (No. 28) p. 5.
61 Limits No. 36 (1995); for the position of Spain see pp. 350–1 above.
62 See, for example, the claims of Tunisia.
63 See Article 10.
66 Ibid.
68 Limits (No. 112), p. 11.
70 See Limits (No. 112), p. 8.
See Article 15. This provision is similar to Article 12 of the 1958 *Convention on the Territorial Sea*.

Signed by Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom on 16 August 1960 (*Limits* No. 49, 1972).

The problem is considered above on p. 354.

*Limits* (No. 59, 1974).


Ibid., *Limits*.

Ibid.

At the time of writing it was not possible to ascertain the exact legal position of the states which have succeeded to the Soviet obligations under the delimitation boundaries referred to above.

Ibid., EEZ, pp. 212–21.


*Gazetta Ufficiale*, No. 211, of 8 September 1992.

Signed on 28 November 1986. See *LOSB* (No. 10. 1995).


Signed 18 January 1908. It has also been suggested that, due to the military strategic relevance of the Strait of Bonifacio, a secret 1972 agreement between Italy and the United States regulating the establishment of an American base for nuclear submarines on the island of La Maddalena may have influenced the course of the boundary: see Jonathan I. Charney and Lewis M. Alexander, *International Maritime Boundaries*, Vol. II (1993), p. 1572, hereafter referred to as *Boundaries*.

See Article 2.

See Article 74.

See Article 83.

Ibid.

1. Where the same continental shelf is adjacent to the territories of two or more States whose coasts are opposite each other, the boundary of the continental shelf appertaining to such States shall be determined by agreement between them. In the absence of agreement, and unless another boundary line is justified by special circumstances, the boundary is the median line, every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points of the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of each State is measured.

2. Where the same continental shelf is adjacent to the territories of two adjacent States, the boundary of the continental shelf shall be determined by agreement between them. In the absence of agreement, and unless another boundary line is justified by special circumstances, the boundary shall be determined by application of the principle of equidistance from the nearest points of the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of each State is measured.
POLICY AND STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

93 See Tunisia/Libya Continental Shelf Judgment (1982) ICJ Reports, 18 at 246.
94 See generally, Attard, EEZ, pp. 129–45, 211–76.
95 Signed 8 January 1968. See Limits (No 9, 1970).
97 Signed 20 August 1971; Limits No. 89.
100 19 February 1974; Limits (No. 90, 1980).
103 Limits (No. 96).
105 For the information on Malta/Italy Shelf see below Part C Section 2(ii).
108 Ibid.
109 See Bathurst, Joint Development of Offshore Oil and Gas (London, 1989), p. 64.
111 Ibid., para. 62.
112 Ibid., paras 72, 73.
113 ICJ Reports (1984), para. 3.
115 Ibid., para. 17.
118 See above pp. 348–9; also pp. 353–5.
119 Wilson, Aegean Dispute, p. 94.
121 See above pp. 349–50.
123 See above pp. 348–53.
125 Ibid., 1995, p. 40617.
126 Ibid., 1996, pp. 40923, 40971.
128 Wilson, Aegean Dispute, pp. 96–9. The legal aspects of the Aegean dispute are otherwise examined in detail in ibid., pp. 90–130, and Bowett, Legal Regime, pp. 249–81.

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129 Wilson, Aegean Dispute, p. 95.
131 Given the size of the Mediterranean, more distant states such as Greece might be involved in terms of claims regarding the continental shelf here.
132 These include, since the late 1980s, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCE), the Five Plus Five talks, the initiatives by NATO, by the WEU, and by the OSCE to open dialogues with Mediterranean countries, and most importantly, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative.
133 See above pp. 346–8.
135 Ibid.
136 See above pp. 357–62; also Bowett, Legal Regime, p. 273.
137 Blake, Coastal State Sovereignty, p. 176.
138 Ibid., p. 178.
139 Ibid., p. 177.
140 Keesing’s, 1980, p. 30261.
141 Ibid., 1978, p. 29362.
142 Ibid., 1979, p. 29399.
143 Ibid., 1980, p. 30261.
144 Ibid., 1982, p. 31586.
145 Ibid.
147 See Keesing’s, 1979, p. 29709.
150 In August 1981 US fighter jets shot down two Libyan fighters in the Gulf of Sidra, 30 miles off the Libyan coast, where the US was conducting naval exercises. The US chose to conduct naval exercises there, asserting that these were international waters, in defiance of a Libyan claim that the entire area was Libyan territorial waters. The following month Italian military aircraft intercepted a Libyan air liner which had crossed into Italian air space (Keesing’s 1981, p. 31181).
151 Keesing’s, 1982, p. 31683.
152 See above pp. 362–5.
153 Keesing’s, 1985, p. 33796.
155 Wilson, Aegean Dispute, p. 93.
156 In March 1984 Turkish destroyers fired salvos at a Greek destroyer off the island of Samothrace in the northeast Aegean, in Greek territorial waters. Papandreou reacted angrily to the incident, but later conceded that it had not been a deliberate act of provocation on the part of Turkey (Keesing’s, 1984, pp. 326–38).
Ecology and Strategy in the Mediterranean: Points of Intersection

J.R. McNeill

The nascent genre of environmental (or ecological) history rarely takes account of military and geopolitical affairs, except perhaps to point out that wars have had environmental costs. The more venerable field of military and strategic history reciprocates this neglect. While geography matters, ecological change does not.

In this essay I shall discuss several points of intersection between ecological history and geopolitical, especially naval, history in the context of the Mediterranean world. I am not suggesting that ecological historians should drop what they are doing and study geopolitics, nor that naval historians must retool themselves and swot up forest dynamics. My case is a modest one: that the perspective of ecological history can sometimes enliven and sharpen portrayals of the past, not least in geo-political and naval history.

Ecology and grand strategies in the Mediterranean co-evolved. Environments constrained and even directed strategy at times. Execution of strategies changed environments, both intentionally and accidentally. Of course, several other variables co-evolved with these two, and the relationship between environment and strategy was often slender. But it was sometimes strong—and often interesting.

MEDITERRANEAN GEOGRAPHY AND ECOLOGY

The Mediterranean is one of five places in the world where westerly winds off of oceans alternate seasonally with dry winds (and descending air masses) to produce a distinctive climate. Central Chile, southern California, South Africa’s Cape province and southwestern Australia share much the same pattern of wet but mild winters and hot, dry summers. The Mediterranean is by far the largest of these five and the
most central in world history. It is larger because no north-south mountain chain blocks the winter winds, so Atlantic moisture penetrates to Lebanon. It is central to world history because of the combination of three environmental features. First, the Mediterranean abuts the one place on earth (southwest Asia) where several large, useful domesticable animals existed. Second, in the same place several grasses with edible seeds suitable for domestication existed. Seeds are easy to store compared with root crops, and permit the accumulation and control of surplus, encouraging hierarchy and specialization in society. Third, the Mediterranean has a strong ecological and climatic unity, so that animals and crops that worked in one place could very likely be transferred successfully throughout the basin. Such transfers took place routinely, because the Mediterranean, at least during the long summer, is very easy to sail. All this favored the early emergence of complex societies and formidable polities in the Mediterranean.

EMPIRES AND ECOLOGY TO AD 1700: GRAND SPECULATIONS

One such polity was ancient Rome, which took full advantage of the biogeographical blessings of Mediterranean lands and integrated them thoroughly. But imperial Rome did more than that. It extended its frontiers to the Danube and the Rhine, eventually to the north of England. It never reached beyond Mediterranean conditions to the south, incorporating Egypt and North Africa, but no more. None the less, its extra-Mediterranean expansion helped provide a measure of ecological complementarity: the Mediterranean itself could produce (cheaply) all the wine, wheat, olives and salt an empire might need, but not necessarily all the horses, hides, tall timber, fish or tin. Absorbing lands where such things could be had cheaply strengthened the Roman Empire by diversifying its resource base. Only north-south expansion could achieve that.

The Roman Empire used its resources on a scale not matched until Sung China. It changed ecologies profoundly. To judge from air bubbles trapped in Greenland's ice caps, lead and copper smelting polluted the air to a degree not equaled in Europe until the nineteenth century. Irrigation over centuries led to the salinization of soils, especially in the Levant and the Maghreb. Rome encouraged the settlement of ex-soldiers on semi-arid frontier lands from Anatolia to Morocco; their farming methods, often learned in more humid lands, promoted soil erosion and nutrient depletion. Lowland forests, especially in the western Mediterranean, were cleared for agriculture or grazing (many in the eastern Mediterranean had been cleared much earlier). Erosion brought soil deposition to river mouths, creating marshes that assisted in the establishment and spread of malaria. Urbanization and road-building inadvertently created conditions favorable to the rapid spread of epidemic disease. Most of these actions
contributed to the prosperity and security of the Roman Empire in the short run. Some of them probably helped to undermine it in the long run.1

The Roman transformations of the Mediterranean environment, especially the extension of maquis and garrigue, reduced the viability of agriculture and improved the prospects for pastoralism of sheep and goats. As such, it favored the emergence of societies skilled in pastoral arts, such as the Castilians, Arabs and Turks. It also favored societies that efficiently exploited the remaining mountain forests. Mediterranean Europe developed pig-rearing economies that made great use of the beech and chestnut woods above 700 meters.2

Subsequent empires brought basic ecological changes to the Mediterranean world, especially in the form of new food crops. Under the comparative calm of the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258), Arab merchants and travelers brought a welter of useful south Asian plants to Mediterranean shores, such as citrus fruits, cotton and sugar cane. From the Spanish Empire in the Americas came maize, potatoes and tomatoes. These new crops helped to put in place the symbiosis between mountain and plain that lasted in the Mediterranean until the middle of the twentieth century. From the tenth century forward, these crops undergirded the resurgent prosperity of southern Spain and the Egyptian delta.3

One society that inherited landscapes made over by ancient civilization and medieval crop diffusions was the Ottoman Turks. In 1324 (its traditional foundation date) the House of Osman, based in northwest Anatolia, was one of several Muslim emirates struggling to take advantage of the declining power of Byzantium. It enjoyed a meteoric expansion between 1352 and 1402, preparing the way for its subsequent role as hegemon in the eastern Mediterranean. It may have got its start by dint of ecological events. What follows is admittedly speculative.

The most lethal epidemic in the history of the Middle East and Mediterranean, the Black Death, was probably the bubonic plague. It arrived in the Crimea in 1346 and from there spread throughout the Mediterranean. It was mainly a disease of rats, and therefore of ships, warehouses, ports and cities. Its human victims were disproportionately urban-dwellers. Maritime populations suffered most acutely. Among rural populations, villagers and farmers, who stored grain and therefore had rats, suffered more than pastoralists who stored little.

The Byzantine empire, by 1346 a shadow of its former glory, was above all a maritime state, based in Constantinople, a lively port in contact with all other Black Sea and Mediterranean ports.4 Byzantium’s manpower was particularly at risk to urban infections such as bubonic plague. Most of the rival emirates of Aegean Anatolia were maritime raiders in the early fourteenth century, based in ports such as Ay din. They too stood to suffer disproportionately from the bubonic plague. The rural societies of the Balkans, such as Serbia, while little urbanized, were more exposed to
plague than those that relied more on pastoralism, such as the Ottomans, The Black Death played favorites, destroying the manpower (and the seapower) of the enemies of the House of Osman faster than it did the Ottomans themselves. Osman’s successors, Orhan, Murad I and Beyazit the Thunderbolt, created a large empire in only 40 years. From their base in northwestern Anatolia, the Ottomans crossed the Dardanelles into Europe in 1352. By 1390 they controlled territory from the Danube to the Gulf of Corinth in the Balkans, and from Bodrum to Sivas in Anatolia. They crushed Serbia (1389) and confined the Byzantine Empire to a few fortified enclaves such as Salonika, Constantinople and Trebizond. These managed to hold out until the mid-fifteenth century only because Ottoman power had grown so great as to attract the attention of Timur, who ventured into Anatolia to extinguish a potential rival (at the Battle of Ankara, 1402). While Ottoman society became increasingly urban after the seizure of Constantinople in 1453, it continued to enjoy support from herder populations less vulnerable to the repeated attacks of plague, giving it an enduring, albeit diminishing, manpower advantage over its more urbanized rivals. It is possible to ascribe the extraordinary Ottoman success to ghazi spirit, the brilliance of sultans or the enthusiasm of Orthodox Christian peasants for Muslim rule, but it seems plausible (and to me likely) that the differential impact of the Black Death had much to do with it.

Once established at Constantinople (now Istanbul), a location so strategic that Napoleon called it the natural capital of the world, the Ottomans built an empire that lasted another 470 years. It enjoyed unusual ecological complementarity, in that its sway eventually extended over about 25 degrees of latitude. By the 1470s the Ottomans controlled the Crimea and exerted sway in the Tartar steppe lands (now southern Russia and Ukraine). By 1517 they held Egypt and by the 1540s half of Hungary and all of Yemen. Their base remained Mediterranean, but with these far-flung territories they could control, in war as well as in peace, the products of sub-tropical, Mediterranean and continental climates—from Russia to the Sahara. Egypt provided about half of state revenues in the sixteenth century, and mattered as much to the Ottomans as New World silver did to Spain. Cyprus, acquired in 1571, and Rhodes (1522) were the Ottoman equivalents of Cuba and the Canaries for Spain, strongholds along the carotid artery of empire.

The Ottomans were thus insulated from the effects of harvest failure in one or another crop. They enjoyed assured access to granaries, forests and pastures. They never lacked for timber, horses, leather, furs, fish, fibers, salt, iron or copper. Food shortages were always local. They supplied strategic goods (horses, guns, copper and timber) to Mameluke Egypt before 1517, and later to Muslim princes as far afield as Sumatra. The teeming Black Sea fisheries supported legions of fishermen who could be
impressed into naval duty when needed, a luxury that other powers in the
fish-poor Mediterranean lacked. After the disaster at Lepanto in 1571, the
Ottomans found the timber, naval stores and sailors to rebuild their Navy
in less than two years. They had enough maritime labor in reserve to
courage Black Sea sailors to join the modest navies of the Muslim
princes of East Africa and south Asia.

Their was a more self-sufficient, flexible and resilient empire than any
of their neighbors’ or rivals’. Safavid Persia, Mameluke Egypt, Venice,
even the Habsburgs all lacked reliable control over as fully diverse a
resource portfolio. At a time when naval warfare was an affair of attrition
and land war marked by prolonged sieges, logistical and supply
considerations mattered even more than usual in strategic history.6
Ecological diversity, always helpful, may have been especially useful in the
era of Ottoman greatness. No empire before Britain’s maritime one, not
even China’s, enjoyed ecological complementarity to the degree that the
Ottomans did from 1540. This helped them to survive in a very rough
neighborhood.7

It is customary to see the failed siege of Malta (1565), the naval defeat
of Lepanto (1571) and other setbacks in Hungary as the decisive checks to
Ottoman expansion. From the point of view of ecological endowments,
two failures at strategic environmental modification loom larger.

After the death of Suleyman in 1566, his Grand Vizier Mehmet Sokullu
found himself in a political struggle with the Ottoman ruling clique. He
gambled on a bold strategic vision, designed to break major geopolitical
constraints on the Ottoman Empire (and to consolidate his own position).
It ended in 1569–70 in a crucial check to Ottoman fortunes.

Sokullu intended to build two great canals, one at Suez and the other
linking the Don and the Volga. With the former he could get the main
Ottoman fleet on to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to fight the
Portuguese. With the latter he could use that same formidable instrument
on the Caspian Sea and the Volga River. With a Suez canal, Mehmet
Sokullu hoped that the Ottomans could link up more effectively with
Muslims in the Indian Ocean. With a Don-Volga canal he hoped to make
common cause with the Uzbeks (fellow Sunni Muslims) against the Shi’a
Safavid Empire in Persia. He also intended to dislodge the Russians from
Astrakhan (seized from the Kipchak khans in 1555). Had this strategy
worked, the Muscovite southern expansion would have been much more
difficult, perhaps impossible. Assured Ottoman access to the forests and
steppes of the lower (and perhaps mid-) Volga, moreover, would have
strengthened the empire’s ecological portfolio, providing grain, horses and
timber in abundance.

The Don-Volga canal was begun but never finished, and the Ottomans
lost 15–23,000 men in the attempt. The Suez project never got started.
The Ottomans could not link effectively with other Sunni states against
their enemies; they could not monopolize the westward termini of the trans-Asian luxury trades. The Ottoman Navy remained confined to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea except for small (timber-short) bases east of Suez. After 1570 the Ottomans remained a great power in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Europe. But unable to deploy their main Navy against the Portuguese and unable to use any ships on the Caspian and the Volga, the Ottomans could not decisively weaken their hostile neighbors. The opportunity for a sweeping change in the strategic balance between the Ottomans and their enemies never came again. Instead, interlopers came to the Mediterranean and eventually dominated it.8

THE ATLANTIC EUROPEANS AND MEDITERRANEAN ECOLOGY, 1700–1869

Two titans of twentieth-century historiography, Henri Pirenne and Fernand Braudel, have sought to explain the decline of Mediterranean powers relative to those of northwestern Europe.9 Here I will offer a couple of supplementary observations about the limitations of the Mediterranean environment vis-à-vis that of Atlantic Europe, followed by a brief discussion of some of the effects the interlopers had upon Mediterranean ecologies.

The early seventeenth century saw recurrent epidemics and famines in much of Europe. Population, which had rebounded from the effects of the Black Death by about 1550, stagnated. Difficult years persisted late in the century, but by 1650 northwestern Europe had embarked on a slow but fundamental transition in its agricultural ecology. Known in English history as the Agricultural Revolution, it began in the Low Countries late in the sixteenth century, perhaps earlier. It consisted of crop rotations that included nitrogen-fixing legumes and root crops. Using alfalfa, clover, turnips and beans improved the food supply for ordinary peasants and city folk alike. The fodder crops raised livestock populations, providing more meat, milk, cheese, hides and tallow. Both the fodder crops and the legumes, by fixing atmospheric nitrogen in the soil, raised cereal yields directly and allowed more land to be cultivated more frequently too. Mediterranean farmers outside the Po Valley did not follow this innovation. In drier climates they could not easily grow the necessary crops even if they had the information to do so. So they continued to require larger areas kept in fallow. One of the powerful engines of demographic and economic growth in Atlantic Europe was denied to the Mediterranean. Ingenious irrigation had for millennia allowed Mediterranean agriculture to overcome limitations imposed by irregular rainfall, but nitrogen deficiency, solved after 1700 in Atlantic Europe by new crop rotations, continued to constrain Mediterranean agriculture until the adoption of
artificial nitrogenous fertilizers after 1950. From about 1650, then, Mediterranean societies labored under a key environmental constraint broken in Atlantic Europe.10

With their enhanced economic and military power (derived, of course, from many things other than nitrogen) France and Britain began to exert greater political authority in the Mediterranean. This required naval power. Naval power until the 1860s rested on ample supplies of skilled seamen, suitable timber, iron and sundry stores. The prominence of seaborne commerce—and of piracy—in the Mediterranean meant that sailors were numerous in most societies. Aside from the Ottoman Empire, however, they lacked the additional reserve that an active fishery provided, the fish-rich waters of the North Atlantic served as a ‘nursery of seamen’ for Britain, France and Spain and helped to assuage their recurrent naval manpower problems.

Timber supply problems emerged as a constraint on all European navies in the last century and a half of wooden ships.11 Mediterranean navies had faced it earlier. Mameluke Egypt relied on Anatolia for its naval timber, a crucial liability when Sultan Selim I decided that Egypt would make a useful addition to the Ottoman Empire. Venice, despite its careful management of forests in northern Italy and on the Dalmatian coast, suffered frequent timber shortages. Mediterranean galleys, like triremes before them, were built for speed not strength. They had to be light, since muscle provided the energy to drive them through the water, and they had to be maneuverable. Consequently they were built of fir, pine and sometimes cypress. Shortage of suitable fir and pine may have limited galley construction at times. Certainly the Ottoman naval effort in the western Indian Ocean (against Portugal) suffered from timber problems: the Basra shipyard imported wood from southern Anatolia.12

Big sailing ships, on the other hand, were built for strength. They required stout oak, more than a century old, and knees for hull construction required oaks grown in isolation. Masts and spars required straight but flexible fir and pine, of which the Mediterranean supply was far inferior to northern Europe’s. But the Mediterranean had good oak.

With the great naval construction booms of 1650–1815 the Atlantic powers ran through their oak supply and turned to the Mediterranean by the late eighteenth century. Spanish naval inspectors scoured coastal Spain for ship timber, and turned to their Italian possessions and even Albania. The British and the French employed agents to find useful timber in the Mediterranean, especially during the Napoleonic wars, but in the French case as late as 1834. Epirus, where the rainfall pattern produced slow growing and very hard oak, helped to supply Malta’s shipyard after 1815.

The Mediterranean supply did not suffice for long. A ship-of-the-line in the 1770s consumed a few thousand mature oaks. Big oaks, already depleted by 1650 in Spain, became very scarce after the eighteenth century.
growth of the Spanish Navy and Spain had to turn to its empire for ship timbers. For Britain the Mediterranean served only as a stopgap before its more systematic exploitation of the woodlands of Canada, New Zealand and India.\textsuperscript{13}

The naval presence of the Atlantic powers in the Mediterranean, militarily important since the 1590s, had ecological ramifications only after 1750 with the depletion of oak woodlands. In the nineteenth century the establishment of permanent naval bases (such as Malta and Corfu) created a reliable demand for timber, grain and livestock, which influenced the economy and ecology of neighboring mainland landscapes. Epitus, for example, exported wood, grain, wool and meat to Corfu in response to the prices on offer from naval establishments there. Timber cutting and livestock-raising expanded in particular in the time of the British occupation of Corfu, 1815–64.\textsuperscript{14}

Perhaps the greatest ecological changes resulting from the intrusion of the Atlantic powers into the Mediterranean came with the Suez Canal. The world’s biggest ditch opened in 1869, three centuries after Mehmet Sokullu’s plan. The forests of Lebanon and southern Anatolia provided the timber needed in this gargantuan construction project. Since it has no locks, the Suez Canal allowed the migration of aquatic species from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean (and vice versa, but this seems not to have happened, perhaps because of the higher salinity of the Red Sea). Roughly 7 per cent of Mediterranean fish species are immigrants from the Red Sea; 12 per cent in the eastern Mediterranean. This may have benefited Levantine (mainly Israeli) fisheries, although one cannot be sure what might have happened without the new arrivals.\textsuperscript{15}

The Suez Canal also accounted for the massive transport of Persian Gulf oil to Europe across the Mediterranean in the twentieth century. About a quarter of the world’s oil flow crossed the Mediterranean in tankers in the 1970s. A small share of that oil never made it safely to shore but instead spilled into the open sea. Tankers discharged a much larger share into harbors and coastal waters in routine tank-cleaning and ballast-water dumping, operations that before the late 1970s went almost unregulated. The Mediterranean received about a sixth of all the oil pollution of the world’s oceans (nearly five million tons a year in 1990), despite producing almost none itself.\textsuperscript{16} The Suez Canal, rather indirectly, also brought about the Aswan High Dam—of which more later.

**MEDIEVALL ECOLOGY IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE, 1870–**

The spectacular geopolitical and economic success of Britain and Germany in the nineteenth century inspired reforms, revolutions and reconfigurations of nature in Mediterranean lands (as elsewhere). In Spain and in newly (after 1860) unified Italy, political elites sought to unleash the
latent economic energies of their societies, foment population growth and enrich the state by privatizing huge expanses of commons, church lands and municipal lands. In Spain, for example, an area the size of Portugal passed into private hands between 1790 and 1910, much of it upland forest that was quickly cleared, sown to wheat and often eventually abandoned. This produced the strongest surge of deforestation in Spanish history and a prodigious pulse of soil erosion as well. Similar political events produced similar ecological changes in Italy and Portugal.17

Italy underwent more intentional environmental transformation at the end of the nineteenth century. In the upper Po Valley landlords and the state sought to capitalize on the agricultural potential of wetlands and seasonal pasture. With massive investment and heroic labor, Lombards replumbed their landscape, building drainage and irrigation canals, and making much of Lombardy suitable for rice. This was but the beginning. By the 1890s Milanese visionaries saw in the Alpine torrents ‘white coal’—hydroelectric power. With enthusiastic state support Piedmont and Lombardy acquired dams and power stations enough to underwrite the rapid industrialization of Milan and Turin. Italy, like all the Mediterranean, was poor in coal. If it was to compete with the energy-intensive economies of the twentieth century, hydroelectric power alone could drive the necessary transformation of Italian ecology and society. As one captain of industry put it:

the transmission of electricity over long distances represents a fact of such extraordinary significance for Italy that even the most powerful imagination would have difficulty foreseeing all the possibilities. It is something that could alter completely the face of the nation, that could one day carry the nation to the ranks of the best endowed countries in terms of natural resources and industry... When countries that had previously grown rich on coal run out it will then be the turn of nations with rich sources of flowing water.18

By 1905 Italy led all Europe in hydroelectric power and capacity grew at a dizzying pace until 1939. Fascist policy (never fully realized) was to achieve self-sufficiency in energy and wean Italy from coal imports. All suitable rivers, most of which lay in the far north among the Alps, were enlisted in the national cause. Italy’s emergence as a European, Mediterranean and imperial power after 1890 rested on this transformation, even if Mussolini imagined otherwise.19 By the mid-1930s Italy’s industrial plant could build ships and supply a Navy that (briefly) posed a serious rival to Britain’s Mediterranean forces and led to Italian dreams of a reincarnated Mare Nostrum of the Mediterranean.20 Alpine water power lay behind Italy’s Mediterranean seapower.

Water meant even more to Egypt than to Italy. Egypt, as Herodotus
noted, is an ‘acquired country, the gift of the Nile’. Water and silt, mainly from Ethiopia, have made the Egyptian desert habitable for the last 10,000 years. The Ethiopian gift consisted of both silt and water. In the twentieth century Egyptians spurned half the gift in trying to improve the other half.

The prominence of Egypt in history derives from its unique geography. The Nile is a two-way highway, because northeast winds (in most seasons) allow upstream sailing while the river’s flow wafts traffic downstream. More important still was the annual flood, prompted by monsoon rains in the Ethiopian highlands. The late summer flood brought moisture and on average a millimeter of fertile topsoil to the river’s banks every year, permitting the cultivation of winter crops. Improvements upon the gift began around 5,000 years ago, with irrigation canals, later supplemented by mechanical devices (shadoofs and water wheels). The flood immunized Egypt against the scourge of irrigation regimes, salinization. The gift of the Nile came with strings attached, however. If the monsoon rains were light, the Nile did not rise, crops did not grow and famine resulted. If the Ethiopian rains were especially heavy, the Nile rose too much (as much as 20 meters) and swept away the settlements along its banks. The modern Egyptian state sought to cut these strings.

The first modern irrigation efforts began with Mohammed (Mehemet) Ali, an Albanian with a pyramid scheme. As Pasha of Egypt after 1805, he aimed to develop the country and enrich his followers. To this end, he proposed irrigation barrages in the lower Nile, using stones from the Giza pyramids. He was dissuaded from this, but beginning in 1842 he built barrages with less precious stone. Finished in 1861, after Mohammed Ali’s death, they adjusted the lower Nile’s flow to suit it to the demands of cotton cultivation. Cotton, as a summer crop, could be ruined by a high flood, which the previous staples of Egyptian agriculture, wheat and barley, could not, because they were winter crops, harvested before the Nile rose. Cotton was the moneymaker which would, Ali had hoped, allow Egypt to import the wherewithal for vigorous modernization. The scheme did not suffice: Egyptian finance failed and provided the pretext if not the motive for foreign intervention.

Britain occupied Egypt beginning in 1882. When Lord Cromer convinced London that this occupation was not to be temporary after all, Britain began a long effort to protect Egypt by guaranteeing a regular Nile flow. A low Aswan Dam was erected to this end in 1902 and heightened in 1912 and 1934. These helped to store water for dry years, but were too small to safeguard against prolonged drought.

In 1952 Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser seized power in Egypt, determined to rid the country of residual British influence and of the shame of poverty and weakness. His technical advisors, army engineers, offered the idea—long in circulation among hydrologists—of a giant dam at Aswan. Nasser saw in this a symbol that would contribute to the heroic
and vigorous image he sought for himself, his regime and for Arab nationalism generally; and he saw a reliable, guaranteed water supply for Egypt. At first, the US and Britain agreed to finance the Aswan dam, in hopes of weaning Nasser from his growing appetite for Soviet bloc armaments. But when Nasser proved less compliant than was hoped, the offer of finance was retracted in a manner calculated to humiliate him. He responded quickly by nationalizing the Suez Canal in July 1956, declaring that its revenues would be used to finance the dam. In fact, Soviet finance helped. And so the Aswan High Dam was built during 1958–71.

From the hydrological point of view, it was misplaced in southern Egypt, one of the highest evaporation zones on earth. The desert air evaporates about a sixth of the Nile’s annual flow from the dam’s reservoir, Lake Nasser. The proper site for water storage was far upstream, at high elevations, where cooler air would permit far less evaporation. But from the political point of view this did not suit Nasser. He did not trust Ethiopia and Britain (and after 1956 the newly independent Sudan) with custody of the lifeblood of Egypt. He had cause: Anthony Eden wanted him murdered.

The Aswan High Dam can store about 150 cubic kilometers of water in Lake Nasser, equivalent to two or three years’ worth of Nile flow, and 30 times more than the 1934 dam. It revolutionized Egyptian agriculture, allowing more systematic use of water, doubling the cultivated area and permitting two or three crops per year. In this respect, it fulfilled Nasser’s expectations. The dam improved upon half of the gift of the Nile.

But it revoked the other half. The Ethiopian soil subsidy ceased to arrive after 1963. Instead, it accumulated as the sediments of Lake Nasser. Without a top dressing of fertile silt Egyptian agriculture had to turn to chemical fertilizers, of which Egypt became one of the world’s top users. Salinization emerged as a threat in the northernmost Delta where Mediterranean sea water intruded; in the Nile Valley, where reliable and free water led to overuse, waterlogging, higher water tables and consequent salt buildup; and wherever groundwater was tapped. Perhaps most ominously of all, the Nile Delta began to contract, as Mediterranean currents swept away the deposition of earlier ages and no fresh silt made good the loss. The Delta is the heart of Egypt, home to more than half the population. In a country that already (in the 1990s) imports 40 per cent of its food, much of which is contingent upon American favor, menaces to agriculture are urgent matters.

The dam did more than withhold useful silt. It deprived the Mediterranean of the nutrients the Nile carried, destroying a sardine fishery that employed 30,000 Egyptians. The fisheries of the coastal lagoons also withered. Without the annual flushing of the flood, the irrigation canals of Egypt became ideal habitat for water hyacinth, a beautiful but pernicious weed. The snails that carry schistosomiasis love...
water hyacinth. Schistosomiasis plagues millions of Egyptians and has frustrated all public health efforts to conquer it. The loss of silt and other effects of the Aswan High Dam imposed serious—and escalating—environmental and health costs on the Egyptian population.

The dam, by altering the silt, salt and water balance of the Nile, ended a 5,000-year-old system, the only fully sustainable irrigation agriculture in world history. Its bounty had underpinned not merely Pharaonic civilization, but Rome, Byzantium, the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates and the Ottoman Empire. The new floodless Nile eliminated the costly consequences of irregular inundation, which helped Egyptian population to double since it was built. This doubling, however, has made the total supply of Nile water, however distributed throughout the year, inadequate for Egyptian needs. In the 1970s, in a moment of generosity, Anwar Sadat suggested that Israel might make use of some Nile water. In 1988, after a decade of drought upstream, Egypt nearly ran out of water. In the 1990s Egypt has none to spare and lives in fear of the moment when Sudan or Ethiopia expands its use of Nile water.24

MEDITERRANEAN ECOLOGY TODAY AND TOMORROW

The present ecological changes in the Mediterranean basin are hard to assess and the future ones even harder to predict. The most publicized problems are those associated with the marine pollution of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The recent industrialization of Mediterranean coasts, and their population growth and massive summer tourist influx, generated heavy pollution loads from the 1960s onwards, especially in the coastal waters of the Ligurian Sea and the northern Adriatic. Mass tourism after 1980 brought about 100 million people to Mediterranean shores each year; tourists roughly doubled the Mediterranean coastal population of Spain every summer, outstripping the sewage-treatment capacity. The importance of acceptable beaches to the tourist trade in the Mediterranean provided sufficient incentive to achieve complex agreements among Mediterranean states from 1975 on. These have moderated pollution levels considerably, allowing the perpetuation of coastal tourism, although its locus has sometimes shifted away from heavily polluted shores (for instance, the northern Adriatic).25 The endless search for clean beaches brought tourists en masse to southern Turkey and Tunisia, provoking pollution problems and fueling an anti-Western cultural backlash.26

More difficult problems plague the Maghreb, where mounting demographic pressures accelerate the degradation of rural landscapes. By the time (almost) the entire Maghreb came firmly under French control around 1920, its population numbered about 12 million.27 By the time of independence in 1956 (1962 in Algeria), it had doubled to 25 million.
Since then population growth has proceeded at 2.5–3.0 per cent per year, among the highest rates in the world. The decline in these rates since their maxima in the 1970s has been very slight. Doubling time remains only about 25 years. Even under favorable political and economic conditions (rare enough anywhere), feeding the additional mouths would be a major challenge. Water is short except in the foothills of the taller mountains. Good soil is scarce and eroding away rapidly. The thickly settled Rif mountains of northern Morocco, for instance, have some of the highest erosion rates in the world. The swift-flowing Alboran Current sweeps Rif silt away, so there is very little build-up of coastal deltas. Soil eroded is soil lost. Desertification (which seems to have accelerated since 1930) each year subtracts further from agricultural potential, especially in the semi-arid margins of the Sahara. By the 1990s desertified area in the Maghreb increased by 1–2 per cent per year. The degradation of soils in Algeria is such that, despite increased irrigation and fertilizer use, agricultural yields have stagnated since 1910. Countless rural development projects across the Maghreb—Morocco has brought nearly a million hectares under irrigation since 1956—have failed to overcome these discouraging trends.  

World-class population growth combined with world-class erosion and desertification put the Maghreb in Malthusian pincers. Theoretically, the Maghreb could develop an economy that exchanged services or manufactures for food from afar, as Holland or Singapore have done. More likely Europe will see fit to pump sufficient money and food into North Africa to forestall social explosions that might send flotillas of refugees to Spain, France and Italy. The possibility of civil unrest and refugee exodus will remain high as long as landscape degradation and population growth continue. Revolutionary movements, as in Algeria since the early 1990s, will not lack for recruits.

Demographic growth also presses against environmental constraints in Egypt and Syria, and to a much lesser degree in Turkey. The northern Mediterranean landscapes from Greece to Spain suffer more from rural depopulation than from demographic growth, which has all but ceased. As recently as 1950 the northern Mediterranean held two-thirds of the basin’s population; by 1985 it still held half; by 2025 it will hold at most one-third. The Mediterranean is one of a very few places in the world where rapid population growth exists adjacent to (roughly) zero population growth. Exponential arithmetic makes such situations rare and short-lived, except where the fast-growing population lives in much richer lands. In the Mediterranean the opposite situation prevails. No one can say whether it will end with bangs or whimpers in the Mediterranean.

The logic of compound growth of population will be complicated by the effects of global warming. The earth has warmed by about 1 degree Fahrenheit in the twentieth century, half of which has taken place since
1980. Although it remains uncertain what the atmospheric accumulation of greenhouse gases will bring, almost all climatologists expect further warming and significant changes in the distribution of rainfall. Global climate models are at present too crude to predict the consequences for the Mediterranean with any confidence. Most expect higher rainfall and higher evaporation rates. If it turns out that less water flows into the basins of the Nile, the Jordan and the Tigris-Euphrates, then the fractious water politics of these international rivers will grow more acute. Drought more serious than that of 1979–87 in Ethiopia and East Africa would leave Egypt entirely without water, despite the Aswan High Dam.29

Whatever the impact on precipitation, if the projected warming of 4–6 degrees Fahrenheit in the next century takes place, then sea-level will rise by several inches (because of melting ice-caps and thermal expansion). Indeed sea-level has risen in the twentieth century by about a foot, the effect of slow warming in preceding centuries. So far the change has been slow enough to make little difference. Around most of the Mediterranean the coastal slopes are steep enough that even a sea-level rise of 2–3 feet (within projected scenarios) would be merely problematic, not catastrophic. The exception is the Nile Delta, which is entirely alluvium, spread out only a few feet above sea-level and subsiding for tectonic reasons. As much as a tenth of the delta may sink beneath sea-level in the next century. Whether or not it sinks beneath the sea will depend on whether or not Egypt has the resources to convert the delta into another Holland by building dikes and sea walls to keep the sea at bay. The Po Valley is the second landscape most vulnerable to sea-level rise, but there is little doubt that Italy (and the EU) could, albeit with strenuous effort, finance a defense against the Adriatic.30

The northern rim of the Mediterranean may indeed profit from global warming. The range of cold-sensitive crops, such as citrus fruits, will expand. And while the wheat economy will nearly vanish, it is uncompetitive anyway. The southern tier, however, even without the effects of sea-level rise on the Nile Delta, stands to lose out in the event of significant warming. Saharan conditions will in effect creep northward, and North African forests, pastures and fields will be crowded into an even narrower belt between the desert and the Mediterranean.31

CONCLUSIONS

Ecological constraints and opportunities often guided Mediterranean geopolitics—and geopolitics in turn altered Mediterranean ecologies. The impacts on naval affairs were most direct when woodlands depletion intruded upon shipbuilding programs and when Italy’s electrification contributed to industrial and naval development. But less direct connections sometimes operated more fundamentally, if not on naval...
matters then at least on geopolitics generally. The future will be no different. Ecological realities will continue to mould geopolitical ambitions, and the pursuit of those ambitions will modify ecological realities. Like every other corner of the globe, the Mediterranean is no longer (if it ever was) a world unto itself. Both the ecology and geopolitics at play are genuinely global. The geopolitics became nearly global as early as 1560–80 when Ottoman grand strategy ranged from the Tartar steppe to Sumatra, Mozambique and Oran. The ecology involved a larger whole since the time of the pharaohs if not before. But the ‘globalization’ of Mediterranean ecology truly began only with the arrival of sugarcane and maize. The effects of global warming are part of the wave of the future, felt in the Mediterranean and everywhere else. Global ecological changes will increasingly alter regional situations, in important but usually unpredictable ways.

NOTES

Thanks are due to Professor Gábor Ágoston for his comments on a draft of this paper.


4. The Byzantine Empire may have owed its survival beyond the seventh century to the shortage of ship timber available in Arab lands, which hampered the first Muslim attempts to take Constantinople. A.R.Lewis and T.J.Runyan, *European Naval and Maritime History, 300–1500* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1988), p. 44.

5. This speculation relies on the prevailing wisdom that the Black Death was, indeed, bubonic plague. A small minority of historians dissent on this issue. In the literature on the rise of the early Ottoman Empire I have found only one who considers the role of the Black Death. Metin Kunt, ‘State and Sultan up to the Age of Suleyman: Frontier Principality to World Empire’, in Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (eds), *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 3–29. On p. 11 Kunt suggests that the Black Death may have helped all Turks on the grounds that their ancestors came from Central Asia, where the plague probably originated. But this could not explain the success of the house of Osman over the maritime emirates. And it is epidemiologically dubious, because there is no heritable immunity to bubonic
plague. The immune systems of the Turks were just as vulnerable to plague as those of Greeks and Serbs. But the risk of exposure varied greatly among these populations, and among different groups of Turks.


26 Robert A.Poirer and Stephen Wright, ‘The Political Economy of Tourism in Tunisia’, *journal of Modern African Studies*, XXXI (1993):148–62. I observed this in Alanya, Turkey in a six-months’ stay in 1994. Alanya was in the middle of a ten-year tourist boom, which brought money to many people but not to all. It brought extra sewage to the coasts in the summer months and exposed almost everyone to the alien ways of northern Europeans. Banana groves gave way to generic hotels. Those who did not get part of the Deutschmark flow generally resented the transformation of Alanya, and often expressed this sentiment by support for Islamist politics. Indeed, even some who did make money from tourism had come to feel the same way.

27 Northernmost Morocco came under Spanish rule from 1912 to 1956, not French.


29 A recent review of these struggles is Greg Shapland, *Rivers of Discord: International Water Disputes in the Middle East* (New York: St Martin’s, 1997). After eight years of drought, in the summer of 1988 Lake Nasser had shrunk to proportions that provided for only six months’ water for Egypt. Heavy Ethiopian rains in 1988 saved the country. See Hvidt, ‘Water Resource Planning’.


31 These speculations derive from Le Houérou, ‘La Méditerranée en l’an 2050’, p. 60.
13. Príncipe de Asturias, which entered service in the Spanish Navy in 1988 and serves as flagship of Grupo Aeronavale Alfa. She is a version of the US Navy’s sea-control ship, modified for vertical and short take-off and landing aircraft.
The Potential for Maritime Confidence-building and Peace-support Co-operation

Michael Pugh

INTRODUCTION

The evolving pattern of maritime power, assessed in earlier chapters, indicates that, in terms of seagoing maritime assets and an ability to control routes and trade, historical shifts have created a paradox. Alongside cultural and political divergence between north and south, east and west, the historical contests for intra-Mediterranean hegemony, pursued by Greece, Rome, Phoenicia, the Italian cities, the Ottoman Empire and Habsburg Spain, increasingly gave way from the sixteenth century to an economic and technological dominance by maritime powers that lay beyond the Mediterranean littoral. For these new powers the Mediterranean was only partly significant for trade and territory; it served geopolitical purposes that were generally focused elsewhere, facilitating strategic operations on Jominian ‘external lines’. Peoples whose everyday livelihood and welfare depended directly on access to the Mediterranean were peripheralized by the shift towards dominance by such powers as Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. Since the division and decline of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet, there is now no significant challenger to the US 6th Fleet, except domestic economic pressures that could lead to what James Miskel in Chapter 6 called ‘doing less with less’.

The argument here is that the end of the Cold War has not dramatically disturbed the general historical pattern nor yet enabled the regional powers to reclaim control over security. Certainly, hopes were raised that both security and functional co-operation between maritime powers with interests in the Mediterranean would expand considerably. In a remark to
representatives of the Assembly of the Western European Union in late 1996, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Amre Moussa, observed that Arab participation in peace-support operations could serve as a model for trans-Mediterranean co-operation and pave the way for co-operation in other areas. He clearly regarded peacekeeping, humanitarian activities and other UN-legitimized operations as offering potential spill-over for the breaking down of security barriers in the Mediterranean area. This would mesh with the UN’s encouragement of burden sharing through regional security arrangements, thereby giving substance to the intentions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In so far as there have been several efforts to establish intra-Mediterranean security frameworks, there is also a prima facie case for considering the Mediterranean as an area where there might be both a demand for peace-support operations and a willingness to contemplate contributing to them. Indeed, regional states might draw upon the considerable experience of internationally legitimized peace-support operations (PSO) in the Mediterranean since World War II. Finally, the Mediterranean’s strategic environment is relatively benign in one respect: maritime disputes per se tend to be generally low-key relative to disputes on land, because there is less at stake.

However, countervailing factors give credence to the view that this is a region of fragmentation rather than integration. This chapter takes a sceptical view of the prospects for Helsinki/Stockholm-type confidence building measures and regional peace-support initiatives. Although there may be some potential for spill-over from the post-Cold War contributions of personnel for UN land operations by Arab states, even low-key confidence-building may be hostage to domestic violence in Arab states that are seen as too close to the West and particularly to the United States. Arab and Islamic perceptions of the West’s double standards in tolerating the Netanyahu government’s actions against the Palestinians and of American manipulation of the United Nations is a check against trans-Mediterranean integration. Moreover, the prospects for co-operation at sea are limited by the divergent political interests and the extra-regional agendas of the largest naval powers, by imbalances in naval strength and capability, and by the fragility of intra-Mediterranean security frameworks. The potential for confidence-building and co-operation in peace-support operations is being realized only slowly and partially. In several respects the locus of naval co-operation among the northern Mediterranean states actually widens political fault lines. Steps to improve intra-Mediterranean relations through participation in peace-support operations are perhaps more likely to be achieved with regard to landbased activities than at sea, given the growing involvement of Jordan and some of the Maghreb states in UN land operations. But peace-support operations in general have so far manifested the interests of
external powers rather than of integrative or co-operative impulses within the region. At sea, a pan-Mediterranean group, analogous to NATO’s Standing Naval Force Mediterranean, or even loose co-operation in maritime peace-support operations, will be too fanciful to contemplate for the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, it is worth exploring the undoubted potential for convergence in functional co-operative welfare. If ocean management, constabulary activities and relatively ‘soft’ confidence-building measures can be insulated from strategic military security issues in the short term, there is potential for joint or multinational activities that might lead in the long term to confidence-building and an increase in military security transparency.

The chapter begins by highlighting significant examples of maritime operations in the Mediterranean (often neglected in the literature on traditional peacekeeping), and by noting that, *ceteris paribus*, maritime units are well suited to co-ordination, even among non-allied states.

**THE HISTORICAL RECORD**

The Mediterranean has witnessed more land and sea PSO than any other region (though it is being caught up by Africa south of the Sahara). From the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1948, to the NATO/WEU forces in the Adriatic in the 1990s, the record is marked by the fact that the region has been the recipient of UN forces rather than the source or repository of a peacekeeping culture. Apart from Egyptian, Jordanian, French and Italian contributions, the area has not been a major recruiting ground for blue helmets. There is certainly no common regional 'culture of peacekeeping' comparable to that of the Nordic group of states. Rather, the area has been host to a series of experiments launched from outside in the interests of external powers.

The Mediterranean has generated violent conflicts and military stalemates of the kind that the UN was peculiarly fitted to tackle. The UN could play a useful role in face-saving for British and French withdrawals as imperial powers and in intercession when the United States and the Soviet Union were not prepared to allow their local clients to overrun each other. The area was sufficiently proximate to superpower interests to engage them, but without its being the central anvil in the Cold War strategic balance. The Mediterranean was the stage for several ‘firsts’: the first observation/mediation missions (in Palestine and the Balkans); the first blue beret operation (after the Suez War) and the first troop contribution by a permanent member of the Security Council (the UK in Cyprus). And there have been various ‘firsts’ connected with the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) and the Dayton Implementation Force (IFOR) in the Balkans.6
However, few security analysts or students of UN history seem to be aware that, in addition to these missions on land, the UN has also legitimized operations at sea to sustain peace and security. A brief reference to three of them illustrates the utility of maritime operations and the extent to which participation has been exclusive, reinforcing political disconnection in the Mediterranean.

**UNTSO Naval Task Group**

The UN’s first maritime operation was conducted in 1948 in the eastern Mediterranean. Curiously, it is mentioned neither in a well-regarded academic study of peacekeeping nor in the UN’s own review of operations. However, sufficient information is available to suggest that it was a remarkable experiment, sent to support the UN Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, the Palestine Truce Commission and the UN Truce Supervision Organization. The task group was a powerful one, comprising a French minesweeper, the aircraft carrier USS Palau (minus its air group), three US destroyers and an amphibious cargo ship the USS Marquette. The United States also supplied five commercial aircraft for patrols and transport, a naval medical unit, observers and communications equipment. The United States stipulated that its ships were not to use force for the purpose of stopping or boarding other vessels and were to be used only for patrolling the coast, transporting matériel and personnel and providing offshore sanctuary. UN officials were evacuated from Haifa, returned and evacuated again by sea. All units flew the UN flag below their national ensigns. At this time, of course, only the principal victors of the Second World War had suitable naval assets for the force, and with one or two subsequent exceptions (such as the Beira patrol by the Royal Navy off Mozambique in the 1960s), the Cold War prevented similar reflagging by permanent Security Council members.

**The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO)**

In the rather different context of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1979 and its 1981 protocol, the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) began patrolling in the Strait of Tiran at the southern entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba and the sea-lane to Eilat. The Red Sea is not, of course, part of the Mediterranean proper, but the operation was an integral part of the monitoring and confidence-building in the Sinai disengagement process. Although a non-UN force, it has UN blessing and is based on the traditional peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality, neutrality and the non-use of force. Three converted minesweepers, based at Sharmel-Sheik, crewed by 100 Italians, ensure freedom of navigation. The Strait is continuously observed from land, but a ship is on patrol for 12 out of
every 24 hours. It is not entirely legitimate, however, for the sponsors of the MFO to salute the Sinai disengagement as a model for regional co-operation when, for obvious political reasons, there has been no participation from the Maghreb or Levant. The MFO has been under an American Director-General for planning and direction, based in Rome, and a Force Commander whose chain of command is linked to the commanders of the national contingents which are all drawn from outside the Middle East sub-area of the Mediterranean.10

**SHARP GUARD**

Legitimized by UN Security Council resolutions, the maritime PSO in the Adriatic have again demonstrated the value of maritime peace-support operations, but again following an exclusive model. In addition to providing naval-air support to operation DENY FLIGHT, and supporting national contingents of ground-based forces in former Yugoslavia, warships were intensively engaged in patrolling the Adriatic to monitor and then enforce UN embargoes. After 17 April 1993, when the UN Security Council extended the Adriatic mandate to prohibit all merchant ships from entering the territorial waters of Serbia-Montenegro except on a case-by-case basis or in the event of emergency, no ship was able to break the embargo. From then until 1 October 1996, when the embargo operations were terminated, 74,192 merchants ships were challenged; 5,951 were boarded and inspected at sea; 1,480 diverted and inspected in port; and six ships were caught attempting to break the embargo.11

The provenance of the forces lay in trans-Atlantic institutions (the WEU and NATO) rather than in any intra-Mediterranean source. The prominent role played by Nato’s Standing Force Mediterranean and NATO command and control in Naples indicates that the operations were essentially an ‘out-of-area’ extension of west European security policy and structures. Of the 14 participating states, Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey represented the southern flank of the WEU or NATO.

There have been other operations, or proposed operations, in the area: associated with the UN Emergency Force I (1956–67), the Multilateral Force off Beirut (1982–84), the Gulf of Suez mine-clearing (1984) and sealeave protection during the enforcement operations in the Persian Gulf (1984–88 and 1991). All told, the Mediterranean and neighbouring seas have witnessed significant instances of multilateral maritime activity underwritten by the UN. Perhaps surprisingly, naval activities have not directly involved Cyprus, though in any future agreement for ‘normalization’ the parties might well consider a coastal patrol element to monitor the coasts, acting in a similar fashion to the Argentine squadron in the Gulf of Fonseca deployed to monitor gun-running as part of the UN operation in Nicaragua.12
CHARACTERISTICS OF MARITIME PEACE-SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The value of maritime PSO lies mainly in the support that they provide to land-based operations. Purely maritime disputes do not have the same potential to escalate into conflict as land disputes because of the absence of habitation and consequent lack of political investment. Most maritime claims are settled by agreement, not adjudication. The Mediterranean has a great many undelimited maritime boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). But maritime delimitation disputes tend to lead to diplomatic and legal solutions or to policies of abstention. The Aegean dispute which, like Gibraltar and the Spanish enclaves in Morocco, is essentially a territorial dispute, is not before a court or ad hoc tribunal and constantly simmers on the edge of warfare. A Memorandum of Understanding, dating from 1988, extends to confidence-building measures and the prevention of incidents. However, there are frequent accusations of violations of airspace, and there were incidents over the uninhabited island of Imia and the inhabited island of Gavdos in January and June 1996, prompting US State Department intervention. Gavdos was subsequently visited by the Chief of Staff General Colin Powell and former President George Bush. The Cyprus problem also dominates Greco-Turk relations. In August 1996 a Turkish Cypriot was killed by a mob and Turkish troops fired on demonstrators, killing one and wounding 11 others, including two peace-keepers. However, Greece and Turkey are constrained by NATO and US pressures and recognize the political losses they would sustain by going to war. They abide by a 6-mile rule, abstaining from exercising the right to enclose islands within 24 miles of the mainland in a 12-mile limit. In principle, the right reduces the proportion of high seas in the Aegean from 56 per cent to 26 per cent and results in Greek jurisdiction over 64 per cent, leaving Turkey only 8.3 per cent. If exercised by Greece the right could affect innocent passage and access to the Turkish ports of Izmir, Istanbul and the Straits and would effectively deny Turkey any continental shelf. Finally, courts have shown considerable flexibility in appealing to principles of state practice, historic rights, proportionality and equitable circumstance in EEZ delimitations.

These factors tend to reduce the requirement for maritime PSO to maintain peace at sea. All the same, some scholars argue that the peaceful completion of delimitations is ‘a prerequisite to joint action aimed at the protection, conservation and rational exploitation of the sea’s natural resources, and this would help promote the necessary environment for peaceful coexistence among its littorals’. Growing competition for resources, especially over fishing, and issues such as seaborne refugees, smuggling and marine pollution certainly require cooperative management strategies for governing the oceans. Maritime forces are often required to
assist in implementing such strategies which are directed at criminals, over-zealous fisherman or victims of civil emergencies. However, these issues require constabulary roles and are unlikely to escalate to militarized disputes requiring naval peacekeepers to intervene.

If there is little call for PSO to discharge functions in maintaining maritime peace in a military sense, it is a different matter altogether where maritime support to land-based PSO is concerned. Supportive maritime tasks, in addition to the theoretical possibility of monitoring and patrolling maritime ceasefire lines, have been itemized in current British doctrine:

- active monitoring of a sea area for infringement of sanctions/embargo, as was the situation initially in the Adriatic operations;
- enforcement of sanctions/embargo, as occurred in the Adriatic from 22 November 1992;
- supervising cantonment of vessels, absent from Mediterranean operations, though the NATO/WEU presence in the Adriatic probably deterred the Federal Yugoslav Navy from leaving port;
- contribution of organic aircraft to enforcement of a no-fly zone and combat air support, as in Operation DENY FLIGHT and in Kosovo;
- contribution of organic helicopters for in-theatre movement of peacekeeping forces and humanitarian aid, and casualty evacuation, as occurred in support of the Stabilization Force (SFOR);
- contribution of amphibious forces to ground peace-support operations, as was available for UNPROFOR, IFOR and SFOR;
- maintenance of an amphibious capability in theatre to permit withdrawal of peacekeeping forces, aid workers and other civilians, again as was available in the Adriatic;
- provision of seaborne medical and other logistic and humanitarian resources where access by land is difficult, as occurred in the UNTSO operation and the evacuation of Palestinians from Beirut in August 1982;
- assistance to and control of seaborne refugees, in which the Albanians and Italians co-operate;
- provision of a neutral platform for peace negotiations, which might have been the case in the UNTSO operation;
- mine countermeasures, as in the Gulf of Suez in 1984, and patrolling (as in the Strait of Tiran) to secure freedom of navigation or to contribute to a new peace agreement.

The distinctive attributes of maritime forces may be readily adapted for use in PSO. They are particularly well suited to diplomatic projection: showing
the flag, monitoring situations and symbolizing concern. They are also well suited to providing logistic support for land operations, amphibious and evacuation capabilities and offshore power in the event that coercion is required. Consent to innocent passage in territorial seas is not normally required, though there may be disputes and conflict over what constitutes territorial waters and innocent passage, as in the case of the Gulf of Sidra. For the most part, however, the issue of consent does not arise in the same way as it does on land. Crossing into an EEZ or territorial sea does not have the same political impact as troops crossing a land frontier. Where the security environment is benign (as in the case of the UN’s operations in Nicaragua) and small craft of opportunity for inshore monitoring are used (as in the case in the UN’s operation in Cambodia), the maritime units may be unambiguously presented as non-threatening by being painted white and disarmed. Generally, however, warships seconded from national navies, whether for coercion or monitoring, put to sea with the capability to defend themselves. This reserve capability has advantages in situations which may escalate (as in the Adriatic after 22 November 1992), and in creating ambiguity for purposes of deterrence. Ships are useful for PSO because they are responsive to deployment in a relatively short time-scale. Given that the goal of such operations is not victory in battle, and since political settlements may take a long time to reach or implement, ships are also valuable for their endurance.

Finally, maritime units are in theory relatively conducive to multi-lateralism. Traditionally, the Mahanian concept of navies as instruments of state competition took precedence over ideas of international cooperation. Maritime power has been associated with hegemony and gunboat diplomacy. In international relations theory naval power has been a major indicator of the rise and fall of states. But seafaring nations have also (a) co-operated to develop maritime regimes including Incidents at Sea Agreements (INCEAs), at the military level; (b) combined in order to meet common threats or to save money, such as the radical NATO experiment in the mid-1960s for mixed nationality crews in a Multilateral Force of surface ships equipped with Polaris nuclear missiles; (c) arranged multilateral risk hierarchies to satisfy different levels of political commitment, in the way that Spain and Germany were allotted non-enforcement tasks in the Adriatic; (d) protected and escorted non-national flagged ships, an inevitable development given that nowadays it is a pardonable exaggeration to say that the merchant shipping industry is supranational and that states with large shipping registers, such as Malta, have no navies and the states with the largest navies have no ships on their registers.

The character of warships as self-contained and semi-autonomous may also facilitate multinational co-operation, in contrast to the difficulties in mixing land-forces. Of course, there are technical and operational
problems in co-ordinating different forces effectively. The establishment of a coherent command and control architecture, common rules of engagement, interoperable communications, shared and protected strategic intelligence and so on, are particularly significant obstacles to integration among the widely divergent Mediterranean maritime capabilities. Such difficulties are less critical when capabilities are interoperable, the operating environment is unthreatening, and some standards and procedures, such as NATO's *Naval Manoeuvring Instructions*, are widely used or available. But since the end of the Cold War operating environments for UN forces have been inherently unstable in intra-state conflicts, and the demands on interoperability all the greater. In any event, the key to minimizing operational difficulties is political agreement about the desirability of co-operation.20

SECURITY CO-OPERATION THROUGH PEACE-SUPPORT OPERATIONS

In this respect it can be argued that the political risks of co-operation in UN peace-support operations have been generally acceptable to many states because the UN provides an imprimatur of legitimacy, states can choose to make very small contributions and participation in PSO is unlikely to undermine perceptions of core national interest. For peace-keeping in consensual environments the forces are not at great risk, demands on fighting abilities are negligible, and the UN has experience of combining all manner of motley forces. Obviously these parameters change significantly for Kosovo-type missions in hostile environments; there are much greater political and operational risks for participants. Nevertheless, it is worth examining the potential for greater security cooperation among non-allied states through the mediation of PSO, given that NATO's Partnership for Peace programme (PFP) has paid particular attention to this kind of co-operative activity (as discussed below).

The extent to which PSO engender co-operative attitudes and behaviours among the components of troop-contributing countries and their defence establishments has not been explored by researchers. Anecdotal evidence from the tactical level is mixed. Disenchantment rather than respect has arisen from perceptions of poor training, inadequate equipment, lack of interoperability and plain ignorance about PSO and the mission itself.21 By contrast, there are reports of Indian and Pakistani troops forging better relations with each other in Somalia and Namibia than in south Asia, and of Argentines and British working well together in Cyprus.22 In any case, PSO co-operation at the tactical level is not necessarily translatable into defence co-operation. Unless a permanent UN volunteer force is established, PSO will remain an intergovernmental
activity and spill-over will be determined by higher foreign policy and defence considerations.

Can co-operation in peace-support operations produce spill-over in the manner alluded to by the Egyptian Foreign Minister? In neofunctional theories of integration, as applied to the European Union for example, spill-over refers to the international regulation of actors in a particular functional sphere, either as an unintended consequence of earlier co-operative regime building, or as the deliberate exploitation of new opportunities that arise from existing co-operation.23 The Egyptian proposal would be consistent with the second impetus. However, it is axiomatic that functional spill-over in military security is dependent on favourable political-strategic calculations (as well as economic incentives) which are dominated by realist considerations. Foreign and defence policy tends to be a jealously guarded bastion of statism, as testified by the neorealist character of the Inter-Governmental Conference of the European Union.

It is also difficult to demonstrate that involvement in PSO creates a demand for wider security co-operation, rather than vice versa. Certainly, efforts to improve PSO performance may assist in enhancing wider security relations. Joint training at multinational training centres (such as the UN Training School in Ireland and the Pearson Centre in Canada), standardization of doctrine and international staff seminars can act as small-scale confidence-building measures. By contrast, the more adventurous Danish adoption of platoons from the Baltic states, training them in peacekeeping and giving them a role in the Nordic Battalion of UNPROFOR, stems from overarching security considerations. In the context of NATO’s change of posture after the Cold War, and its drive to associate east European states, the North Atlantic Council of Ministers adopted the Athens Report on Co-operation in Peacekeeping in June 1993, to facilitate joint planning, standardized training and education, and the development of common approaches to doctrine.24 One of the issues that the PFP partners could readily agree upon was consensus-based ‘peacekeeping’. It was relatively uncontroversial and placed limited demands on the neglected military capabilities of the east European states that were already queuing up to demonstrate their credentials for full membership. In other words, a framework of co-operation already existed for PSO to slot into and, in spite of some exceptions, non-NATO adhesions to the IFOR and the SFOR in Bosnia also appear to have worked well. Political developments and military functionalism had a reciprocal effect in facilitating co-operation, but the former was undoubtedly the spur. PSO activities in the Mediterranean will remain dependent on wider political developments towards stronger security relationships. At most they will reinforce such developments rather than initiate them.
REGIONAL DISCONNECTIONS AND UN PARTICIPATION

As Stephen Calleya notes in Chapter 11, the predominance of disconnections over connections and the lack of a common agenda in the Mediterranean apply explicitly in the intergovernmental military security sphere. The Mediterranean has become a new boundary for established European regional institutions. It is widely regarded among NATO members as a new frontier to replace the old central and eastern European one. For the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), Turkey and Malta are the southern outposts. The prospects for security convergence are also limited by fragmented relations throughout the Mediterranean. Even among NATO states northern Mediterranean military ties are not especially strong (characterized by brinkmanship in the case of Greece and Turkey) and there is a high degree of fragmentation in the Maghreb and Levant.

In theory, of course, the universalism of UN operations means that participation in PSO ignores such barriers. Indeed, efforts to create a concerted regional approach might be counterproductive. They might undermine universalist principals and the pragmatic ad hoc participation by Arab states. In fact, the UN Secretary-General and the Department of Peace-Keeing Operations have often been only too glad to get assistance from wherever they could. A large intake of peacekeeping novices, including from among the permanent five members of the Security Council, has been a feature of the post-Cold War period. Mediterranean representation in peace-support operations has, in fact, grown from a low to a respectable level. Jordan has had some 3,500 troops in such operations, mainly in the Balkans, but also in Tajikistan, Georgia and Angola. Morocco has a brigade earmarked for humanitarian and PSO tasks and has had forces in Somalia, Angola and 1,000 troops under Spanish command in IFOR. In smaller numbers, Algerians have been in Angola and Haiti, and Tunisians in former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Somalia and Western Sahara.25

The main barrier to participation is the longstanding principle that parties to the dispute should not be involved in UN-authorized operations. Explanations for lack of integration in the Mediterranean can begin with this obstacle.

First, Mediterranean states have been parties to many of the disputes that have drawn international responses, and peacekeeping has depended on a force mix acceptable to the protagonists. Within the region its poorer states have traditionally been under-represented. Maritime operations especially have been conducted overwhelmingly by European and extraregional states (though Egypt was involved in the multinational search for mines in the Red Sea in 1994).

Secondly, and quite obviously, Mediterranean states have higher
domestic and neighbouring security priorities which do not oblige them to seek an ‘Irish solution’ to military redundancy.

Thirdly, although domestic-regime type is no barrier to participation (witness the endorsement by the UN of the Nigerian military regime’s efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone), multinational peace-support measures generally offer limited service to ruling elites that seek to use nationalism externally to keep the peace at home. The multinational character of PSO also limits the potential for generating Arab nationalism through UN operations. Enforcement operations do generate nationalistic propaganda, but peacekeeping participation is more often a quest for international or internal respectability.26

Fourthly, suspicion of the Security Council as a tool of the rich and powerful remains strong in parts of the Mediterranean and may grow in response to the increased levels of Balkan intervention by the permanent five members. US voting patterns on the Middle East at the UN and the determination of the United States to monopolize negotiations on Palestine do nothing to counter suspicions of this kind. Further, states which are themselves prone to internal unrest or which manifest humanitarian disasters of their own are reluctant to endorse developments in the UN that promote interventionism and any weakening of Article 2(7) of the Charter. This is reinforced by a widespread perception in the Muslim world of Western selectivity and double standards, as evidenced by the UN’s perceived reluctance to protect Muslims in Bosnia.

Fifthly, actual control over subcontracted PSO also suggests that they are a vehicle for hegemonic ambitions, as Nigeria’s dominance of the West African Economic Community Monitoring Group in Liberia indicates. Exclusiveness in maritime operations can only reinforce suspicions in this regard. Operations in the Adriatic were exclusively for WEU and NATO states, and operation ALBA was exclusively a southern European one (albeit a signal of independence from US dominance over European security). Similarly, although the European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR), with components from France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, may be little more than a vacant gesture, it is perceived in Arab states as less of a humanitarian or peacekeeping force than another measure to promote European security interests against the Arab world and specifically to deal with a potential wave of seaborne refugees.27 Even Morocco, which broadly accepts EUROMARFOR and has been invited to observe its exercises, has criticized the delusion that peace and security in the Mediterranean can be maintained, in the words of General Abdelhak El Kadiri of the Moroccan Higher National Defence Council, ‘simply by bringing some kind of policeman into the region’.28

In sum, the frequently criticized, ad hoc nature of peace-support operations would appear to suit participation by Mediterranean states, rather than a concerted intraregional approach. Lack of experience or
absence of a peacekeeping culture has not been an insuperable barrier to involvement in UN operations, as demonstrated by US participation since 1990. In fact, Egypt has longer experience than any of the permanent five Security Council members, having been involved in ten or so operations, mainly in Africa but including the supplying of a battalion in the Balkans. It is possible that Maghreb and Levant states could gain a taste for multinational operations from their more recent participation on an ad hoc basis. Nevertheless, we should keep the level of commitment in perspective. Jordan has been exceptional in its high contribution level, with 3.5 per cent of its armed forces engaged in PSO in the mid-1990s. Such involvement may therefore impact only slightly on the overall outlook of Arab defence establishments.

More important will be the instrumentalist motives for participation: the extent to which participation reaps rewards of recognition, or tradeoffs in terms of support for economic or political claims, or opportunities to play an enhanced role in regional dynamics. Representation from Islamic countries was clearly important in Bosnia-Herzegovina. From a UN/NATO perspective it balanced the force mix, and from the perspective of Islamic states it demonstrated responsiveness to the fate of Muslims in Europe. Such circumstances have given rise to Egypt’s hopes for spill-over into regional security, but the absence of non-NATO states from the Albanian-Kosovo intervention suggests that Bosnia may not be a precedent.

Moreover, from the perspective of leading Western states, as the nature of peacekeeping has changed, so non-Western involvement will have to meet purely military criteria. To the extent that it has become more robust, PSO doctrine and practice dictate a growing gap between the needs of military efficiency and political representation. In operations that entail enforcement, military protection of the force is paramount. Consequently, there is no room for incompetent, fainthearted or noninteroperable components. High levels of proficiency are required, and this entails standardization in training and harmonization of operating procedures. Reformers recommend strict criteria, to which some Third World states are unlikely to conform, for determining the suitability of contributions to peacekeeping. These criteria will have consequences in terms of representation and political legitimacy, because selected multinational forces are likely to be drawn from a limited number of capable states, thereby reinforcing a hegemonic trend in peace-support operations. This will alienate Islamists who are attached to the UN but not to the American role in it.

As already emphasized, the maritime environment is a common link that could bind Mediterranean states in new security approaches. It might be hypothesized that because maritime units have operational characteristics that allow for a balance between international co-operation
and the retention of national control, combined operations at sea would be a viable and convenient way to begin a process of co-operation, political circumstances permitting. However, the ratio of proficiency to representation is especially critical in maritime operations. There is a more restricted pool of potential co-operation: while most states can spare infantry, fewer either possess or can spare frigates. Apart from coastal patrol vessels, only Algeria, Egypt and Libya have limited ‘blue-water’ capabilities. Furthermore, in terms of proficiency, it is one thing to send a small number of troops to a consensus-based peacekeeping operation, quite another to participate in naval task groups in contested environments. In the latter situation the capacity, training and equipment currently tells against the southern/eastern Mediterranean states. The prospect for joint efforts on land may be greater, therefore, than in the all-important maritime environment, and any future security cooperation at sea is likely to be at the level of peacekeeping support in benign environments or in the realm of non-military, low-level, constabulary functions.

FUTURE STEPS

In suggesting possible co-operative measures we have to acknowledge that a great deal must depend upon such factors as domestic instability, progress in the Middle East peace process and the down-sizing of the US presence. If de-linking from core security issues becomes possible, then the following steps might be explored, beginning with the most promising.

1. States could explore intra-Mediterranean constabulary measures at sea that do not impinge on national military defence (except to the extent that naval vessels play a role in civilian coastguard functions). This could begin, for example, with an information bank based on a survey of the anti-marine pollution assets and procedures employed by states for emergencies, leading perhaps to anti-pollution exercises on the model of those jointly conducted by Italy and Malta. Similar steps might be taken with regard to fish stock and hydrographic surveys, accidents at sea, smuggling and seaborne refugees.

2. It would be feasible to organize dialogues and seminars on the maritime environment, on the Law of the Sea, for example, or as a followon to the 1995 San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea, hosted perhaps by the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta. These could be extended to peacekeeping in the framework of the Barcelona EuroMesco association of foreign policy institutes, the OSCE’s Contact Group seminars on confidence-building or as part of a WEU
initiative. The aim would be to raise consciousness about divergent perceptions on maritime security issues and to lay the intellectual groundwork for any future participation in decision-making at the UN or in regional arrangements.

3. Following this, an initiative from within the Mediterranean might be a regional PSO education centre. The UN’s Department of Peacekeeping operations in association with the Maghreb Union, the Arab League and the OSCE could examine the establishment of a framework for education, perhaps modelled on the Hashemite Trust Charity Centre for Disaster Relief and Development in Amman, designed to enable Arab Middle East states to cope with emergencies. Such a centre would provide general knowledge and skill for peacekeeping operations, mission-oriented training and specialist training for observers, military police and so forth. Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco, because of their PSO experience, or Malta because of its multilateral role in regional dynamics, might offer sites for such a centre. A maritime component would facilitate the eventual participation of personnel as observers from the Maghreb and Levant in a future maritime operation.

4. A further step might be the revival of low-impact maritime confidence-building measures (CBMs), notably the Canadian-led programme for Search and Rescue and Incidents at Sea Agreements (INCSEAs) as part of the Madrid Multi-track process. INCSEAs are important to show good faith and establish regular professional contacts. Search and rescue co-operation has the potential to reassure in seaborne refugee crises which may lead to humanitarian operations. These might lead to transparency about naval activities, including voluntary exercise notification and reassurance about EUROMARFOR’s purpose. But first, the European military security organizations would have to determine a much more coherent policy of their own for pursuing improvements in trans-Mediterranean relations. It also has to be recognized that CBMs are slow to take effect and do not directly counteract substantive political divergence.

5. Selective trans-Mediterranean sponsorships and attachments might be feasible in the longer term, in the way that Italy already subsidizes Tunisia’s navy, between states with good political relations. This could focus, for example, on mine countermeasures, coastal patrols or subsidized logistic support to overcome shortages of equipment and supplies. The attachment of a southern Mediterranean vessel to a UN-authorized operation in a benign environment might not be beyond the realms of possibility.

6. Rather more remote would be a Mediterranean PFP in which PSO play a significant role. NATO has attempted to soften its frontier policy towards the Mediterranean and improve relations with other
non-NATO states, though the ultimate aim of these initiatives is unclear. The role of PSO in the PFP programme has been important in attempts to integrate eastern European states in NATO. But the political drive was already present and east European states already benefited, or suffered, from Warsaw Pact co-ordination. It is not a model that is likely to be copied in the politically fractured Mediterranean.

CONCLUSION

What then is the potential for a trans-Mediterranean approach to confidence-building and peace support in the light of historical and recent experience and the recognized value of multinational maritime operations? The above suggestions have been made in an attempt to be positive about the potential. This should not be taken to mean that we can be overoptimistic about their adoption.

Historically, the Mediterranean area has been a target of PSO, and there has been no equal partnership in participation. There has been no peacekeeping culture in military establishments, let alone naval establishments. Nevertheless, several Mediterranean states are beginning to acquire the kind of land-based experience earlier acquired by Egypt. Arab participation with land-based forces in former Yugoslavia appears to have been a positive experience, and in Egypt’s view holds out the prospect of spill-over into trans-Mediterranean security. PSO, especially unarmed observation, monitoring and traditional peacekeeping, appear on the margins of purely military security and need not interfere with issues of vital interest. But subscribing to PSO on an ad hoc basis is currently an advantage for Arab states that distrust the great-power sway in the Security Council. Any spill-over would have to fit within a muted approach to the building of intra-Mediterranean confidence rather than as part of a concerted effort to establish a regional approach to PSO.

In the case of maritime forces, NATO and WEU members have exerted a monopoly and northern Mediterranean states have confronted the southern Mediterranean with a makeshift force which is widely perceived as exclusive and threatening. If the northern states also insist on ever stricter military criteria for participation in PSO, the UN’s principle of broad political representation will be lost. PSO will assume the mantle of a new kind of imperialism, and at sea the distinctions between PSO and gunboat diplomacy will be all the harder to discern. The most promising avenue for maritime confidence building would be for states to explore constabulary functions, especially those that would provide mutual economic safeguards such as environmental protection, search and rescue operations, and a common framework for dealing with refugees.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT


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NOTES


3 Chapter VIII enables regional organizations recognized by the UN to take action to maintain peace and security in conformity with other provisions of the Charter.

4 ‘Peace-support operations’ is a term borrowed from current UK military doctrine to encompass monitoring, peacekeeping, peace enforcement based on minimum force principles and humanitarian operations which have been legitimized internationally, usually by the United Nations. The Mediterranean area can be extended to include the Red Sea and the Black Sea as well as the Mediterranean basin proper.

5 Islamic fundamentalists have been particularly problematic for the Egyptian government since the Camp David Agreement with Israel. In 1997 Egypt held military training exercises with British, US and Italian forces.

6 UNPROFOR was the first UN military operation on mainland Europe. NATO air strikes in Bosnia were the first in that organization’s history.


10 Israel and Egypt co-fund the MFO. Participants have been the US, UK, France, Canada, Colombia, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Italy, Norway, Hungary, Uruguay and the Netherlands.

11 The effort involved nearly 20,000 ship days at sea, over 7,000 maritime patrol
aircraft sorties as well as over 6,000 airborne early warning sorties. NATO/WEU, ‘Operation Sharp Guard’, IFOR Final Factsheet (2 October 1996), http://www.nato.int/ifor/ifor.htm


14 Malta-Libya, Crete-Libya, Cyprus-Turkey, Cyprus-Israel-Syria-Lebanon, Greece-Egypt, Algeria-Tunisia, Morocco-Algeria, Croatia-Slovenia-Bosnia-Montenegro, Greece-Turkey. Most claims have to do with exploitation and are issues of economic security, with traditional fishing activities having been more contentious than potential seabed exploitation. Libya considers the Gulf of Sidra as an historic bay, integral to the security of the hinterland economy, over which it has exercised continuous rights. Faraj Abdullah Ahnish, The International Law of Maritime Boundaries and the Practice of States in the Mediterranean Sea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 195–251. On these issues, I am particularly grateful to George Joffe, Deputy Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, in conversation, 5 June 1997.


16 Ahnish, International Law, pp. 269–70.

17 Ibid., p. 391.


Conversation with George Joffe, (n. 14).

Assembly of WEU, Doc. 1543, p. 37.


Algeria: 2 submarines, 3 frigates, 10 coastals; Egypt: 2 submarines, 1 destroyer, 4 frigates, 26 coastals, 3 amphibious, 12 minewarfare, 17 naval helicopters; Israel: 3 submarines, 45 coastals, amphibious craft and marines; Jordan: coast guard; Lebanon: coastals; Libya: 5 submarines, 3 frigates, 45 coastals, 31 naval helicopters; Morocco: 1 frigate, 25 coastals; Tunisia: 1 frigate, 20 coastals; Syria: 3 submarines, 40 coastals. The submarine capabilities of these states may have more value in the realm of imagined disruption to peace and security than in contribution to peace-support measures.


The Mediterranean will never cease to engage the attention of scholars or to present to historians, politicians, political analysts, sociologists, anthropologists and a host of other specialists from diverse disciplines an immense challenge as they try to comprehend the many facets presented by this entity made up of mixed interests and deep divisions; of points of convergence and points of divergence, of friendship and enmities; common destinies and disparate opinions; hopes and delusions; a veritable crucible of diverse civilizations, religions and cultures.

We are part of this mosaic, interacting with the kaleidoscopic socio-political colours and patterns generated in this region by the interaction of events and the interplay of interests both from within the region as well as from without.

This is why my government is ever eager to support initiatives, such as yours, which are aimed at achieving a deeper understanding of the region that surrounds us. Given our geographical position and our long turbulent history of domination by foreign powers, it is not surprising that our destiny has been shaped by events generally not always of our making. Developments around the globe, which often seem remote to us, do concern us by virtue of our geopolitical position and by the fact that the Mediterranean has a way of reflecting within the confines of its shores the vicissitudes of political power elsewhere and of political decisions taken in the corridors of power in places as far away as Washington or Moscow, Beijing or Tokyo.

I am confident that you are all aware of the strategic role that our Islands have played throughout the centuries. Often this role did not reflect the aspirations of our people but those of our masters. On attaining statehood, and in particular following the departure of all foreign military forces from Malta, it became a common ideal of our people no longer to serve as ‘the aircraft carrier of the Mediterranean’ or to depend for our
living on the economies of wars, but to encourage the use of our territory for the promotion of international peace and co-operation, particularly in the Mediterranean region.

In this pursuit, our efforts have been bifocal: Europe and the Mediterranean. Malta is a European state which enjoys longstanding commercial, cultural and political ties with the European mainland. In the case of the Mediterranean our policy reflects our central geographical position and the equally longstanding bilateral relations with neighbouring Mediterranean states. This is a clear case of geography dictating a nation’s foreign policy, where the realities of history and commerce have forged a nation’s identity and culture.

These links have inspired the Euro-Mediterranean ideals which we strive to share with all the states within this region. In such disparate surroundings, where prejudices have accumulated and differences grown wider over the centuries, there is a crying need for dialogue, for cooperation, for understanding, for acceptance and for sharing. This is why it is mandatory that all efforts should be undertaken to ensure a continuing, effective, regional dialogue to achieve stability and co-operation in the region.

Such peace and stability, while paying huge dividends to the Mediterranean countries themselves, will also ensure security and stability on the European continent, because of the close linkage between these two regions.

My government, since returning to power, has been actively engaged in developing such a dialogue which seeks to consolidate our ties with all the states that make up the Euro-Mediterranean region. Our efforts in this direction are best demonstrated in the convening of the Second Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Valletta in April 1996. It was of immense personal satisfaction for me, in my capacity as co-chairman, to host and address Foreign Ministers or their representatives of another 26 states from Europe and the Mediterranean. It is commonly accepted that the very convening of this conference in Malta, given the delicate and difficult times the Middle East peace process was and is still passing through, has been a significant achievement and an undeniable recognition of Malta’s contemporary role as a neutral forum for Euro-Mediterranean dialogue.

The Malta Conference meeting some 18 months after the first Euro-Med Conference in Barcelona, constitutes part of a process designed to promote dialogue and common action on a Euro-Mediterranean basis, across a wide range of interrelated fields, not only political and economic but more importantly social, cultural and human. What was initiated at Barcelona was renewed and invigorated in Malta. Despite the obvious complexities and often conflicting interests, the Malta meeting succeeded in generating a new enthusiasm in the Euro-Med process and in the development of Euro-Mediterranean relations.
Our active participation in the Euro-Mediterranean process is reflected in a number of interesting and practical proposals we made and which received an encouraging response. Malta has for many years now been promoting the idea of a permanent Council of Mediterranean States, a forum intended to help, develop and promote understanding between peoples with diverse cultures, traditions and ideologies. Such an institution would serve as the ideal place where parliamentarians or experts would meet on a regular basis to discuss problems emanating from the region; evaluate the difficulties faced in the resolution of these problems; explore the potentialities of co-operation which exist; and map out common political objectives. Admittedly progress towards the realization of this proposal has been discouragingly slow.

With similar objectives in mind, but obviously adopting a different and wider approach, we have proposed the creation of a Parliamentary Component to the Euro-Med Process, a proposal that also has the aim of bringing together elected representative from European Union countries and from around the Mediterranean with a view to the establishing of a regular and constructive dialogue on questions related to the Mediterranean; draw up a programme of work and activities based on the Work Programme adopted in Barcelona and reaffirmed in Malta; and create a mechanism—a Council of the Mediterranean—that would coordinate the work of this parliamentary grouping.

We intend to work on this proposal as we believe it has great benefits and opens up great possibilities. Other proposals we made relate to the educational and cultural sectors, focusing mostly on co-operation in the new technologies, language and teacher training. The development of our human resources is of paramount importance if we wish to create a true Euro-Mediterranean partnership in social, cultural and human affairs.

The need for sustainable and balanced Euro-Mediterranean socio-economic development is the basis of another initiative we launched. The tremendous differences in the economic development of the states that make up the Euro-Mediterranean region are a painful and threatening reality. In this respect, my government has proposed the enhancement of cross-border co-operation between banks and financial institutions. On this model in 1996 the Mediterranean Bank Network was established in Malta as a result of a private initiative taken by Mediterranean banks. This Network is successfully increasing in membership, and, it is hoped, will span the whole region.

Another proposal we made to the Euro-Mediterranean Conference relates to increased co-operation in the health sector, a sector which has a direct bearing on the quality of life and human resource development in the Mediterranean region.

In this day and age risks of military threats in the Mediterranean continue to decrease, while the danger of an ecological disaster continues
to loom ominously upon the littoral coasts of our semi-enclosed sea. This sea remains today a major navigational route used daily by hundreds of vessels transporting all sorts of cargoes including 30 per cent of all hydrocarbons shipped around the globe. An accident such as that of the Torrey Canyon, the Amoco Cadiz or the Exxon Valdez, were it to happen in the Mediterranean, would cause untold and irreparable damage in the confined waters of this sea. Indeed, it is reasonable to suggest that such an event would threaten the security and well-being of a small island state such as ours. It is imperative that Mediterranean states co-operate to ensure the environmental protection of the sea they surround. Since the late 1970s tremendous progress has been achieved within the context of the 1976 Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, I believe that further efforts should be made to ensure that the risk of navigational accidents and collisions is reduced significantly. In particular, I believe that Mediterranean states should, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, develop established sea lanes wherein tankers, nuclear-powered ships and ships carrying nuclear or other inherently dangerous or noxious substances or materials may be required to confine their passage. Initially, such a system would be on a voluntary basis. I have already received a favourable reaction when discussing this matter with a neighbouring state. Recently I also raised the matter with Mr William O’Neil, Secretary General of the IMO, when he paid a courtesy visit to my Ministry.

As a small nation-state in the Mediterranean which can never ever be perceived by anyone as posing any threat, military, economic or otherwise, to any other nation, and depending heavily on our manufacturing and services industries, we are committed to following a policy of cooperation with all neighbouring states to guard against environmental degradation, against illegal immigration, drug trafficking, money laundering and contraband.

We aim to build the best possible bilateral and multilateral relationships based on mutual respect and on non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

We firmly believe in preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures and co-operative security as adequate and effective tools to achieve peace and security and condemn without any reservations all forms of terrorism and armed struggle.

Our dream is to see the attainment of long-lasting peace take root in the Middle East, to see all Mediterranean littoral states being eligible to participate in Euro-Mediterranean initiatives, and to see the just sharing of the proceeds and the benefits accruing from future economic growth in the Mediterranean area, leading to greater stability and more prosperity in this region.
14. HMS *Asia*, which served as Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codington’s flagship at the Battle of Navarino in 1827, the last major battle between fleets under sail.
The Contexts of Mediterranean Seapower

John B. Hattendorf

Its very name stresses context: Mediterranean, the sea among lands. In terms of international security policy and strategy in this maritime region, this volume has tried to demonstrate that seapower has a variety of contexts, whether considered in the past, in the present, or in the future. These contexts have changed over time, although many of the contemporary issues that observers emphasize today are themes that have a long history of their own. Many of these same present and future issues have supplied the context for past events in the Mediterranean, but their importance has sometimes gone unnoticed in maritime history, as the maritime side of affairs has sometimes gone unnoticed within the common discussion of other specialized themes. As several contributors to this volume have suggested, it may be our understanding and our interpretations that must be stretched to include both sides of these issues, if we are to understand fully the varied contexts and impacts of events at sea. This poses the need to widen the ‘mental horizon’ of those who examine and discuss such issues.

For example, in recent years the scholarly discussion of naval affairs has widened firmly and expanded beyond the specialists’ concentration on battles at sea to show naval affairs and maritime conflict in the context of such varied issues as domestic politics, industrial capacity, financial resources, social issues and bureaucratic decision-making.1 Historians have also found a fertile subject to examine in considering the gap between the objectives, needs and desires of a naval power and its ability to satisfy those objectives. Here, geographical considerations, political will and technological limitations have created patterns and relationships that provide valuable insight for our deeper understanding of context.2 But there are additional features and a variety of contexts that may come to bear on maritime issues. Distant history provides some valuable insights along these lines. In the early modern period, given the ecological conditions of the Mediterranean, political power depended upon the
availability of natural resources. Without them, a navy could not be sustained and without a large population and its essential requirements, neither land nor sea forces could be sustained. Because of ecology, the Mediterranean could be controlled by holding key ports and bases, thus making the seizure and defence of those positions more important than battles at sea. This was particularly true of the early modern period but it is also true of later periods; John McNeill shows how fresh-water resources were central to development of electrical power in Italy—an essential resource for a modern navy. Self-interest governed alliances, even across deep cultural and religious differences. In this, minor states in this diverse mixture of peoples and states found a continuing need to create working relationships with the changing dominant powers, whoever they might be and whatever culture they might represent. Additionally, larger states consistently found it convenient to use smaller states and independent actors to act against their rivals.

In the seventeenth through the nineteenth century, foreign naval powers intervened in the Mediterranean. In examining the meaning of seapower in this period, one can see that, in terms of outside naval intervention in the Mediterranean, seapower played a continuing, if not a decisive role. Great Britain obtained global hegemony through its seapower, but this power was due not merely to naval supremacy, but to the additional and exceptional conjunction of broad economic power, effective diplomacy and judicious grand strategy for the comprehensive direction of armed force.

The first half of the twentieth century presents a period in Mediterranean history that illustrates a number of distinctive characteristics about strategy and policy in the Mediterranean context. During this period Britain was ambivalent about the Mediterranean. While it was neither vital to its own survival nor to that of the British Empire, Britain was incapable of releasing it. It repeatedly devoted to it significant resources which could have been more effectively used elsewhere. Meanwhile, France and Italy faced fluctuating and uncertain circumstances as they dealt with the growth of German interest in the region as well as rivalry with Britain and between themselves. German naval leaders, even at the height of World War II, were motivated by ideas that dated as far back as 1916, believing that Italy’s role and position in the Mediterranean would assist the Third Reich in its rise to European hegemony. Having nearly reached that goal at the height of the German war effort, Germany then turned to destroy, rather than to consolidate, Italian maritime power.

The Cold War period saw the sharp rise in both American and Soviet naval power in the Mediterranean, with the rivalry and subsequent reduction in naval strength in the post-Cold War era. At the same time, Italy and France have pursed starkly contrasting strategies in the
Mediterranean. While France has consistently pursued its role as an independent global power, seeing the Mediterranean as one of several theaters of strategic importance to it, Italy has sought to remain an important regional power, closely tied to NATO and the Atlantic alliance. For other states along the Mediterranean littoral in this period, the region became the converging point of global conflict, bringing regional divisiveness. With the East-West confrontation at an end, the question remains as to whether or not the North-South division will deepen across the Mediterranean. In this context the Mediterranean remains important to the navies of western Europe. Despite the abrupt end to the East-West conflict, there is a basic continuity in many aspects of naval affairs, although European navies have experienced a sharp shift in their roles, becoming more constrained, more focused on coastal areas and more open to collaborative efforts.

The events of the contemporary world have raised a number of issues of importance that now demand to be considered more fully in current thinking relating to maritime strategy and policy in the Mediterranean region. One such fundamental issue involves the considering of the bridge between Mediterranean history and future security policy for the region. Domestic politics among coastal states have continued to play an increasingly important role in the formation of foreign policy. This pattern will tend to off-set and counterbalance recent trends toward trans-Mediterranean co-operation. While the end of the Cold War marked the end of intrusive, bipolar rivalry, it is being gradually replaced by a different type of intrusive dominance: a multilateral system involving non-Mediterranean international organizations. Scholars within the region suggest that the more that these organizations dominate Mediterranean relations, the more they tend to stifle the growth of intra-Mediterranean relations.

In the development of such circum-Mediterranean relations, arbitration arrangements provide a means to clarify interests across cultural divides and to help in creating new and shared common interests. Such trends tend to lead away from conflicts engendered in the ‘clash of civilizations’. One of the contemporary issues related to this tension is shown in the politics and the passions that surround the complex and diverse set of human movements involved in international migration across the Mediterranean basin. In particular, the appearance of large Islamic groups within western Europe has created volatile political situations, complicating and hindering the movement toward intra-Mediterranean cohesiveness. In this, the issue of ethnicity has become a major consideration. In this context, the case study examining the deep roots of attitudes during the Algerian War in the 1950s offers contemporary strategists and policy-makers some useful insights into the wider nature of the problem and the possible
divisive effects that such a declared confrontation might have on societies that are increasingly becoming more ethnically diverse.

In the light of contemporary issues such as arbitration, migration and ethnicity, the Law of the Sea and its associated jurisdictional issues add another dimension, and one that is specifically maritime in nature. The claims to sovereign rights to the seabed under the Mediterranean make neighbors of those who were once distantly separated by a defensive moat. In theory, the establishment of the shared concepts of the Law of the Sea to the clearly defined geographical space of the Mediterranean should lead to increased regionally, but, in practice, has produced friction. This appears to be largely due to the introduction of the new, economically oriented regime that the Law of the Sea Convention has introduced. The application of the Law of the Sea has resulted in a clearer definition of boundaries, but, at the same time, its application has involved increased disagreement over interpretation, resulting in further fragmentation in intra-Mediterranean relations in longstanding disputes. However, the fact that the disputes have been cast in legal terms and not the terms of armed conflict suggests that there is a regional disposition to abide ultimately by the rule of law. In coming to understand more deeply the fundamental bases for agreement and disagreement in the search for more enduring solutions, the ecological perspective offers some useful insights. As always, ecological realities mould geopolitical realities. In the modern world, as so often in the past, the Mediterranean is not an isolated region which can solve its problems without reference to wider considerations. It is clearly tied to global considerations and, as so often in the past, the centre of these considerations lie outside the Mediterranean region. The global aspect furthers tensions, exacerbated by local issues, and the Mediterranean continues to be a region of fragmentation rather than integration. In such a climate there is limited potential for maritime confidence-building and peace-support co-operative measures, but a clear possibility remains for their effective use. In this a dilemma arises. Such measures are particularly useful and constructive in the context of NATO, the Western European Union and the European Community. The capacity and interest for such measures largely rests with the states on the northern shores of the Mediterranean who are members of these international organizations. The more effective and the more co-operative naval forces are for these purposes and in this area, the more they are perceived as threats along the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

A deeper understanding of the multiple contexts for seapower is a necessity in dealing with the strategy and policy of the Mediterranean region, in the past, in the present, or in the future. It is a complex and continuing task. As the Maltese Foreign Minister George Vella noted in June 1997, ‘The Mediterranean will never cease to engage the attention of scholars...as they try to comprehend the many facets presented by this
entity made up of mixed interests and deep divisions, of points of conversion and points of divergence, of friendships and enmities, common destinies and disparate delusions…”.

NOTES

1  See, for example, John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *Doing Naval History* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1995).
3  See Chapter 16 above, pp. 382, 387–8.
15. The dismasted French two-decker *Guillaume Tell*, being captured off Malta in March 1800, after severely damaging her British opponents. After a six-month blockade, the French garrison on Malta surrendered in September.
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