

A RAND NOTE

**Changes in the Character of East-West Relations:
Implications for NATO's Southern Region**

Ian O. Lesser

June 1990

RAND

The research described in this report was supported by The Ford Foundation under Grant No. 840-0289A.

The RAND Publication Series: The Report is the principal publication documenting and transmitting RAND's major research findings and final research results. The RAND Note reports other outputs of sponsored research for general distribution. Publications of The RAND Corporation do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the sponsors of RAND research.

A RAND NOTE

N-3133-FF

**Changes in the Character of East-West Relations:
Implications for NATO's Southern Region**

Ian O. Lesser

June 1990

**Supported by
The Ford Foundation**

RAND

PREFACE

This Note was originally prepared for the first joint RAND-Istituto Affari Internazionali workshop on "The Southern Region and the Atlantic Alliance in a Changing Strategic Landscape," held in November 1989, and sponsored by The Ford Foundation.

It is essentially an essay, offering some preliminary observations on current developments and their meaning for Southern Europe, rather than a report based on completed research.

SUMMARY

Despite the fact that the "end of the Cold War" will leave a host of unresolved regional security dilemmas in Europe--the majority of which will be in or around Southern Europe--there is little prospect of the Atlantic Alliance devoting more attention to the problems of the Southern Region in the near-term, as developments in Eastern and Central Europe remain at center stage. Nonetheless, the changes currently underway in the East-West strategic relationship, above all the acceleration of political detente and arms control, will have a number of unique implications for NATO's Southern Region:¹

- As Europe continues to view the Soviet military and political threat in more remote terms, moves toward a progressive "de-nuclearization" of strategy, and adopts an increasingly independent and assertive stance, particularly on questions of regional security, it will present less of a contrast to the Southern Region where these characteristics have always been the norm. Indeed, these elements have traditionally served to make the Southern Region distinctive in terms of its role and character within the Alliance.
- The problem of strategic "coupling" has always been more complex in the Southern Region context. Here, the problem has been not only to assure the credibility of extended deterrence across the Atlantic, but also to maintain the linkage between security in the Central Region and the south. As the unifying perception of a Soviet threat recedes, and nuclear and conventional forces are reduced, these linkages will become more problematic. The risk, in this case, will be a fragmentation of approaches to regional security in Southern

¹That is, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

Europe and a "marginalization" of the role of the Southern Region countries. In the near term, the waning of the Soviet threat will permit the release of intellectual and material resources (at the national level) to address regional and out-of-area threats around the Mediterranean. For the moment, broader European or Alliance initiatives in this area will be hampered by competing demands elsewhere, especially in Eastern Europe.

Indeed, an important consequence of the revolution in Eastern Europe is the growing concern, from Lisbon to Ankara, that Western political and economic attention will flow eastward, driven by broader strategic imperatives. An extension of the European Community towards Eastern Europe would threaten to dilute the symbolic and material benefits of membership for Portugal, Spain, and Greece. The decreasing prominence of NATO, coupled with the increasingly dim prospects for membership in the European Community, suggest a broader risk of Turkish alienation vis a vis the West.

- Since substantial and increasingly modern arsenals (including chemical and ballistic missile technology) in North Africa and the Middle East will be unaffected by conventional force reductions in Europe (CFE), the linkage between conventional arms control and increased security will be least automatic in NATO's south.
- The U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean, which has traditionally played a vital role in promoting cohesion in the Southern Region, will prove increasingly difficult to maintain in the face of political detente and the arms control process. Even in the absence of naval arms control, prevailing restrictions on the use of bases in the region will undoubtedly

continue, and perhaps be reinforced, just as "out-of-area" problems assume a more prominent place on the security agenda.

- Ultimately, the development of a multilateral approach to security issues originating in and around Southern Europe may be encouraged by the need for NATO (or an alternative security structure) to adopt a more relevant political mantle. This can be expected to lead to the consideration of a range of issues outside the traditional security realm, including problems of demographics and immigration, economic development, and political stability. Taken together with the risk of regional crises in the Balkans, the Maghreb, and the Levant, it is clear that many of the most pressing security and security-related issues that will confront the United States and its European allies will be in the south--a fact that should influence the character of future security arrangements in Europe, beyond the East-West competition, and whatever their form. This would include the development of multilateral approaches to security issues within the Western European Union and the European Community.

CHANGES IN THE CHARACTER OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO'S SOUTHERN REGION

It has long been axiomatic among Alliance strategists and observers that deterrence and defense in NATO's Southern Region is distinctive within the Alliance not only in terms of its role as viewed from Washington or Brussels, but also in terms of its character. Just as one has been able to speak of a *European* security environment, one has also been able to speak of a more specific security environment around the Mediterranean, and the differences and linkages between the two. The profound changes that have taken place--and continue to take place on an almost daily basis--in Europe, and in the character of the East-West relationship as a whole, can have distinctive consequences for the Southern Region.

This Note explores the implications of changes in the character of the East-West strategic relationship for the Southern Region--its relative importance, role, linkage to Central Region concerns, and place within the Alliance: Will prospective developments contribute to a further separation of Atlantic, European, and Mediterranean security interests, or will they contribute to cohesion--and in what manner? Will political and arms control initiatives, and the related evolution of the Atlantic and European dimensions of the Alliance, serve to focus attention on the Southern Region, or will they have precisely the opposite effect? In sum, is the Mediterranean dimension of the Atlantic Alliance likely to become (1) more or less distinctive, and (2) more or less important in the future?

Clearly, there are limits to the extent that broad generalizations can be made about five individual member-nations (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey), all with distinctive foreign and security policy traditions.¹ The issues discussed in this Note will not be of

¹The role of France, as an important Mediterranean power, is acknowledged. A discussion of French policy is, however, beyond the scope of this Note, which focuses on those NATO countries whose security policies are characteristically "southern."

equal importance to all, and there will be marked variation in the ability of individual countries to play an active role in key debates within the Alliance. Yet there is considerable justification for a Southern Region perspective, however sweeping, for reasons that have as much to do with history and perception as with Alliance relations. Indeed, alliances are ultimately about the aggregation of national and regional interests.

THE CHARACTER OF SECURITY IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

The security environment in the Southern Region is distinctive in a number of important respects, all of which are central to the questions addressed here. First, the Southern Region has long been characterized by a relatively diffuse perception of the Soviet threat. While specific areas of threat certainly exist in the region, most notably in northeast Italy and in Greek and Turkish Thrace, there is no focus of vulnerability comparable to that which has existed in NATO's Central Region.² The fact that the Southern Region itself comprises three separate land subtheaters, and an additional maritime subtheater in the Mediterranean, means that deterrence and defense in the south bring inherent problems of cohesion and coordination. The perceived remoteness of the Soviet threat, together with the existence of diverse strategic traditions and concerns, has also supported the persistence of distinctive national approaches to security matters and national assertiveness within the Alliance.³ One consequence of this generally low perception of a direct Soviet threat has been that the symbolic aspects of NATO membership are of at least equal importance to the practical benefits associated with coalition deterrence and defense.

²This was not, however, the prevailing view in the immediate postwar period, when events in Greece and Turkey gave rise to the Truman Doctrine.

³See Diego A. Ruiz Palmer and A. Grant Whitley, "The Balance of Forces in Southern Europe: Between Uncertainty and Opportunity," *The International Spectator*, Vol. 23, No. 1, January-March 1988, pp. 28-29. Distinctive national approaches are treated extensively in John Chipman, ed., *NATO's Southern Allies: Internal and External Challenges* (London: Routledge, 1988).

For Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Turkey--all of which have had recent experience with authoritarian government--the symbolic value of NATO membership is reinforced to the extent that it is also a hallmark of membership in the Western democratic "club." While this legitimizing function is less important in the Italian case, NATO membership continues to have potent symbolism in the context of the domestic political debate, and is an important vehicle for activism in international affairs beyond questions of security, narrowly defined. To be sure, NATO as a whole is as much a political (and symbolic) institution as a strategic one, but this aspect of the Alliance has been particularly significant in the Southern Region.

Second, and in strong contrast to the Central Region, strategy in the Southern Region is essentially nonnuclear. While it is difficult if not impossible to discuss deterrence and defense in the NATO "core" without reference to the role of nuclear weapons, this is the norm in relation to the Southern Region. Mediterranean strategy has been characterized by an emphasis on conventional forces, traditional missions (e.g., sea control), and longer-war assumptions to a greater extent than elsewhere in NATO. This has less to do with comparative levels of nuclear capable forces in Central Europe and the Mediterranean than with the reality, noted earlier, that there is no comparable focus of vulnerability in defense of which the use of nuclear weapons can be credibly threatened.

Third, the scale and diversity of the Southern Region, its proximity to historical centers of crisis and instability in North Africa and the Middle East, and the importance of the Mediterranean to communications with regions of economic and strategic importance, including the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, confers a significance that transcends the East-West competition in Europe. The future security of the Southern Region will be at least as strongly affected by developments outside Europe as within; and given the difficulty of treating "out-of-area" problems in the NATO context, the most important responses are likely to be national or regional, rather than Alliance-wide. Indeed, the persistence of specific regional concerns

around the Mediterranean, from Spain's relationship with Morocco, to Italy's concerns about Libyan capabilities and interest in the stability of Yugoslavia, to friction between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean, are at least as important as the Warsaw Pact threat in shaping the strategic landscape in the Southern Region.

The factors that have given the Southern Region its distinctive political and strategic character have also given the U.S. presence in the region a unique importance. U.S. forces, and particularly the Sixth Fleet, lend cohesion to the defense of the various subtheaters, contribute to the linkage of Central and Southern region security, and bridge--although not without friction--NATO and out-of-area needs for power projection.⁴ Both symbolically and materially, the U.S. presence serves to bind together a vast theater that is, for the most part, not directly threatened by Soviet power, less nuclear, and equally absorbed with a variety of out-of-area or regional security concerns.⁵

CHANGES IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

The evolution of the political relationship between East and West, and parallel developments in nuclear and conventional arms control, mark a fundamental transformation of the security environment in Europe. The nature of this environment will be driven by events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the Western response. At a minimum, one will likely see a marked reduction in the level and character of the Soviet military threat to Western Europe. These changes also imply certain risks, however, not least the prospect of growing instability in Eastern Europe including the Balkans, and most significantly, in the Soviet Union itself. To the state of flux in the East-West strategic relationship one must also add the movement towards European integration --"1992"--the future of which may be strongly influenced by developments in Eastern Europe, with special significance for the newer members of

⁴See Jed C. Snyder, *Defending the Fringe: NATO, The Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), pp. 16-18.

⁵One should stress "for the most part"--the Turkish perspective on the Soviet threat will naturally be somewhat different, but in other respects the point remains valid.

the European Community in Southern Europe (and Turkey as an aspiring member).

Political Detente

To the extent that the military component of East-West relations is reduced and political detente promoted, this can be expected to strengthen the position of smaller and "peripheral" states within the Alliance, including those of the Southern Region. An atmosphere of political detente can also be expected to offer greater scope for bilateral East-West initiatives on trade and development. Italy, in particular, is well placed to act as a favored interlocutor in the dialogue with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and a similar if less active role could perhaps be foreseen for Spain. Overall, the improvement of East-West relations in the political sphere will have the effect of shifting Atlantic and European relations to areas in which the militarily weaker Southern Region countries are relatively better equipped to play an active role.

While political relaxation may encourage a greater role for individual Southern Region countries, this does not necessarily imply that the region will receive more attention within the Alliance on this basis. Indeed, the developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that have made possible the new perception of opportunity in East-West relations are most directly relevant to security in Central rather than Southern Europe.

As a general observation, the rise of political detente may pose significant challenges for both the Atlantic dimension of Alliance relations and the movement towards European integration. For a variety of reasons these challenges may be especially pronounced in relation to the Southern Region. First, the level and character of the U.S. presence in Europe has particular significance for the Southern Region where, as noted earlier, U.S. military power plays the essential role in ensuring a coherent defense. Second, this presence is dependent upon the maintenance of increasingly strained basing accords around the Mediterranean. The limits placed on the use of these facilities for

other than NATO-related purposes, coupled with a relaxation in the East-West military confrontation in Europe (and associated force reductions) may encourage more active political opposition to costly base and security assistance agreements in the U.S. Congress. In these circumstances, and even in the absence of any precipitous withdrawal of American forces from Europe, the Atlantic dimension of Alliance relations in the Southern Region is likely to become more difficult to manage, especially in light of competing priorities for economic and political attention in Eastern Europe.

The tension between European and Mediterranean security interests, and between the European and Atlantic dimensions of foreign and defense policy--common to all of the Southern Region states in varying degrees--will be complicated by a movement towards detente and demilitarization. The fact that it has always been difficult, if not impossible, to envision a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation in the Mediterranean except as part of a wider European conflict, has supported the perception that security in the Central and Southern Regions is, ultimately, closely linked. As the already low perception of a direct Soviet threat recedes, this linkage is progressively weakened.

In an atmosphere of political detente, the Southern Region countries will also be able to devote greater energy and attention to European concerns, increasingly important in the context of "1992." Yet, over the longer term, the changes in the European security environment, including the erosion of the perceived importance of NATO, that will make the European Community an even more attractive focus for external policy around the Mediterranean may, if carried far enough, complicate the full integration of Portugal, Spain, Greece (and in association, Turkey) within the Community. The expansion of the Community eastwards in some form, to include Austria and in extremis East Germany, Poland, or Hungary, against the background of an East-West strategic relationship that would permit this, could dilute the symbolic significance and potential benefits of European integration for the European Community's newer Mediterranean members. Political and economic attention, and most importantly the private investment that has

been expected to accompany participation in "Europe" may, it is feared, be drawn towards Eastern rather than Southern Europe.⁶

Regional Problems and Security Structures

To the extent that the NATO-Warsaw Pact military competition is defused, existing regional and out-of-area security concerns are likely to be given greater prominence in the plans and policies of Southern Region countries. In a region with formidable constraints on defense resources, a perceived decline in the Soviet threat, together with ongoing arms control initiatives, will be seen as an opportunity to trim defense spending and to devote more of the remaining effort to national rather than Alliance security concerns. There is, of course, no shortage of such concerns in Southern Europe, including political instability, ballistic missile and chemical weapon proliferation in North Africa and the Middle East, increasing challenges for air defense, terrorism, and traditional and untraditional threats to sea lines of communication.

For Italy, in particular, bolstering the capacity to deter or counter a range of threats originating to the south has been an increasing concern. The waning of the perceived threat from the Warsaw Pact can be expected to support this trend and encourage the further development of "rapid action forces," on the pattern of the *Force d'Action Rapide* and the *Forza di Intervento Rapido*, elsewhere in the Southern Region. The "Mediterraneanization" of security policy, however, also brings with it the risk of a further marginalization of the role of Southern Region countries--precisely the condition that politicians and strategists in the region have decried.⁷

⁶This is likely to happen despite the fact that the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary are more prosperous than the countries of the Southern Region (with the exception of Italy) when viewed in terms of per capita gross national product. See, for example, Alan Riding, "Challenge to Madrid's Success Story," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1990.

⁷See, for example, Clyde Haberman, "Italy Says NATO Neglects the Mediterranean," *The New York Times*, February 16, 1989; and Maurizio Cremasco and Giacomo Luciani, "The Mediterranean Dimension of Italy's Foreign and Security Policy," *The International Spectator*, Vol. 20, No. 1, January-March 1985.

One way of reconciling this dilemma would be for the Alliance to devote more attention to Mediterranean security--in short, for the strategic center of the Alliance to move southward.⁸ This is most unlikely, not least because of the difficulty of orchestrating a NATO strategy towards out-of-area threats, and the dramatic developments in Central and Eastern Europe that will continue to be the focus of political if not military attention. Expanded cooperation among the Southern Region allies, along the lines already being pursued by Italy, France, and Spain in the area of maritime surveillance, can represent a useful hedge against a reduction in the U.S. presence in the Mediterranean or a movement towards a narrowly based (e.g., Franco-German) form of European defense cooperation.⁹ Again, the attractiveness of such ventures is likely to be limited by a preference for broader European initiatives that do not foster a separate approach to security in NATO's south. In this context, both the Western European Union (WEU) and the European Community may play a useful role.¹⁰

The revolutionary developments in Europe have raised the larger question of NATO's future as an institution for coalition deterrence and defense. In the Southern Region context, the most pressing issue will be the extent to which alternative and more comprehensive security structures, perhaps based on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), can effectively address regional problems, including those that have traditionally been seen as "out-of-area." On the whole, NATO has avoided embracing security problems on the periphery that might risk Alliance consensus on "core" issues. One may suggest that over the longer term, the decline of the Soviet threat will inevitably reduce the

⁸The issue of a shift in the strategic center of Europe is raised in Sergio A. Rossi, "NATO's Southern Flank and Mediterranean Security," in *NATO's Maritime Flanks: Problems and Prospects* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987), p. 48. A more recent and broader discussion of the issues can be found in Alvaro de Vasconcelos, "Southern Europe, the United States and NATO," *NATO Review*, October 1989.

⁹Initiatives in this area include the joint Helios observation satellite project and proposed cooperation on AWACS.

¹⁰Spain and Portugal joined the WEU in November 1988, and Greece and Turkey have expressed an interest in membership.

saliency of the traditional core issues (forward defense, flexible response, etc.) leading to a growing crisis of relevance for the Alliance, and possibly a new interest in cooperation on regional and out-of-area questions. An alternative or parallel security structure based on CSCE would, of course, face a similar test of relevance.

Freed from the constraints imposed by competing alliance systems, a broader CSCE approach might well offer certain advantages as a forum for cooperation on regional problems, especially those of a nonmilitary nature (e.g., immigration, the environment, economic and political development). On security matters more narrowly defined, the effective alternatives to a strictly national approach are more likely to be found in a redefinition of the NATO role, or a strengthening of the bilateral relationship with the United States. Again, from the Southern Region perspective, a multilateral approach will be preferable, particularly if it places regional concerns in a European rather than Mediterranean framework.

The ongoing friction and risk of open conflict between Greece and Turkey clearly has its own dynamics. Active NATO-Warsaw Pact competition, and the need to hedge against Soviet aggression, has provided an incentive for Greek and Turkish cooperation with the United States and within the Alliance, and has undoubtedly served to temper relations in the Aegean. Improved East-West relations and a perceived decline in the Soviet threat, together with the increasingly dim prospects for Turkish membership in the European Community, could introduce a new element of uncertainty in this quarter.¹¹

Political detente, and political and economic liberalization in Eastern Europe, may also pose new challenges for stability in Yugoslavia, with obvious implications for security in the Balkans and the Adriatic. More specifically, long-standing problems of ethnic unrest and regional separatism can be expected to accelerate as the

¹¹Including the revival of long-standing frictions involving Turkish minorities in northeastern Greece, as well as Bulgaria. See, for example, Paul Anastasi, "Greek-Bulgarian Tactics for Turkey," *The New York Times*, February 7, 1990.

Yugoslav system appears less liberal and less attractive in relation to rapidly reforming regimes elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The revolutions in Bulgaria and Romania--developments that could hardly have been foreseen a short time ago--may well be followed by a prolonged period of political instability in which traditional ethnic and national frictions will play a leading role. An environment of this sort in the Balkans (quite possibly including Albania) would have significant security implications for Greece and Turkey, and would seriously restrict the Soviet Union's freedom of action in the Warsaw Pact's own southern region.¹² Indeed, continued ethnic strife in the southern Soviet Union would be even more troubling from the Turkish perspective.

Nuclear and Conventional Arms Control

For the Southern Region, as elsewhere within the Alliance, nuclear and conventional arms control initiatives are welcomed as the concrete expression of a general movement towards political and military detente in Europe and, possibly, as a means of reducing the burden of defense spending. If the perception of a direct Soviet threat is less keenly felt around the Mediterranean than in Central Europe, the problems posed by changes in strategy and forces as a result of arms control or unilateral initiatives are of no less concern, and are in some ways even more complex. Despite the long-standing importance of conventional forces in the region, the possibility of a progressive "de-nuclearization" of NATO strategy will be greeted with reservation in some quarters because the nuclear dimension of flexible response is seen to have a unifying effect within the Alliance, binding together the security fate of Central Europe and the flanks. From the Southern Region perspective, it is essential not only to assure the strategic coupling of the United States and Europe--a traditional NATO concern--but also to maintain the coupling between deterrence in the Central and Southern Regions. This is not to say that further reductions in nuclear forces, in particular short-range weapons including (perhaps) air-

¹²See Jonathan Eyal, ed., *The Warsaw Pact and the Balkans* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

launched and sea-based systems, will meet strong opposition in the Southern Region--political reality dictates otherwise--but it does suggest that the problem of coupling in the Southern Region will become more pronounced.¹³

In a similar manner, reduced reliance on nuclear forces, together with improvements in the conventional balance in Europe as a result of arms control, unilateral withdrawals or restructuring, and modernization, could lead to a situation in which a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict--however unlikely--might be longer rather than shorter, and involve more than one theater. A war of longer duration would, in turn, raise the importance of secure sea lines of communication for reinforcement, resupply, and access to vital resources. All of these factors would naturally increase the importance of NATO's flanks, particularly the Mediterranean.¹⁴

As currently envisioned, conventional forces will be reduced by significantly cutting stationed ground and (probably) air units, but not (as yet) naval and naval air forces. This could lead to an environment in which the Southern Region with its concentration of maritime forces becomes a center of substantial residual military power.¹⁵ The extension of the CFE process to naval forces could present profound problems of adjustment for NATO strategy in the Mediterranean and could have even more far-reaching implications for Southern Region cohesion.

While political detente and conventional force reductions can substantially improve the security outlook with regard to the East-West relationship, they will have little effect on the range of out-of-area and regional security threats around the Mediterranean (although the

¹³It is noteworthy that in the midst of the current political crisis in Greece, former Prime Minister Papandreou has called for the removal of all U.S. nuclear weapons as part of a new base accord. See *The Manchester Guardian*, November 1, 1989, p. 13.

¹⁴See Bruce R. Kuniholm, "CDI in NATO: The Southern Flank and Alliance Defense," in *The Future of Conventional Defense Improvements in NATO: Proceedings of the Tenth NATO Symposium* (Washington: National Defense University, 1987), p. 263.

¹⁵An agreement based on zones would reinforce this effect, as would the transfer of modern aircraft or other equipment to Southern Region members to maximize NATO's residual capability under a CFE agreement.

prospects for East-West crisis management might perhaps be improved), as arsenals in North Africa and the Middle East remain unconstrained. This raises the question of the longer-term effect of negotiated conventional force reductions, especially naval and air, and any unilateral reductions, on capabilities for non-NATO contingencies in the Southern Region. In sum, the linkage between asymmetrical force reductions and improved security will not be as automatic in the Southern Region as in the center or the north.

Finally, the improvement in East-West relations and progress on conventional arms control can be expected to throw into sharper relief the problem of U.S. access to Allied facilities around the Mediterranean. Over the past decade, Southern Region countries have become more explicit about restricting the use of bases and overflight rights to NATO-related purposes at a time when the Warsaw Pact threat is widely perceived as receding and out-of-area threats expanding. Given this, and in a period of budgetary pressures on both sides of the Atlantic, the politics of maintaining this infrastructure will become more difficult (witness the current difficulty surrounding the move of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing to Crotone).

As this brief analysis suggests, conventional force reductions in Europe will have a number of unique strategic and political implications for the Southern Region. On balance, and in the absence of a dramatic regional security crisis in the south, these developments are unlikely to result in any overall increase in the attention devoted to the Southern Region within the Alliance in the near term, since the impetus for and substance of current initiatives derives overwhelmingly from the historic imbalance of forces in the Central Region and the imperative of redressing this. Having done so, it is possible that regional problems around the Mediterranean can, ultimately, be given more attention by the United States and the countries of the Southern Region, ideally in a NATO context.

SOME OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

In sum, changes currently underway in the East-West strategic relationship--in particular the related phenomena of political detente and arms control--are unlikely to cause the Alliance *as a whole* to devote more attention to Southern Region issues in the near term, however justified. Nonetheless, current and prospective developments will have some unique implications for NATO and the Mediterranean:

- The traditional *distinctiveness* of the security environment in the Southern Region will persist, not least for reasons of geography and political culture, but is likely to become less significant over time. As the Alliance as a whole continues to view the Soviet threat in more remote terms, places less emphasis on the nuclear dimensions of deterrence and defense, and is characterized by increasing independence and assertiveness on regional questions, it will present less of a contrast to the environment in the Southern Region where these characteristics have long been the norm.
- The problem of *strategic coupling*, always more complex in the Southern Region where there is a need to maintain the linkage between security in the center and the south, as well as extended deterrence across the Atlantic, is likely to become more difficult as nuclear and conventional forces are reduced, and the unifying perception of a Soviet threat recedes. As elsewhere--but with particular importance in the Southern Region--the tension between the European and Atlantic dimensions of security policy will persist, and perhaps deepen, as *Europe* is seen as an increasingly important vehicle for political-military as well as economic assertiveness.

- At the same time, a waning of the Soviet threat will allow the release of intellectual and material resources for the consideration of regional and out-of-area threats around the Mediterranean--certainly at the national level. Because substantial forces in the Middle East and North Africa will be unaffected by CFE reductions, the linkage between asymmetrical force reductions and improved security will be less automatic in the Southern Region than elsewhere in Europe.
- The U.S. presence in the Mediterranean, which has traditionally lent cohesion to deterrence and defense in the Southern Region, will prove more difficult to sustain in an environment of active political detente and arms control. Leaving aside the possibility of naval force reductions, existing restrictions on the use of bases around the Mediterranean are likely to persist and solidify just as out-of-area threats become more prominent on the security agenda.
- Finally, the widely discussed need for NATO to become a more relevant *political* institution in response to changing conditions in Europe will inevitably lead to considerations outside the traditional security realm, including problems of demographics and immigration, economic development, and the environment. If one adds the regional security problems of the Maghreb, the Levant, and the Balkans, it is clear that many of the future issues that will confront the Alliance will originate in or around the Southern Region. This suggests an important longer-term opportunity for the Atlantic Alliance (or an alternative structure, perhaps based on CSCE) to promote cooperation on security and other matters in the Mediterranean, beyond the East-West competition.

