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IV

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA IN THE CONTEXT OF SUPERPOWER DYNAMICS

I have no crystal ball, nor privileged access to information which might enable me to disclose the scenario most likely to unfold for the peoples of the Mediterranean. One thing is clear, however - whatever the scenario turns out to be, it will be shaped to a significant extent by forces external to the area, by events in Washington, in Moscow, in Peking, as well as in London, in Paris and in Bonn. The degree to which it will be shaped by the 280 million inhabitants of the area depends on their will and determination and actions, and this is the crucial element in the picture. It is crucial and it is where we must pin our hopes.

To set the problem in its proper framework, let us turn first to the situation in Europe today. Since the early sixties, the cold war has abated and entered a phase of "peaceful coexistence". This phase entails the implicit acceptance by each superpower of the existing division of Europe - an acceptance expressed in mutual efforts to regularize force build-ups of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, to expand trading ties and to normalize political relations between the blocs. The success of Brandt's Ostpolitik opened the road for the climactic finale in the formalization of this division of Europe - Nixon's journey to Moscow. As a necessary correlate to this division, ruling establishments in both Eastern and Western Europe have tightened their grip, turning with increasing severity against all forces and movements which express popular yearning for self-determination.

While this has been going on, America has given military and political support to Israel and has provided the grounds for the rapid expansion of American presence in the Eastern Mediterranean - the building up of the 6th fleet, the intensification of propaganda and spying activities, and, most recently, the establishment of new bases in Greece to facilitate interventionist schemes, and the political intimidation and penetration of the independence - seeking nations of the region. This new thrust of American imperialism has been countered by the extension of the Soviet Third Fleet and the establishment of alliances in the area - a Soviet presence, which by virtue of Soviet timidity outside the region of its direct influence, constitutes a holding action.

The official apologists for expanding U.S. penetration of the Mediterranean area justify it on the grounds that it contributes to peace and stability in Europe. They also say quite frankly that it serves their own interests. Martin Hillebrand, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, testifying on July 14, 1971, before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, had this to say:

"Our present role in the Mediterranean emerged after World War II when we assumed under the Truman Doctrine a stabilizing function that the British and others had previously been performing. While my statement today will focus primarily on the U.S. role in the Mediterranean in terms of our NATO relationship and its southern flank, we should not overlook the fact that our presence in the Mediterranean also serves our Middle East interests. Thus, the role of U.S. forces in the area is inseparable - as a deterrent to Soviet sponsored political and military ventures in either area by demonstrating U.S. capability and determination to assist our friends and allies.... It is within this context we must view our role on the southern flank of Europe. Just as the peace of Europe is crucial to the peace of the world, peace in the Mediterranean is crucial to stability in Europe.... In conclusion, I would

like to emphasize that U.S. Forces on the southern flank of NATO are there, as they are in Central Europe, in our national interest."

The role assigned to the U.S. in the postwar era by the apologists of its policies is one of imperial peace-keeping. What they fail to mention, is that to play the role of imperial peace-keeper, a nation must have or seek to establish an empire - it must be an imperialist power.

The United States clearly qualifies as an imperialist power. Indeed, since World War II it has developed into the global imperialist power. This has tended to be obscured by the dynamics of the game among the super-powers. The action of one superpower of necessity brings forth the response of the other. There is overwhelming evidence, however, that action and response were not randomly distributed in the era of confrontation between Washington and Moscow. The action was American while the response was Russian. It should be stressed that the Soviet Union did not act as a veritable expansionist power. The widely held judgment to the contrary is based on an uncritical and unwarranted identification of the Soviet Union, as a national power, with world communism and with global revolution.

Clearly, the dominant dynamic on a global scale - a dynamic that transcends the relations between the superpower - is one of counter-revolution. Its theaters are to be found in the Mediterranean, in Latin America, in Southeast Asia, and in Africa - in the vast expanse of the Third World. The main actor, the main vehicle of this counter-revolutionary dynamic is America. Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Korea, the Dominican Republic, Greece - are some of the largest monuments erected in the wake of this counter-revolutionary

expansionism of postwar America.

The impact of American imperialism on the countries of southern Europe differs in significant respects from its impact on the countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

The Arab peoples of the Middle East and North Africa have been engulfed since the end of the second world war, in a struggle for national independence and self-determination. This struggle, similar in many respects to that of other Third-World countries, has led to the emergence of a structure of power with three dominant characteristics. With respect to international relations the dominant motif is a more or less fragile pattern of non-alignment. Socially, the emerging systems are quite transitional in character - falling either in the category of "liberal capitalism" or that of "paternalistic capitalism" - with a bourgeois middle-class dominance. Politically, power is concentrated in the hands of military elites that are committed to the task of rapid modernization.

Differences in population density, resource base and cultural background make generalizations extremely hazardous. Some of the countries of the region have an agrarian background, while others a commercial one - some have oil while others do not. The fact that almost all the countries in question are Arab does lend the region some unity - a unity, however, that has taken form and shape primarily in the context of the anti-imperialist struggle of these nations, a struggle that, following their liberation from the shackles of Western European imperialism, has entered now a new and more subtle phase.

In Europe a clearcut *modus vivendi* has been worked out by the two superpowers. This is not the case in the southern part of the Mediterranean basin, and especially its eastern half, nor in the Middle East - with its proximity to oil and the Arab-Israeli conflict. This presents serious challenges to the two superpowers. The situation is quite fluid, for alignments are in the making and nationalist sentiments run high. Thus, both Moscow and Washington are engaged in an active game of expansion of their military activities - especially naval, air, and nuclear-presence and of economic and political infiltration. The Arab-Israeli conflict is manipulated so as to produce the right political climate and the justification for the enhancement of the military posture of the two superpowers in the Mediterranean basin, without leading them into a direct "hot" confrontation. The last twenty-five years have taught the two giants how to control their competition and how to transform it into an effective instrument for the expansion of their control over the geosphere.

The Israeli military victory in June, 1967, and the consequent exacerbation of the Palestinian problem has upset the modus vivendi that had been carefully built up by the two superpowers. But it has done more than that. It has demonstrated the difficulty for the Arab nations to counter effectively, through conventional military means, the U.S. supported armed forces of Israel - given the well-known timidity of the Soviet Union to confront the United States. As a consequence, the focus has shifted to the capabilities of the Palestinian guerilla movement. The radical character of this movement is not limited to the technics of war. It extends to the social and political program

sponsored by the Palestinian guerrillas. For it constitutes a genuinely anti-imperialist program for the Mediterranean. The Palestinian movement obviously creates problems - in varying degrees - for the Arab governments. For it comes in direct and sharp conflict with all forms of dependence of the Arab states on foreign powers - with any form of "stability" in the area which might be based on an entente between the Soviets and America on respective spheres of influence. All this can hardly be ignored by the Arab governments - not only because they have been unable to offer a solution to the Palestinian problem through conventional military means, but also because of the pervasive moral influence on Arab populations of an Arab movement that is genuinely anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist (while not anti-Jewish), socialist and militant. But what really gives the Palestinian movement its moral thrust is the knowledge that peace cannot come to the Middle East without a resolution of the Palestinian problem.

The concern of the Palestinian movement with dependence of the Arab states on large foreign powers is fully justified. This relates intimately not only to the fragility of the non-alignment stance of the Arab states, but also to the transitional character of the social structures now predominant in the region.

The natural tendency of the Arab States, that have only recently emerged from the shackles of European imperialism, is toward a policy of active non-alignment. But the Mediterranean is already the arena of active competition among the two giants, with some northern European ex-imperialist nations once again in the game for the development of pockets of economic and political

influence. The total identification of the imperialist superpower, the United States, with Israel forces some of the Arab states to tip the balance in favor of the Soviet Union. With the exception of Jordan, the closer they find themselves to the theater of potential war with Israel the greater the need to depend on the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union does not seek to export its brand of socialism to the Arab States. Its policies are not dictated by the requirements of world socialism or world revolution. They are dictated rather by its interests as a superpower - a superpower that is dominated by the need to hold together its possessions rather than by the drive to expand them, as is the case with America. The Soviet Union deals with governments, not with parties - and is always prepared to sacrifice the local communist parties on the altar of good relations with the regimes in power. It offers military and economic aid - in return for penetration, for the development of a not so subtle economic and military dependence. And this may well be the key to the region's future.

It is my guess that the "paternalistic capitalism" which is characteristic of many of the social structures in question cannot solve effectively the gigantic development problems that confront the Arab governments. It might have functioned reasonably well, if the internal problems had been primarily managerial or administrative. But they are not. They are developmental de profundis. And this may well be the deeper reason for the need of the region to seek outside aid, quite apart from questions of military preparedness. Soviet aid, while promoting a state of dependence for the Arab states, does not resolve the deeper social problems that confront their governments. It buys them time. And what is more, given the

non-revolutionary character of the Soviet Union, dependence on it does not put in motion processes that undermine the status quo. It represents the least painful form of dependence.

In contrast, wherever the U.S. succeeds in creating a relationship of dependence, it penetrates the social system in a decisive way, by opening wide the gates that lead to neo-colonialism. Upon the footsteps of the soldier comes the U.S. technocrat, followed by the U.S. businessman, the representative par excellence of the contemporary establishment. These forces, if permitted to function uninterruptedly, sooner or later doom the recipients of aid and draw them inexorably into the neo-colonialist imperial orbit of the U.S. This process is but an aspect of the dynamic of contemporary imperialism, of modern "paternalistic capitalism" - which in the metropolis is managerial, while being aggressively expansionist in the periphery.

The third superpower, the Peoples' Republic of China, does play a role in the area - to the extent that it identifies itself with the Palestinian liberation movement. But its emerging superpower status comes in direct conflict with its image of the spokesman for global revolution, and circumscribes the range of its possible actions in the Mediterranean region. It is difficult to guess what its eventual impact will be in the area - until such time as the conflict between the two images of the Peoples' Republic has been resolved. Will China play the game of a third superpower - contributing to American presence in the Mediterranean as a counterweight to Soviet Union? Or will it maintain and strengthen its leadership as a spokesman for the oppressed peoples of the Third World?

What are the historical options available to the Arab States? An American embrace leads inevitably to a return to colonial status. This status in its new form combines the availability of up-to-date consumer gadgets for the middle-class with continuing impoverishment of the masses and military subjugation of the nation. A Soviet embrace also leads to dependence, but this dependence lacks the corroding social dynamic which is propelled by the contemporary capitalist establishment of the U.S. In some sense it may buy time for the dependent regimes, and it may do so in two ways: First, because it may provide a shield against American aggression. Secondly, because it may give the Arab peoples badly needed time to move forward toward radical social change that will make them impregnable to imperialist expansion, and will remove in a permanent way the forces that drive them to dependence. Of course, this latter option can have a happy ending only if there is conscious pursuit of radical change, conscious effort to lay the foundations of genuine socialism at the grass-roots level, a socialism that will rely on the active participation of the masses. Needless to say, if the Arab States can avoid both embraces, if they can stay clear from both Washington and Moscow, if they can work effectively now for a neutral Mediterranean - then they should do so without delay. For this option, if it is historically available, is undoubtedly the best.

The climate of confrontation between the two superpowers in the Mediterranean, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the determination of the Palestinian people to live in their land as free men - all these forces at work generate conditions that make the pursuit now of independence extremely hard. And the

temptation may well take form and shape in the Arab world to re-establish close relations with the ex-imperialist powers of Western Europe - to escape from the dilemma of dependence on either Washington or Moscow - by relying on a "third force". Such a course of action, however, hardly represents a real alternative. For as even a brief review of developments in western Europe will disclose, the large countries of Northern Europe hardly represent a third force. They are rather junior partners in a system of power dominated by the U.S.

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Who can doubt that Western Europe is integrated into a system of power which is controlled by the imperialist establishment of the U.S. - when even social democratic governments plead with the White House not to withdraw the American occupation troops from their countries?

The extension of the European Common Market from the Six to the Nine and the dollar crisis are erroneously taken as indications of a decisive weakening of American supremacy and the creation of a European counterweight to American power. The economic, military and political penetration of American capital into Western Europe is so deep that such developments are not significant in this historical phase. The NATO directorate, a vast military and economic complex under the direct control of the Pentagon, exercises decisive influence over the establishments of the participating Western European countries - and is indeed itself a not insignificant component of these establishments. Its network of power extends from the military elites and the top echelons of the national security bureaucracies in general, to the economic and political elites of the member nations.

This is not to deny that each and every Western European country serves the interests of its own capitalist establishment - or that significant conflicts are brewing within the so-called western community of nations. It is merely intended to stress that the strategic options open to the major industrial nations of Western Europe are sharply circumscribed by an American-dominated system of power.

Intimately associated with the process of consolidation of American power in Western Europe ever since the end of the last World War, is a process

of rapid polarization between north and Mediterranean Europe. To the North lies the Europe of the Rich, and to the South the Europe of the dispossessed. Under competitive pressure from the United States, and prodded by their export and foreign investment oriented capitalist establishments, European governments are increasingly engaging in the struggle for a share of the neo-colonial pie on the European shores of the Mediterranean. Complementing and reenforcing this process is a mass migration of Mediterranean European cheap labor to the factories of Germany, Belgium and other industrially advanced northern European countries. Rapidly the Europeans of the Mediterranean are becoming the Blacks of Europe.

Mediterranean Europe is well on its way to becoming a joint colony of the United States and Northern Europe. Thirty years ago, twenty-five million people died in the war to banish fascism from the shores of Europe. Yet the Europe of the seventies is witnessing the rebirth of fascism in a new and malignant form. Portugal, Spain, Greece and Turkey - four fascist and neo-fascist regimes dominate the scene in southern Europe. Spain and Portugal are remnants of the past, of Hitler's and Mussolini's Europe, but they are part of the modern scene. They represent today's European realities in a very special and poignant way. For it is doubtful that Spain or Portugal would be fascist today if they did not have the unconditional support of the U.S. and NATO.

Greece differs from the Spanish and the Portuguese cases in a significant respect. It is truly the first Dominican Republic on the European continent. The Greek dictatorship is Greek only in the perfunctory sense that the

military speak Greek. But their uniforms and guns are American, their thinking is American, and they serve American interests.

The green light for the coup was given in Washington, by W.W. Rostow, in February 1967. The coup was executed by the Greek junta under the Direction of the C.I.A. and in the context of a NATO-elaborated plan, the infamous "Plan Prometheus".

In the five and one-half years that have gone by since the April coup Greece has become a full-fledged colony of the United States.

From the mouth of the U.S. Ambassador to Greece in a private briefing to American congressmen on January 12, 1972 in Athens, we have the following words:

"I am convinced there is no alternative to the policies we are following in Greece. I think they do reconcile our national interests and they do meet the vital security interests that we do have in Greece. There is just no place like Greece to offer the facilities that we have got with the backing of the Government that you have got there."

U.S. units are located throughout Greece. There are major communications sites, a missile-firing installation in Crete... Bases in Nea Makri... Suda Bay... In all there are thirteen U.S. military, naval, air missile bases in Greece. Recently it was decided that the Sixth Fleet will take Piraeus over as its homeport... At no cost to the United States. Officers are trained in the United States and the military command in Greece parallels that of the Hellenic forces so that they maintain a direct counterpart relationship.

Greece's national independence, the sovereignty of the Greek people and democratic processes have been extinguished in order that Greece become an armed camp, a veritable U.S. military fortress. A fortress from which America can pursue its imperialist adventures in the Mediterranean and the oil-rich Middle East.

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Neo-fascist, colonized Greece is becoming the strong arm of American imperialism in the Eastern Mediterranean. The significance of Greece is not the Greek component of NATO combat forces, but the territorial position of Greece. The critical issue for the Pentagon is thus free and unhindered access to Greek soil and waters for the staging of military and intelligence operations directed towards the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean.

U.S. President Nixon himself expressed frankly the primary significance of Greece as a U.S. base of operations in his Press Conference of July 27, 1972. Aid to Greece and Turkey, he stated, "is just as necessary today as then (1947), and for most of the same reasons, now particularly so because of the fact that without aid to Greece and aid to Turkey, you have no viable policy to save Israel." (New York Times, August 6, 1972). Top-ranking Republican Senator Hugh Scott, defending U.S. aid to the Greek junta, stated that to halt such aid would "eliminate the possibility of quick response in case of a menace to Israel." (Ibid).

Such statements are not made by U.S. officials merely for internal political reasons. They represent the strategic realities of American presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Confirming evidence of this is the significance given to Greece by Israeli officials. A member of the Israeli Parliament, Shmuel Tamir, recently made the following statement:

"I may not like South Africa's racial policies, but I do like the fact that the Government is friendly. I may prefer some other regime to that of the Greek Colonels in Athens, but I do appreciate the fact that they permit an American naval base there that helps protect our security." (Ibid)

Two points must be emphasized regarding the statements:

1. They clearly indicate that the feasibility of American interventionist schemes in the Middle East is fully guaranteed by the puppet regime of Athens and by that regime alone.
2. The citing of Greece and South Africa together is not coincidental. For, just as the racist regime in South Africa provides the only guarantee for neo-colonialist exploitation by Western capital in that area of the world, so the neo-fascist regime of Greece provides the only guarantee of American militaristic adventurism directed against the independent states of the Eastern Mediterranean. Both the Greek and the South African regimes constitute important links in the American network which is simultaneously militaristic and neo-colonialist in proportion to specific circumstances.

In order to obscure the facts about Greece, and to disorient those in the anti-imperialist camp whose vital interests are at stake, the junta

self-consciously projects a pro-Arab image through such public relations efforts as the dispatching of vice-president Stylianos Pattakos to Syria and Lebanon in June of 1972. At the same time, American officials and information services carefully cultivate the notion that the junta is nationalistic in character, and that America is "forced" into support of that regime because of America's "weakness" to influence events there, and by the "danger" that the colonels will turn to the Soviet bloc if offended by the U.S.

These Madison Avenue techniques can hardly hide the true role of the Greek junta. The junta was installed to crush in its infancy the people's movement of the early sixties towards popular sovereignty and national independence. Under its rule, Greece has become the vulture's nest of American Imperialism in the Eastern Mediterranean - a home base for the militaristic adventurism, subversion and political penetration which underwrites the expansion of monopoly capital of the West.

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The developments in the Mediterranean, as I sketched them out, may seem foreboding for the peoples of southern Europe, of North Africa and of Middle East. And indeed they would be, if the forces unleashed by U.S. imperialism and by the clash of the two superpowers in the Mediterranean were allowed to operate without obstacle, without resistance. For then, the freedom, the national independence and the welfare of the people that inhabit the region would be compromised for years to come.

But the peoples of the Mediterranean will not allow such a development to take place. Inspired by the great struggle of the Vietnamese people and by the indomitable spirit of the Palestinians, the Greek, the Portuguese, and the Spanish freedom fighters as well as by the recent successful liberation struggles of the peoples of Africa and the Middle East against Western European colonialism, they will take their stand, and will struggle to hold imperialism at bay.

To minimize the costs of the struggle, to guarantee an early victory for the forces of freedom and self-determination, we need a joint strategy. Whatever its outlines, such a strategy must accord first place to the liberation movements of the region. For the unity of the Mediterranean peoples - which is so critical to their survival - can only be forged in the conscious, bold struggle against imperialism. And the only vision that will mobilize the peoples of the Mediterranean is the vision of a genuinely non-aligned and socialist Mediterranean society.

November, 1972.