A RAND NOTE

Airpower and Security in NATO's Southern Region: Alternative Concepts for a USAF Facility at Crotone

Ian Lesser, Kevin N. Lewis

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Ian Lesser, Kevin N. Lewis

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PREFACE

This Note was prepared at the request of Brigadier General Bobbie L. Mitchell, Deputy Director of Plans, Office DCS/Plans and Operations, Headquarters, USAF. It builds upon ongoing work on NATO's Southern Region conducted under the Project AIR FORCE study "The Air Force in a Changing Europe," sponsored by USAFE and AF/XOX. Project AIR FORCE was asked to provide a fast-reaction overview of certain questions associated with USAF basing options in NATO's Southern Region, focusing on the issue of possible future roles for Crotone Air Base in U.S. and Allied security strategy.

This research was conducted within the National Security Strategies Program of Project AIR FORCE. It should be of interest to those concerned with airpower and basing issues in Europe, as well as broader issues of security and Alliance relations around the Mediterranean and beyond.

SUMMARY

The past several years have seen many dramatic political, strategic, and resource developments, including the collapse of the Warsaw Pact as an integrated military entity, progress in arms control talks, the reunification of Germany, a worsening defense budget picture, and, most recently, the outbreak of a serious crisis in the Persian Gulf. These have combined with more gradual developments to demand a fundamental reassessment and reorientation of U.S. and NATO plans and concepts for security in and around Europe. One aspect of this reassessment concerns U.S. and USAF options for military presence in the NATO Southern Region/Mediterranean theater.

Until August 1990, policy pertinent to this reassessment followed evolutionary or "incrementalist" lines: For instance, as part of a longstanding effort to restructure USAFE Southern Region bases, the USAFE, with NATO support, intended to redeploy the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) (located at Torrejon, Spain) to a new base to be constructed in southern Italy. By "incrementalist," we mean that the concept for this unit redeployment would, in effect, preserve the basic USAFE Southern Region capabilities, posture, and missions existing before recent watershed events. The redeployment of the 401st was undertaken in reaction to the Spanish government's demand for a change in the unit's peacetime residence.

But beginning in 1990, several developments combined to threaten the implementation of this plan, including the following:

- The ongoing debate over the future purpose and roles of NATO in a rapidly changing world (and, beyond that, of the U.S. military establishment as a whole) has led many observers to demand a basic recasting and reframing of the strategic and military predicates on which planning has been based.

- U.S. budgetary and political factors (both domestic and diplomatic) have cast some doubt upon the future of the 401st TFW relocation plan.

- The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 and the subsequent intensification of that crisis illustrate many still unresolved questions about NATO's out-of-area military interests, U.S. deployment capabilities, and the role of military forces in the post-Cold War environment.[1]

[1]In addition, the Persian Gulf crisis and U.S. economic woes (which have not been improved by the military crisis and the rise in oil prices following from the Iraqi aggression) seem likely as of this writing to reshape at least the near-term U.S. defense resources debate.

Against this backdrop, it is hard to say exactly how present influences (both domestic and strategic) will play themselves out. Clearly, a "business as usual" approach to many ongoing military policy questions will not suffice. This is as true of the continuing debate over Crotone as it is of any other issue. What began as a straightforward response to a Spanish request to vacate Torrejon and a NATO decision to build a base at Crotone to house the soon-to-be evicted 401st must now be examined in light of broader national and Alliance issues, not only in relation to security requirements in the southern Europe/Mediterranean region, but also in terms of the larger organizational, functional, and other questions raised by recent developments.

The Crotone question should be recast in larger terms; Crotone can serve as an important prototype for future U.S. deployment options and other cooperation schemes (both joint and combined). These points are summarized here first in terms of the short-run issues of constructing the base and then with regard to the longer-term possibilities for its utilization. In both cases, we will consider the costs and benefits of alternatives to the base scheme as it is currently configured, including what might be called an "austere" Crotone option along with a more ambitious concept for the installation.

It is worth underscoring the importance of the incrementalist approach in the final resolution of the overall Crotone/401st TFW plan. So far, objections to Crotone in the U.S. Congress and elsewhere have taken two forms: (1) that the facility is out of touch with the times, allegedly reflecting waning threats and outdated requirements; and (2) that construction of the new base is an unjustifiable venture at a time when domestic bases are being closed, budgets are heading downward, and U.S. balance of payment accounts are in the red. We believe that the former argument becomes unsustainable in the face of a larger, joint-combined "enhanced" Crotone concept. And despite the domestic U.S. political aspects of the debate that accompany stateside base closures, such political expedience is particularly unproductive at a time when so many issues are crucial to the future of the Alliance and of U.S. security interests in general. Although there are costs associated with any Crotone option, these are quite modest compared with the strategic value of the capabilities in question, the opportunity costs of dropping Crotone completely, and the direct and indirect military and financial costs of various alternatives (e.g., continuous deployment of more aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean Sea).

ADVANTAGES OF THE CROTONE INSTALLATION IN THE LONGER RUN: THE "NEW" PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

More important than narrower ongoing concerns in our opinion are the possible larger ramifications of the Crotone base construction scheme. Specifically:

1. Preliminary analysis of Crotone's strategic significance suggests that the base itself is far more important than the wing slated to occupy it. Retaining the 401st TFW somewhere in southern Europe is important in and of itself. But when larger national and coalition considerations are factored in, having the potential to flexibly employ a range of military capabilities at such a centrally located facility becomes most valuable. Thus, the **Crotone base should be seen as a fundamental national and Alliance resource, able to support a broad array of possible options.** These might include the deployment of bombers, tankers, transports, escorts for aircraft, management of intelligence and special purpose airpower resources, and so on, operating not only throughout the Southern and Mediterranean regions, but also transiting to points east and south to meet the requirement of a potentially broad range of contingencies.

2. The continued maintenance of a USAF presence in the Southern Region is strategically and militarily important and, of perhaps equal importance, seen as necessary by our Alliance partners. Ultimately, the requirement for this presence may fade—or more likely change in nature—but for the foreseeable future, what has been an important presence will remain so. Moreover, the availability of both military capabilities and deployment infrastructure in the Southern Region is essential not only for NATO functions, but also for effectively meeting out-of-area requirements, which in the case of *Desert Shield* involve a constellation of U.S., NATO, and other coalitional concerns.

3. Near-term cost issues are pertinent mainly on domestic political grounds; the difference between various Crotone basing/deployment configurations is quite modest. The "baseline" cost of construction at Crotone is estimated to be $1-1/3 billion, of which $350–375 million is to be borne by the United States. More austere design concepts for the base may save some initial construction funds, many of which are in any event being provided by NATO, and could well end up being less cost-effective overall, depending on how certain indirect costs are treated. Preliminary estimates indicate, however, that an *operationally* austere Crotone concept—for instance, a full Crotone main operating base (MOB) installation, but with, say, only one tactical fighter squadron (TFS) on rotation duty at the base (with the other two deployed at an existing installation in the continental United States)— *might* yield some appreciable long-term savings (though there are important operational and strategic liabilities to be considered under such circumstances).[2]

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[2]Moving the entire 401st on a permanent basis to a down-scaled Crotone, for instance, forgoes the possible benefits of expansion of the total Crotone concept. Moreover,

Because we believe that the acquisition of the installation is more important than the near-term fate of the 401st redeployment plan, and taking into account the current domestic political environment, **beginning with an "austere" base layout while maintaining options for subsequent expansion and improvement of the installation may be a politically wise strategy to ensure that this very promising opportunity is not completely abandoned in the near term.** Of course, as the lessons of *Desert Shield* are digested, opponents of the base might change their views.

4. Crotone provides an opportunity to explore a potential prototype concept for a "new NATO": It should be multinational as well as multipurpose. The base is not only a military and strategic resource, it can also serve as a test-bed and a motivator of new concepts of the Alliance. For instance, two of the areas in which NATO has always had an interest (but that have to date been somewhat overshadowed by the "traditional" NATO planning process) are a move toward multinational forces and operations and the need to prepare for a broader range of threats to the Alliance than the canonical "Central Region" scenario. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, to take one very notable example, highlights both of these points clearly. The response to this act of aggression has involved (1) a true multilateral response, and (2) an indirect—economic—threat to all members of the Alliance (and, indeed, to the world community at large). The importance of a resource like Crotone for enhancing not only a U.S. but a coalition response to such challenges cannot be overstated. Cast from the beginning as a flexible, Alliance resource and not just a U.S. capability of a certain type that happens to reside physically and organizationally within NATO, Crotone can provide a new vehicle for joint and combined training, planning, and operations. Assuming that favorable trends in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union continue to reduce the saliency of security concerns in more traditional areas, this might provide an invaluable impetus to NATO's future vitality.

5. With few exceptions, the factors likely to affect overall U.S. and NATO military capabilities enhance the value of a permanent U.S. presence at the Crotone installation. These factors include contraction of the European U.S. base structure overall, the budget-driven decline in the Navy's available carrier force, and the strategic and political requirement that NATO credibly redefine its role away from the traditional canonical Soviet-led threat toward a larger conceptualization of security requirements and objectives.

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what would presumably make such a base "austere" would involve "quality of life" base features, the lack of which might have an adverse effect on personnel retention.

To take just one case in point, the decline in Navy carrier force structure necessitated by budgetary constraints, probable reductions in Navy operating tempos and deployment intensities, and the need to use available carriers for the highest-priority requirements will mean that in many scenarios the U.S. military, as well as NATO, will be obliged to attain the maximum coordinated employment of all available forces. In other words, it is extremely unwise to view the Crotone issue as an "Air Force vs. Navy," or, still less, a "United States vs. Allies" problem. Given likely force postures of the 1990s, the optimum coordination of all available resources will be necessary to contend with inexorable resource pressures.

To best meet such demands, it is desirable to build a solid foundation for joint and combined operations into our posture, and not to rely (with mixed results, as we have seen on so many occasions) on *ad hoc* coordination schemes whose resilience in untested contingencies has shown in the past to be less than fully adequate. By configuring Crotone properly from the start, we can go a long way toward enhancing key capabilities and testing new techniques for adequate responses to challenging contingencies in the future.

6. Should the Crotone option be foreclosed, a range of possible opportunities for the United States and its NATO Allies would also be foreclosed, probably for good. This is a particularly critical time in the evolution of the Alliance. As a true coalition enterprise (that is, a plan fully supported, politically and financially, by NATO), Crotone is an important test case for the future viability and relevance of the Atlantic coalition. While construction of Crotone can set the stage for new collaborative ventures, it must be recognized that a failure to follow through with the base will run counter to our continuing interest in a strong transatlantic security partnership.

NEARER-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Finally, several nearer-term factors bear on the Crotone plan or some variant of it.

1. Given the priority put on the Crotone plan by NATO in general and by its Southern Region members in particular, the consequences of unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the effort will be harmful. If we take into account the inchoate strategic and burdensharing aspects of a "new NATO," such a disruption could have adverse long-term effects on Alliance cohesion.

2. Given the multinational financing scheme for Crotone and various management concerns (economies of scale, the costs of further delays in the rebasing program, etc.), the price of the base is very modest compared not only with the total life-cycle cost of the total set of U.S. force structure oriented toward NATO's Southern Region, but also with the potential longer-term benefits of the plan.

3. For political and other reasons, no feasible alternative to the Crotone installation exists in-region. Crotone's centrality, on both east-west and north-south axes, plus its relative nearness to potential deployment bases make it a nearly ideal site.

4. Crotone provides several attractive features given the shifting social and political context for armed forces of all sorts in Europe. To name but a few: (1) there would be none of the complaints about jet noise and other operational problems that now afflict installations in more congested regions; (2) Crotone would not be tainted with an adverse historical legacy (in the case of Torrejon, that being an unpleasant reminder of the Franco-tainted and unilateralist U.S. legacy that many Spaniards found unacceptable); (3) Crotone could be designed specifically with new sensitivities (e.g., ecological ones) in mind; and (4) as a true joint venture, the installation at Crotone would be less susceptible to the politicking and the diplomatic and domestic political uncertainties that frequently influence bilateral basing arrangements.

Examining the evidence, we find that, from a Southern Region planning perspective, the presence of the 401st TFW at Crotone is important since it (1) provides tangible evidence of a geographically and functionally *balanced* U.S. commitment to Europe in a period of considerable uncertainty regarding future security arrangements and stability in the region; (2) is a notable example of Alliance burdensharing and a possible avenue for future multinational activities of other sorts; (3) contributes to the deterrence of and defense against threats arising from the Middle East and North Africa; (4) plays a specific political reassurance role in relation to Turkey; and (5) not least, provides an affordable hedge against possible reductions in the U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean and a complement to current and future naval capabilities there.

The utility of Crotone for non-NATO contingencies could be limited by the political uncertainties associated with out-of-area cooperation within the Alliance,[3] but there is a good chance that attitudes toward such cooperation could improve as NATO works to define a new role for itself. The cooperation witnessed in response to the call for Western naval operations in the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait are hopeful precedents in this regard. Since Crotone is itself a NATO initiative, since the base has been freely offered by the Italian government (and does not exist as a legacy of World War II or the U.S. nuclear bomber deployments of the 1950s), and given the prospects for the configuration of Crotone as a true joint and combined operation (and not just as a USAFE fighter installation), the establishment of Crotone may help promote a new atmosphere of cooperation and coordination, both bilaterally and Alliancewide.

[3]The difficulties in obtaining overflight and basing rights for USAF F-111s en route to Libya provide an excellent example.

Southern Region allies will almost certainly accept some variation in the level of the permanent U.S. presence and the scale of facilities to be put in place at Crotone. The symbolism associated with the U.S. presence is important, however, and a substantial in-region presence will be favored from the allied perspective. In a broader European context, the presence of dual-capable U.S. aircraft in Italy will contribute to continuity in German policy within the Alliance by allaying fears of "singularity."[4] From a U.S. perspective, the transfer of the 401st to Crotone furthers a prudent "portfolio" approach to the basing of residual forces in Europe, substantially reducing a concentration of the U.S. military presence in one or two nations.

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[4]"Singularity" refers to the location or affiliation of some particular Alliance military capability solely in or with one nation (historically, the Federal Republic of Germany).

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GLOSSARY

AWACS	Airborne warning and control system
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CFE	Conventional Force Reductions in Europe
CONUS	Continental United States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CVS	Aircraft carrier, antisubmarine
EC	European Community
GLCM	Ground-launched cruise missile
INF	Intermediate-range nuclear forces
JSTARS	Joint surveillance and target attack radar system (E-8 aircraft)
MLC	Mid-level contingency
MOB	Main operating base
OPTEMPO	Operational tempo
SOF	Special operational forces
TAF	Tactical air forces
TFS	Tactical fighter squadron
TFW	Tactical fighter wing

I. INTRODUCTION

Changes in the European security environment and developments in and around the Mediterranean (not least in the Persian Gulf) coupled with an active debate in the United States over defense strategies, force structures, and budgets impel the analysis presented here, the purpose of which is to examine the potential roles and costs of Crotone Air Base, in light of the changing security environment in Europe and beyond. The value of this analysis is to provide a summary of issues and to stimulate new thinking on U.S. security interests and the role of airpower in the Mediterranean region and adjacent areas. It is not meant to be a detailed assessment of the costs and benefits of various base configurations, but the discussion that follows captures the essential points to be considered in such deliberations.

BACKGROUND: WHY CROTONE?

The NATO decision to collectively fund a base for the 72 U.S. F-16s of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) came in response to a January 15, 1988, agreement in principle between the United States and Spain that the wing would be removed from its base at Torrejon near Madrid within three years from the entry into force of a new bilateral base agreement (then under negotiation). The Spanish parliament ratified the new agreement, widely viewed as essential to continued Spanish participation in NATO, in June 1989, leaving May 1992 as the deadline for withdrawal of the 401st. Within days of the January 1988 agreement, Italy had agreed in principle to accept the transfer of the F-16s, provided a suitable base could be found. Informal discussions within the Alliance had already made it clear that for political and economic reasons no other Southern Region country would host the wing. Heavy civilian air traffic in the north of Italy and poor weather would limit the possibility of training. Together with the desire to site the 401st further from Warsaw Pact forward bases in Eastern Europe, as well as the interest of the Italian government in promoting the economic development of the Mezzogiorno, these factors argued for a location in the south.

The impending military disengagement in Europe and the *de facto* disintegration of the Warsaw Pact have reduced the importance of obtaining strategic depth in relation

to the Central Front. At the same time, the growing perception of security problems to the south, in the Mediterranean and beyond in North Africa, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia, argues even more strongly for the currently planned location.

U.S. and Italian officials examined the option of using the short-lived ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) base at Comiso in Sicily, but U.S. officials rejected it on the grounds that the base lacked a runway (and posed severe restrictions on expansion) and Italians rejected it for public acceptance reasons. Existing facilities at La Mezia, north of Reggio Calabria, were also examined, but these too lacked a suitable runway and were close to populated areas.

CURRENT STATUS

The eventual selection of the specific construction site, a small municipal airstrip outside Crotone in Calabria, was driven mainly by domestic political practicality, although the base is certainly well sited to support operations in the central Mediterranean and beyond.[1] The contracting and procurement associated with the new facility have proceeded slowly, but approximately 1300 acres have been acquired, initial contracts have been let, and preparation has begun for runway construction. The highly unusual arrangement that the major costs of construction are to be paid from the NATO infrastructure fund has meant that NATO is supervising the construction through a coordinating office in Rome. It is now estimated that the base will be ready for occupation sometime in 1995, leaving an interim period in which the 401st TFW must be accommodated elsewhere (perhaps at more than one installation) within NATO, in the continental United States, or possibly at its present home base through an extension of the Torrejon agreement.

PROSPECTS FOR EXTENSION OF THE TORREJON DEPARTURE DEADLINE

There is a general perception in Spain and elsewhere that extending the arrangement for the 401st at Torrejon is unlikely. However, some influential and well-informed observers in Spain suggest that there might well be a prospect for extension if

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[1]In recent years the Italian military in general and Italian Air Force specifically have been developing an increasing southern focus to their defense interests.

(1) plans for Crotone are seen to be moving ahead; (2) NATO, and preferably Italy, makes the request; and (3) the extension agreement reaffirms the impending departure of the 401st. Should an extension prove necessary, the Spanish government might request "compensation," although there can be little Spanish interest in pushing this too far. On the whole, the Gonzalez government may have more room for maneuver on this issue than is usually imagined. The apparent inactivity of the Spanish government in reminding the public of the impending departure of the wing may indicate expectation of an extension request that may be received positively.

THE STATE OF ONGOING CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

The plans for Crotone have been the subject of considerable debate in Congress, apparently driven by cost and burdensharing concerns. On July 31, 1990, the House Armed Services Committee voted to ban spending on the Crotone project for 14 months. Subsequently, the Committee's Senate counterparts directed the Air Force to develop lower-cost alternatives, specifically a more austere minimum-cost facility at Crotone. In doing so, the committee also recognized the importance of an F-16 presence in southern Europe.

During the tumultuous days of early October when Congress and the administration were deadlocked over federal budget options for FY91, Crotone emerged as a stumbling block. The House and Senate Appropriations committees agreed to language barring the use of any FY91 funds (and also previous unobligated funds, including recoupments) from being obligated for the construction of facilities at Crotone during FY91. In addition, the General Accounting Office had launched a new investigation of DoD's justification for selection of the Crotone facility. The two committees agreed further that no funds available to DoD (including previous year funds, or U.S. contributions to the NATO Infrastructure Program) be obligated or expended in connection either with the Crotone installation or with the movement of the 401st TFW to any other location outside the United States until the Secretary of Defense certified the following information (after consultations with NATO):[2]

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[2]See 101st Cong., 2d Sess., H.R. 4739, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991," Sec. 2802, p. 15, 25 September 1990.

1. Whether, in light of the changed strategic situation in Europe, the retention of the 401st TFW in the Southern Region was necessary.
2. Whether, in the same context, the continued construction of the Crotone facility itself was desirable.
3. Whether alternative bases in NATO, especially its Southern Region, could in fact substitute for the Crotone installation.
4. Whether the United States would be able to use aircraft based at Crotone for military missions outside of the European theater.

Both the Appropriations and Authorizations Conference committees reduced the President's request for NATO infrastructure funds from $420 to $193 million. This reduction represents a fairly rare case of Conference action reducing a funding level below that agreed to by both House and Senate. This action followed upon a reported negative reaction by appropriators in the face of what was seen to be DoD efforts to resolve the Crotone issue with Authorization Committee members only. Indeed, there were also news reports of a threatened veto of the entire FY91 budget by the administration if Crotone were killed outright. Thus the prohibitions of funding plus the requirement to produce the certification cited represent a strained compromise between Congress and DoD. From a political viewpoint, then, Crotone now resides in a state of official limbo.

The progress of the ongoing congressional debate is watched with a nervous eye in Italy and elsewhere in the Southern Region. Developments in the Persian Gulf may reinforce support for a base and ground-based air presence relevant to "out-of-area" as well as European security concerns. For instance, the relevance of such concerns can be readily extrapolated from the central role now being played in operation *Desert Shield* by both the Torrejon facility (which is the main airlift hub in southern Europe) and by the 401st TFW itself (elements of which have been deployed to the Persian Gulf). Access to Southern Region facilities has been critical to deployment, reinforcement, and sustainment operations in support of *Desert Shield.* Moreover, the availability of combat units in the Southern Region has been important to overall U.S. and coalition strategy in the Persian Gulf. Since Crotone will actually enhance the potential for such operations throughout a wider area of interest, one of the "lessons learned" of *Desert Shield* may include a ringing endorsement for both the facilities and the capabilities envisioned under the Crotone base and deployment plan.

II. POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Attitudes toward Crotone in NATO's Southern Region, and indeed in the United States, are driven to a great extent by broad political and strategic considerations. This is not in itself unusual but takes on special importance against the background of rapid change and widespread uncertainty in Europe and troubling developments in North Africa and the Middle East. Overall, the southern allies are broadly supportive of the U.S. presence in Europe, including the planned transfer of the 401st TFW to Crotone.[1]

A CLIMATE OF UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty over the future of the European security environment suggests to Southern Region officials and observers the need for a "balanced" approach to security within the Alliance, an approach that gives equal weight to stability in the center and the south. If NATO and the U.S. presence in Europe are to remain relevant, substantial forces should be kept in the Southern Region since this is where many of the post-Cold War security problems will be centered. If the Alliance is to evolve into a more political institution as many now suggest, that too argues for a large NATO military presence around the Mediterranean as north-south issues, including trade and immigration, become increasingly prominent on the European agenda.

While German reunification is widely supported in the Southern Region (Italian attitudes remain mixed but officially encouraging), there are concerns of varying intensity about the economic and strategic consequences of both a reunited Germany and a reunited Europe. On the economic side, developments in Germany and Eastern Europe have already resulted in a diversion of investment and assistance from southern Europe to meet pressing demands in the east. This phenomenon is of great concern to Turkey, Portugal, Greece, and Spain in roughly that order. The potential, and from the Southern Region perspective undesirable, consequences of the changes under way in Europe include a broadening of the European Community (EC), diluting its value to its southern members and further alienating Turkey; a general diversion of political and economic attention; and a more rapid waning of security and security-assistance relationships with the United States. It is feared that the

[1]This survey of allied perceptions draws heavily on an extensive Southern Region study trip involving discussions with senior government officials, parliamentarians, military officers, and academics in April 1990.

outcome of such developments would be a strategic "marginalization" of the Mediterranean region precisely as new security and security-related problems emerge to the south. Assessments of this sort may be too pessimistic in some respects, but their influence on current thinking around the region should not be ignored.

LINKING SECURITY IN EUROPE'S REGIONS

Since 1945, the U.S. political engagement and military presence have promoted Alliance cohesion as well as a coherent framework for defense in the Southern Region, an area characterized by a diffuse perception of the Soviet threat, a largely nonnuclear approach to strategy, and a variety of cross-cutting regional interests and conflicts.[2] Moreover, the problem of strategic coupling, a central issue for the Alliance as a whole, has always been most complex in the Southern Region where it has been essential to link security in the center and the south, as well as across the Atlantic. This double coupling has traditionally been provided by the U.S. nuclear and conventional presence in and around the Mediterranean. The Southern Region allies, even more than those elsewhere in Europe, have a strong stake in assuring a continued U.S. presence. The base at Crotone is seen to play a particularly valuable role in this regard, certainly because of its location but also as a prominent NATO initiative relevant to deterrence in both the Central and Southern regions. Such initiatives are important since the Southern Region countries have little desire to address the range of regional security problems that will exist in Europe after conventional force reductions without the close cooperation of allies.

THE MEDITERRANEAN AS A CENTER OF RESIDUAL AND NEW SECURITY CONCERNS

Security and security-related problems arising from North Africa, the Balkans, or the Middle East have always existed in the Southern Region. The waning of the Soviet threat and uncertainty about the future of existing security structures have encouraged attention to regional issues and at the same time removed much of the traditional context (containment) for addressing them. Moreover, the linkage between conventional arms control and

[2]In this sense NATO as a whole may be moving toward an approach to security long characteristic of the Southern Region. See Diego Ruiz Palmer and A. Grant Whieley, "The Balance of Forces in Southern Europe: Between Uncertainty and Opportunity," *The International Spectator*, January–March 1988; and Ian Lesser, *Changes in the Character of East-West Relations: Implications for NATO's Southern Region*, RAND, N-3133-FF, June 1990.

enhanced security is least automatic in the Southern Region. Because the Mediterranean allies perceive considerable threats to their security outside the East-West relationship, they tend to exhibit a conservative attitude toward arms control initiatives that might alter regional balances (e.g., between Spain and Morocco, Italy and Libya, Greece and Turkey, or Turkey and its Arab neighbors).

For most of the Southern Region countries, there has been a real, not merely a relative, growth in the perception of "nonshared" threats.[3] *In many areas conditions have changed or reverted to more traditional and dangerous patterns, raising the value of a visible tactical air presence in the Mediterranean.*

1. *Middle East and Southwest Asia.* In addition to the role of the Southern Region in the East-West strategic competition since 1945, the importance of the Mediterranean has also been defined by its proximity to centers of continuing and potential conflict in the Middle East and its value for communications to areas beyond, including Southwest Asia and the Indian Ocean. The current crisis in the Persian Gulf, with its implications for oil supply, provides a dramatic example of the value of bases and forces that can facilitate intervention in this vital region.[4] The multinational character of the response to Iraqi aggression may also presage a broader Allied interest in deterrence and defense along the Mediterranean-Persian Gulf axis, the maintenance of the 401st in the Southern Region, and expanded multinational operations at Crotone and elsewhere.

2. *The Balkans.* In contrast to the overthrow of the old order elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the political revolutions in Bulgaria and Romania are in large measure incomplete. In Albania, signs of dissent have yet to give way to serious change. Above all, there is concern, particularly in Italy, that a disintegration of the political arrangement in Yugoslavia would lead to a period of turmoil and lawlessness in the Adriatic region. Despite a strong interest in Balkan stability, Italy, Greece, and Turkey will find it difficult to intervene to restore order in a crisis unless it is in a coalition (NATO, European Community, or even Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe—CSCE) context. Thus, the risk of instability in the Balkans provides a strong rationale for multilateral approaches that place

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[3]Spanish observers tend to employ the term "nonshared threat" to describe their relations with North Africa. Similarly, Italian officials refer increasingly to the "threat from the south."

[4]A well-located facility in the Mediterranean can, for example, aid in the refueling and safe passage of transports en route to the Persian Gulf region, support airborne warning and control system (AWACS) operations, and serve as a base for long-range bombers and for air strikes against Libya, if required.

the interests and policies of Southern Region countries in a broader framework. In this context, the U.S. presence at Crotone, in addition to the presence of the Sixth Fleet, plays an important political reassurance role, demonstrating the U.S. commitment to stability in Europe's most dangerous region.

3. *The Eastern Mediterranean.* The waning of the Cold War will complicate the relationship between Greece and Turkey by reducing the importance of both countries in the East-West strategic competition and limiting the role of NATO as a force for restraint. In Greece, the perception of a Turkish threat remains high, while in Turkey the shift to a conservative government in Athens, hailed as a positive development across the Alliance, is viewed with concern (the Mitsotakis government will be able to count on greater support within the EC and NATO and thus, in the view of many Turks, will be tempted to adopt a more aggressive line toward Turkey). Turkey does stand to lose a great deal more than Greece as a result of changes in Europe, and the risk of Turkish alienation from the West in an era of detente and European integration (from which Turkey will probably be excluded) contributes to the potential for confrontation in the Aegean and elsewhere. Turkish cooperation in the Iraqi crisis reduces the risk of alienation in the short term; the longer-term consequences are less clear.

Perhaps most troubling, recognized in both Greece and Turkey, is the shift of the focus of the bilateral dispute from issues of sovereignty in the Aegean to the less easily managed problem of ethnic frictions in Thrace. The problem of crisis management in the eastern Mediterranean is becoming more complex, despite the apparently sincere interest of both governments in improved relations. Both countries have a strong interest in seeing the other "anchored" within enduring security structures (e.g., NATO) and restrained by the political and strategic relationship with the United States and the associated presence of air and naval forces in the Mediterranean.

4. *North Africa.* Concern is growing around the Southern Region (and in Europe as a whole) about the security and security-related problems flowing from North Africa. Of the direct security concerns, the increasing sophistication of conventional arsenals and the proliferation of ballistic missile, chemical, and possibly nuclear technology are most prominent. Libya is undoubtedly the chief worry, particularly for Italy, but the prospect of political instability elsewhere in the Maghreb is viewed with concern by France, Spain, and to a lesser extent Portugal.[5]

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[5]The recent victory of Islamic fundamentalists in Algerian elections and the growth of fundamentalist opposition elsewhere in North Africa have reinforced these perceptions. On the military side, Libyan acquisition of chemical weapons and air and missile systems of increasing range poses a growing threat to population centers in southern Europe.

The existence of the Spanish enclaves at Ceuta and Melilla on the Moroccan coast gives the notion of a "threat from the south" a concrete flavor for the Spanish foreign and security policy elite. While Socialist circles tend to concentrate on the problems of political and economic underdevelopment across the Mediterranean rather than direct security challenges, Spanish policymakers across the political spectrum are clearly beginning to think seriously about regional security in the western Mediterranean. French and Italian defense policies have long incorporated a strong Mediterranean and North African dimension.

Over the longer term, an important issue for Europe as a whole will be the consequences of the looming demographic imbalance between a "poor" North Africa and a "rich" Europe. Economic migrants from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt will almost certainly seek to enter an increasingly prosperous and barrier-free EC through its porous border along the Mediterranean. At the same time, EC efforts to restrict immigration may, it is feared, provoke a hostile response from politically and economically hard-pressed regimes in North Africa.[6] *Overall, our allies in southern Europe will prefer broader bilateral and multilateral initiatives to promote stability in North Africa rather than attempting to go it alone.* The vehicles available for pursuing cooperative approaches include regional coordination (e.g., among France, Spain, and Italy in the western Mediterranean), greater attention to "southern" issues within NATO, and, most important, a continuing U.S. role and presence around the Mediterranean. *If NATO moves toward a more multinational approach to operations, and at the same time renews its efforts to develop a concerted approach to out-of-area (and near out-of-area) problems, combined naval and air operations in which Crotone and the 401st TFW could play a valuable role will be increasingly attractive.*

5. *Turkish Perceptions.* Turkey's direct exposure to developments in the Middle East lends an additional strategic and operational dimension to the maintenance of the 401st TFW in the Southern Region. The broader challenges facing Turkey as a result of changes in the East-West relationship also reinforce the value of the U.S. presence in the region as a contribution to political reassurance.

With the decline of a direct threat from the Warsaw Pact and the deterioration of the political and military situation in the Middle East, there is a perception that Syria, Iraq, and Iran will pose an increasing security problem for Turkey. The contributing factors in this regard (leaving aside the obvious impetus provided by Iraqi actions) include the general

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[6]Spain, for example, worries about the potential linkage between the immigration issue and Moroccan policy on Ceuta and Melilla; the possibility of armed conflict over the enclaves is taken seriously.

growth of conventional arsenals in the region, the proliferation of chemical weapons and nuclear technology and the means of delivering such weapons at considerable range, and the militarization of Turkey's neighbors in the wake of the Gulf War. To these one might add the potential for friction over water supplies posed by Turkey's Southeast Anatolia Project (the Ataturk Dam) and the support given to Kurdish insurgents by Syria and Iraq. Some observers also see an Iranian hand in the recent activity of Islamic fundamentalists in Turkey. Finally, Turkish officials and planners continue to worry about the size and character of Soviet forces facing them in the east, as well as the possibility of instability in the southern Soviet republics that might affect Turkey.

6. *Oil and the Mediterranean.* Even before the current crisis in the Persian Gulf, officials around the Southern Region, particularly in Turkey, had begun to emphasize the growing use of pipelines terminating in the Mediterranean for the export of Iraqi oil.[7] Since nearly half of Europe's oil now arrives via the Mediterranean (including Suez), the security of this route is an important issue for the West as a whole. The future importance of this route will clearly depend on the resolution of the crisis in the Gulf and the nature of Iraqi oil exports over time. The continuing risks associated with shipment through Hormuz suggest that the use of pipelines to the Mediterranean will be a persistent trend over the longer term. Recognition of this trend has influenced the debate over security policy toward the Mediterranean across the Southern Region, most notably in Italy. Crotone is ideally sited to protect this vital line of communication for oil and very well situated to facilitate the protection of oil supplies at source in the Middle East.

HEDGING AGAINST ORGANIZATIONAL UNCERTAINTY

There is a widely shared concern in the Southern Region that a post-Cold War NATO, EC initiatives, and the CSCE process will be captured by issues of stability and development in Central and Eastern Europe, despite the existence of pressing security problems in the south. Southern Region allies are searching for ways to redress this potential imbalance. The U.S. presence at Crotone serves this purpose very well.

An initiative proposed by Spain, and supported by France and Italy, would involve a CSCE type of mechanism for the Mediterranean that would have two broad purposes: promoting political and economic development; and cooperation on security matters, principally in the western Mediterranean. Initial activities in the security realm might

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[7]Roughly half of Iraq's total daily exports of 2.7 million barrels had been passing through Turkish pipelines.

include confidence building measures, to be followed by arms control, possibly naval arms control, at a later stage. Apart from Spain, Italy, and France, where there is enthusiasm for this approach based on the sensible idea that the CSCE process must not be focused entirely on Central Europe, a Mediterranean conference is widely viewed as a nonstarter—politically impractical as a consequence of difficult issues of membership and Middle Eastern frictions, or merely a vehicle for Spanish political activism.

There is also some concern that in the emerging European environment Germany, with its growing economic, political, and ultimately strategic influence, will be cut off from constructive involvement in Mediterranean security. New initiatives toward the Mediterranean could promote German participation in the region. In the NATO context—in many ways a preferable vehicle for German involvement—Crotone could serve as a useful center for multinational activity.[8] Current multinational security initiatives in the Mediterranean include the French, Italian, and Spanish *Helios* satellite surveillance project and proposed cooperation on airborne warning and control systems.

If the Mediterranean is increasing in importance to Europe's overall security, NATO (and/or CSCE) ought to devote greater energy and resources to problems originating in the south. In reality, the rapid pace of change in Europe has already led to a diversion of political and economic attention from the Southern Region to Eastern Europe, and potentially the Soviet Union. On the strategic front, the effect has been less pronounced, largely because of the tangible regional security problems mentioned above, *but Southern Region countries still fear the tendency within the Alliance to view security in Central Front terms. In this context Crotone is welcomed as evidence of NATO's symbolic and material commitment to security outside Central Europe.*

HEDGING AGAINST SOVIET REASSERTIVENESS

The prevailing atmosphere of detente and arms control has naturally led officials and observers around the Southern Region to examine security issues arising from outside the East-West relationship. Nonetheless, Turkey remains concerned about the Soviet military threat on its borders, and both Portugal and Spain point out the continuing importance of Iberia and the western approaches to the Mediterranean for the rapid reinforcement of Europe in a crisis. Depending upon the character and location of the crisis, access to

[8]German aircraft already train in Sardinia, and German economic and political interests in Turkey are longstanding. Improved cooperation on out-of-area policy within NATO may also contribute to the "anchoring" of Germany.

facilities and unimpeded lines of communication to the central and eastern Mediterranean might also be essential. Even in an era of military disengagement in Europe, the Soviet Union is likely to continue to deploy substantial forces in or capable of reaching the Mediterranean, and the potential for superpower confrontation over regional crises will persist. Airpower based at Crotone would play a unique role: contributing to the deterrence of a residual Soviet threat *and* promoting security around the Mediterranean (and beyond), an excellent example of a "relevant" initiative for NATO and the United States.

ALLIED PERCEPTIONS OF CROTONE SUMMARIZED

Across the Southern Region there is continuing, even increasing, support for the presence of the 401st TFW. Specifically, Crotone is seen as important because:

1. It is tangible evidence of the U.S. commitment to the Southern Region. This is especially relevant in a period of uncertainty regarding future security arrangements and stability in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean.
2. It is a notable example of burdensharing and a possible avenue for multinational activity.
3. It contributes to the deterrence of a range of threats arising from North Africa and the Middle East.
4. It plays a specific political reassurance role in relation to Turkey.
5. It *provides an excellent hedge against the decline of the traditional U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean as a result of arms control or economics.*

The Southern Region allies also share a transcendent interest in preserving NATO and the U.S. presence as a means of binding together the security fate of Europe as a whole and avoiding the marginalization of their security concerns. Indeed, this imperative exists in inverse proportion to the extent of a country's integration and importance within the EC. Italy worries about keeping the United States engaged in the Mediterranean, but it does so from a broader European perspective. To a degree, the same is true of Spain. At the opposite extreme, Turkey, lacking the institutional alternative of "Europe," has the most obvious stake in existing security structures and deployments, particularly those involving U.S. forces.

Uncertainty about arrangements in Europe coupled with mounting anxiety over developments in North Africa and the Middle East (again, even before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait) have apparently served to solidify Allied support for Crotone. Whereas only a few months ago one could speculate on the willingness of the Italian government to envision a halt to the Crotone project in the face of conventional arms control (the "two-track approach") and a declining Soviet threat, the current outlook for support is more positive.[9]

LIKELY ALLIED RESPONSES TO GENERIC OPTIONS

There is likely to be substantial latitude with regard to tolerable options for Crotone in the view of Southern Region allies. Because the symbolism of the U.S. presence plays an extremely important role in Allied perceptions, it is the disposition of the 401st TFW as well as the base at Crotone that will be the focus of concern (leaving aside the political "sunk costs," which do play a role in Italy, especially in Calabria). Overall, more permanent presence in-region will be preferable to less; it is the perception of a strong and continuing U.S. and Allied commitment that matters. The following summarizes likely Southern Region responses to various generic options:

1. *Proceed with Crotone as planned.* This option can be expected to find wide support within the Alliance, particularly in the Southern Region.

2. *Proceed, but with a more austere facility.* Again, as long as the project moves forward, the precise character of the facilities will not be an important factor in political acceptance. One possible exception would be in Italy itself, which expects regional economic benefits of substantial construction and presence. Nonetheless, variations in the extent of the project and planned deployments are unlikely to provoke a collapse of support in the host country.

3. *Proceed, but without (or with a much reduced) permanent presence at Crotone, using it on a rotational basis only.* Because this option has a direct effect on the perception of the U.S. commitment to Mediterranean security, it is unlikely to be a preferred option from the Southern Region perspective but will probably be judged better than no presence at all. Moves in this direction may revive the dubious idea of using Crotone as a bargaining chip in arms control talks.

4. *Proceed, at whatever level of presence, but with a view toward multinational operations.* This approach is likely to be well received throughout the Alliance and can possibly contribute to a new NATO understanding on cooperation out of area. In narrower European terms, this option would be a natural

[9]The prospective elimination of ground-based nuclear forces has also raised the importance of residual air-based systems, including the dual-capable 401st TFW, an important issue in those quarters where the continued U.S. commitment to extended deterrence is a concern.

development of current thinking on the future of collective security and could be a useful vehicle for promoting German participation in Mediterranean affairs.

5. *Withdraw from the Crotone initiative and return the 401st TFW to the continental United States (CONUS).* Cancelling the move to Crotone would not provoke a political crisis within the Alliance, but it would be viewed with dismay in many quarters. It would also send the wrong sort of political signals at a time when Southern Region countries are concerned about the future of security arrangements in Europe and the future of bilateral relations with the United States. In NATO Europe as a whole, cancellation would be seen as an acceleration of the U.S. withdrawal from Europe and the failure of a valuable exercise in burdensharing. If cancellation is envisioned, it should be undertaken with the full consultation of Allies and announced as an Alliance response to changes in Europe and arms control opportunities.

OUT-OF-AREA ISSUES

For many officials and observers across the Southern Region, an element only rarely articulated is the perceived role of a U.S. air presence in the region in deterring aggression from across the Mediterranean. In Italy, Libya is the obvious concern, but here as elsewhere in the Alliance, so-called out-of-area issues are treated at arm's length, with the question of U.S. access to facilities in non-NATO contingencies a particularly difficult one.[10]

Over the past decade, Southern Region countries have become more explicit about restricting the use of bases and overflight rights to "NATO-related" purposes. Even in the case of Portugal, with its excellent history of bilateral cooperation on non-NATO access, there has been a movement toward a more European approach, in which it is increasingly unlikely that access would be granted in a sensitive out-of-area crisis unless it was in accordance with wider action by Portugal's EC partners. The result of this trend is that the issue of out-of-area access has become more difficult, just as the likelihood of traditional NATO scenarios is declining and the possibility of intervention outside Europe is increasing. The imperatives of strategic logic and political acceptance have been difficult to reconcile, limiting the ability of Allied governments to articulate the full rationale for the presence of the 401st at Crotone.

It is perhaps too early to speculate on the effect of the Iraqi aggression in the Gulf and the Allied response on attitudes toward out-of-area cooperation and base access. At a minimum, the crisis will have demonstrated that NATO can cooperate very effectively in cases where interests coincide; judgments about the prospects for access based on the

[10]"Out of area," a term of art within the Alliance, is not necessarily a helpful one in seeking to foster a broader purview for the Alliance.

experience of 1973 or the Libyan action may have been too pessimistic. One possible outcome of the current crisis may well be the development of a new approach to extra-European security issues in the Alliance and perhaps a redefinition of NATO's role in embracing multinational operations to promote regional security outside the traditional NATO geographical area but within the area of common interests of the Allies. The presence of the 401st TFW and the associated facilities at Crotone could play an important role in this context.

In broader terms, it will be more difficult to ask our Southern Region allies to cooperate in non-NATO contingencies if we draw down forces committed to their defense. This consideration becomes more central as potential adversaries in North Africa and the Middle East acquire unconventional weapons and longer-range and more sophisticated delivery systems. Indeed, the proliferation issue raises the importance of airpower based at Crotone as a deterrent in being, but also further complicates the environment for out-of-area access. A Libyan threat to use chemical weapons against Rome or Naples could give Italian decisionmakers pause in relation to a U.S. request for access in a North African crisis.

In sum, the problem of out-of-area access is unlikely to disappear; considerable political and public acceptance issues will remain, most obviously in relation to Arab-Israeli contingencies. Yet growing concern about security outside the East-West competition coupled with the precedent for cooperation provided by the current crisis in the Gulf (all against the background of a mounting interest in new approaches to regional security in NATO) suggest that the climate on this question may be improving in ways that will increase the usefulness of facilities at Crotone to the United States and the Alliance as a whole.

DETERRENCE

Ultimately, judgments about the value of the U.S. air presence at Crotone will turn on perceptions of its value as a deterrent by Allies and potential adversaries. To be most credible, the deterrence of regional threats should be in-region and not solely reliant on a retaliatory capability based in the United States. Proximity also matters with regard to the reassurance of Allies, and this in turn tends to reinforce Allied cohesion, itself an important component of deterrence.[11]

[11]The deployment of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf cannot fail to be noted in Tripoli, further reinforcing the credibility of Mediterranean-based deterrents.

In broader terms, the U.S. presence at Crotone contributes to a balanced distribution of conventional and nuclear deterrent forces in Europe. This is a useful hedge against inevitable reduction in the U.S. military presence in Central Europe and even helps to contain pressures for further reductions by addressing German concerns about "singularity."

III. A U.S. FACILITY AT CROTONE: FUNCTIONS, OPTIONS, AND COSTS

INTRODUCTION

The current operational concept for the new installation envisions the transfer not only of the 401st TFW from Torrejon[1] but also the roster of missions, contingency plans, and operational concepts embodied in the 401st. In this section, we examine alternatives to this operational resume in light of the changing strategic and resource matrix.

Not only is the preservation of existing USAF Southern Region capabilities a centrally important goal, but also an expanded concept of operations for forces at Crotone—forces not limited to the 401st or elements thereof—should be entertained as a matter of high priority. It is not necessary that a full expansion scheme be pursued from the start, provided, of course, that options for future augmentation of the Crotone facility are not prematurely foreclosed. In fact, one approach that reconciles both some of the immediate concerns about defense resources and the issue of best exploiting the great potential of the Crotone installation would be to design a building block implementation concept for that base. The program would begin with an initially austere concept, with subsequent decisions about when and how to expand facilities and/or operations awaiting resolution of various current uncertainties.

If budgetary pressures make it necessary to pursue an austere Crotone option, that should probably take the form of an austere operational concept (e.g., the rotation of squadrons of the 401st TFW, the majority of which would be based stateside), rather than an austere base. Obviously, once the base is in hand, expanded operations are possible, but long-term prospects along such lines are jeopardized by down-scaled infrastructure. Moreover, the indirect costs of any base design that were to scrimp on facilities could in the long run add up to more than neutralize any such savings from such early corner-cutting.

Regardless of which course unfolds, it will be important to understand Crotone's relevance in full multimission and multinational contexts. Crotone will of course retain its original purpose, which was to provide a way to preserve important USAF capabilities in support of NATO's Southern Region, but the strategic emphasis of the future should be on a *broad range of contingencies*. This is evident from both the various gradual trends that have been at work since the Warsaw Pact began to unwind and from the more abrupt early

[1]That is, its 72 primary authorized aircraft wing and some 5000 personnel.

indications provided by the Persian Gulf crisis. A very broadly defined and flexible concept for Crotone operations may offer strategic, military, political, and resource advantages that outweigh the possible costs of even the most ambitious expanded Crotone option. These advantages, however, seem to pale with the narrowing of the concept for Crotone operations.

OPTIONS FOR SOUTHERN REGION BASE POLICY

The prospects for general conflict in Europe have waned with the changing strategic situation. However, retaining options for supporting full-scale USAF operations in support of continuing NATO requirements remains necessary for the sake of deterrence and for the sake of assuring, at an appropriate cost, a sound residual "New NATO" posture.[2] To the extent that Crotone can support the usual functions associated with such operations, planning for the installation should reflect them. These include but are not limited to support (operational, logistical, etc.) for the tenant unit in a range of traditional and novel NATO-oriented requirements, communications support, housing and other support for mobilization personnel en route to other forward locations, possible provision for medical support and evacuation logistics, and logistical support for other forward deployed units in the Southern Region and for post-operational recovery and reconstitution. If the base is ever to support units with a theater-oriented nuclear mission, the prerequisites also must be provided.[3] Some of these measures (e.g., base security) will overlap with requirements for other missions, but other requirements will be unique.

Notwithstanding the continuing relevance of the 401st TFW/Crotone capability to NATO's requirements, it is desirable to view the Crotone option in terms of larger U.S. Southern Region basing requirements, resources, and options, many of which extend in importance beyond traditional NATO considerations. The post-World War II military problems with which the United States has been confronted have not only revolved around the major contingencies (principally NATO and Korea) for which we have planned, but from time to time have involved other types of operations. These contingencies have had many vexing characteristics, including their unpredictability and the demands they place on the flexibility of the U.S. posture. U.S. Air Force units, by virtue of their many capabilities

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[2]For a discussion of the role of NATO in future U.S. security strategy, see Robert A. Levine and David Ochmanek, *Toward a Stable Transition in Europe: A Conservative/Activist Strategy for the United States,* RAND, N-3106-AF, July 1990.

[3]These would include weapons storage areas, central security control facilities, appropriate command posts, and secure/alert squadron and other areas.

and the speed and great reach their units can bring to bear on situations, have figured centrally in such contingencies.[4] USAF and national preparedness has been a hallmark of planning in the modern environment in a range of atypical, unplanned, and unexpected situations from the major conflicts of Vietnam and Korea down through lesser combat operations (*Urgent Fury* (Grenada), *Just Cause* (Panama), and *Eldorado Canyon* (the 1986 joint USAF/USN attack on Libya)), on to crisis management, humanitarian, and other roles. The requirement to prepare for contingencies other than the main canonical ones used for planning overall U.S. posture and employment options is not new.

With the passing of the Cold War, the need to think in such flexible strategic terms will grow in importance, especially with certain local military balances no longer constrained by the tense but nonetheless stable superpower standoff.

NATO too is now in the process of revamping its strategic foundations, reflecting not only the devolution of the traditional Warsaw Pact threat, but also the increasing movement toward European unification, resource constraints, etc. Both the United States and its NATO Allies face the imperative of thinking more flexibly about future military requirements. Nothing highlights these issues more than the recent response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The United States has had to explore new political, strategic, and military options in implementing operation *Desert Shield.* Such activities have been closely coordinated with an unprecedented range of other powers, including many in NATO. Although *Desert Shield* may represent something approximating the "high end" of contingencies, it nonetheless drives home the point that unilaterally or multinationally, the United States and its friends and Allies must be prepared for a broad range of possibilities. The preparations and capabilities afforded by NATO arrangements are not irrelevant to the challenges of the post-Cold War world, yet adaptations are necessary and improvements are possible.

Within this evolving strategic context, options for U.S., USAF, and NATO capabilities need to be viewed in new terms. The concept for the proposed Crotone installation should therefore be cast in such larger strategic terms. In view of the forces of change under way in the world, a detailed assessment of long-term base structure needs in this region is essential. Such an assessment is beyond the scope of this study, but it is possible to identify certain functions that should be associated with a rationalized base

[4]For a historical inventory of these contributions, see *The United States Air Force and U.S. National Security, 1947–1989,* paper prepared by the Secretary of the Air Force's Staff Group, September 1990.

structure. *The Crotone option needs to be viewed in terms of its larger strategic ramifications over an extended period and not as a short-term issue determined by contemporary political and resource constraints.*

We shall review four options. The points listed below are actually more along the lines of "outcomes" to the ongoing debate over Crotone. The options are not discrete: Adoption of one or another does not *necessarily* exclude subsequent adjustments to Crotone or changes in the operations based at Crotone, depending on developments. Nor are the options inconsistent: For instance, an "austere" Crotone concept could be designed with a surge contingency-oriented capability in mind, or with a second round of improvements programmed, or something else.

1. *Pursue the existing plan fully*. Maintain the present plan to acquire and construct the facility as approved by NATO, and move the full 401st TFW to the installation on the original schedule.

2. *Abandon the Crotone/401st redeployment plan entirely*, redeploying the 401st to CONUS in 1992, either for rebasing at an existing base (or, far less likely, a new one) or for disbandment (with the F-16C/Ds of the 401st possibly being distributed among stateside units).

3. *Pursue the existing plan but with some degree of "austerity" in the ultimate alternative capability maintained.* Austerity here can refer either to the installation itself or to a reduced (e.g., rotational) concept of operations for the unit given a more or less full Crotone installation. Each offers some cost savings (at least in the near term), and the two austerity concepts can be combined.

4. *Pursue some variant of the existing plan*, but with certain augmentations made in the proposed concept of operations that could greatly enhance both U.S. and NATO flexibility and capability in the Southern/Mediterranean regions (and beyond).

Assessment of These Options

Option 1: Pursue the Existing Plan Fully

From a political point of view, this plan is probably dead. Congressional resistance to the plan appears to derive from two main sources: (1) concerns about spending funds to build a new overseas base when defense resources are declining (and stateside bases and units are programmed for closing, reorganization, or disestablishment); and (2) opposition to a base that was devised in the "old days" of NATO (on the assumption that the base, "guilty by association," somehow has become as anachronistic as some other parts of the Alliance). Arguing against this viewpoint are: (1) the continuing existence of valid NATO

requirements; and (2) the political consequences of dropping out of a plan that NATO has decided to underwrite and that, in the Alliance's eyes, remains a good idea. Proponents of the base have argued that unilateral rejection of this plan is not an ideal way to begin the 1990s, which will see a lot of reflection on the ultimate future roles, meaning, and requirements of the Alliance. But this argument alone does not seem likely to sway Crotone's most resolute critics.

Option 2: Abandon the Crotone/401st Redeployment Plan Entirely

Nothing is assumed about the ultimate disposition of the 401st, although it is not unreasonable to assume that the wing would stand down, with its assets distributed among other units. From many critics' perspective, this option would save some funds, and there might be some other modest home-district advantages. The disadvantages are that it would sacrifice not only the specific set of capabilities now located at Torrejon, but it would set a poor precedent for future NATO burdensharing options, could cause considerable strategic and political ill-feeling and dislocation, and would sacrifice a large range of potential contingency-related capabilities. In general, the savings afforded by this option are so small compared with the strategic, military, and political downside that it must be counted as the least desirable option.

Option 3: Design and Implement an "Austere" Crotone Concept

Mindful of the issues raised in Options 1 and 2, congressional and DoD leadership have ordered an examination of possible austere concepts for the Crotone installation. However, it is unclear exactly what "austere" may mean. There are two ways to view the concept. First, one might conceive of it in terms of an austere facility, one that does not provide many nonessential combat capability-related infrastructure elements meant to enhance the quality of life of those stationed at the base, including family housing and recreational facilities. Down-scaling Crotone in this fashion would save a limited amount of money. However, the long-term and more indirect costs of these items might be considerably larger than any short-run construction savings in terms of reduced retention, poor morale, etc.

The second way of viewing an "austere" Crotone concept is from the vantage point of an austere concept of base operations. It is unclear exactly what form these adjustments might take, and there are many possibilities. Base construction would proceed more or less as planned, but fewer forces than are now programmed might be located at the facility under

day-to-day circumstances. One option might be to remove the majority of the 401st TFW to some existing CONUS base, rotating one squadron at a time to the theater on a 4–5 month temporary duty basis. The advantages of this are partially in terms of savings. Forward units involve some additional costs over stateside ones.[5] There would not be the same requirement for new, dependent-related, and other such facilities and support needs.

Certain operational penalties would accompany a rotational scheme. For example, it might not be possible to maintain some operational or training tempos, and alert duties might also be out of the question were, say, the single unit in residence to be on a forward training deployment somewhere in the Southern Region. There are many possible permutations on this option (e.g., rotating units from other parent wings and squadrons including, possibly, guard and reserve units). To our knowledge, little detailed information exists on the full range of cost and operational benefits and liabilities of such an initiative, and in our view they merit detailed examination.

Option 4: An Expanded Crotone Concept

To date, most public discussion on the military virtues of a USAF facility at Crotone has revolved around existing, rather narrow plans. It is useful, therefore, to describe concepts for operations at Crotone in some detail. There is nothing new with the idea of a Crotone that would do more than simply serve as a new home for the "steady state" 401st TFW and its various missions and responsibilities. As the use of Torrejon Air Base as an important link in the ongoing reinforcement of U.S. Persian Gulf forces demonstrates, one need not have a formally articulated plan for any particular additional roles for the base, providing the facility may be used for contingency-related purposes. Moreover, in the debate over Crotone (as it existed through 1 August 1990), an expanded concept seemed so much in contradiction with the intent of many in Congress that the prospects for even the full original plan seemed doubtful.

However, given developments associated with *Desert Shield* and the new attention that situation should focus on contingency requirements in general, it is worthwhile to think through the possibilities for an expanded Crotone concept. Such a concept is an increasingly attractive option in light of the increased demand for USAF, U.S., and coalition capabilities of a highly flexible and responsive nature in an environment of new resource, political, and other constraints. It is also useful to cast the facility's roles and functions in light of the

[5]Some of these "savings" are in fact the result of different accounting conventions used for forward vs. U.S. deployed units. The actual cash difference might be less.

political, strategic, and military needs of a "new NATO." Such needs suggest the advantages of a flexible Crotone, able to support a broad array of U.S. and multinational missions.

As the United States and NATO confront a new world of security challenges, the United States should contemplate its future basing (as well as force structure) options in the context of regional, if not global, requirements. Such requirements should reflect the full range of missions that the United States might wish to undertake or support from what will evolve as a politically stable and financially supportable worldwide strategic deployment concept. By virtue of its central location and the ability to shape its configuration *de novo*, Crotone provides an opportunity to consolidate several functions, compensating for adjustments in regional base structure, enhancing flexibility, and providing important surge potential for unforeseen contingencies outside of those planners have traditionally prepared for. In the case of Crotone, these options can be arrayed in an ascending ladder of options:

1. *An expanded USAF-specific base of operations* for both NATO and other contingencies.

2. *A base for support of U.S. joint operations and capabilities* in both NATO and other contingencies.

3. *A base for expanded multinational and combined peacetime preparedness, training, and operations*, primarily configured toward NATO requirements but also, depending on circumstances, to include out-of-area operations as well.

Crotone As an Expanded USAF Installation. The role played by such facilities as Kadena, Clark, and the like during the Vietnam conflict gives a feel for the full range of missions that might be sited at a centrally located installation like Crotone.[6] This would argue both for an explicit, expanded concept of operations for Crotone (though that might not be inconsistent with an austere concept of operations for the 401st TFW), and also certain construction and other infrastructure measures associated with such expanded operations. For instance, would the currently planned facility provide the ramp space, refueling support, and other capabilities needed to support operations by a range of USAF aircraft operating from, or transiting through, Crotone? How many "heavy" aircraft (bombers, tankers, and transports) could be housed at the facility? How much of a crisis,

[6]During the height of *Linebacker II*, for instance, some 155 B-52s were stationed at Andersen AFB alone, although not in any dispersed configuration. This illustration alone suggests how the availability of sufficient ramp and support resources can profoundly facilitate operations.

alert, readiness, and peacetime training operation could the base feasibly support in a range of circumstances? The detailed assessment of such issues is beyond the scope of this preliminary treatment, but consideration should be given to the provision for the ultimate acquisition of such capabilities. Above all, such possibilities should not be foreclosed before a detailed reassessment of requirements.

Such a study should reflect worldwide and regional U.S. base structure, which, so far as NATO and other regional facilities goes, is in the process of substantial change. In recent years, more and more factors have combined to place pressures on the U.S. defense establishment to rationalize and streamline its global basing structure and to contend with frequent problems arising from activities of forces at those bases: low-level flight operations, damage to civilian property during field training exercises, storage of noxious weapons or materials, environmental quality considerations, changing local economic imperatives, anti-Americanism, etc. Beginning with the legacy of forward bases deriving from World War II, the U.S. overseas base structure grew rapidly during the 1950s. So far as USAF bases were concerned, major determinants of this growth were, first, the acquisition of facilities for operation of U.S. nuclear deterrent forces, and second (in the 1960s), the reconfiguration of overseas base structure in light of the increasingly important conventional deterrence mission. Excluding certain (often temporary) acquisitions such as Vietnam-related facilities, special-purpose installations in Europe, and facilities associated with the CENTCOM contingency, the general pattern in overseas base structure has been toward a leaner overall base structure.[7] At the same time, overseas force deployments have not had a parallel decline.[8] Thus, the story to date seems to be one of increasing consolidation, rationalization, and reconfiguration. In the future, pressures on both posture and base structure will compel extensive reassessment of total posture and deployment needs.

As *Desert Shield* demonstrates, another important requirement for the future USAF posture will be in the area of strategic and theater mobility needs. By virtue of its central location, Crotone would be especially well suited to the support of a broad array of airlift

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[7]USAF overseas installation counts have declined generally: Worldwide, in 1965 the USAF maintained some 60 major overseas installations; by 1975, this number had declined to 35, where it has remained more or less since then (with the exception of sites related to ground-launched cruise missiles—GLCMs).

[8]Indeed, overseas deployed TFW-equivalents ran to about half of the active posture before the Vietnam buildup, to a little more than 40 percent of the active force structure in the mid-1970s, to close to three-fifths of active units in the mid-1980s.

operations. Table 1 reveals the superiority of the Crotone installation for such operations compared with Torrejon or some other representative base further west. Shown is the smallest lifter required (given a full or nearly full payload and flying on a great circle route) to travel from either Crotone or Torrejon to selected destinations throughout the European Command/CENTCOM areas, followed by a return leg to a base (or refueling track) located one-half the distance from the base of origin (a 1-1/2 way mission).[9] Also shown is the maximum range, again, on a 1-1/2 way mission of a V-22 aircraft (operating "short take off" with a 20K lb payload). By using Crotone rather than Torrejon, we convert what would be tanker-dependent strategic airlift operations into tactical lift problems independent of tanker support in many circumstances. Given a declining posture, the potentially great demands that might be placed on strategic airlift assets (as is amply clear from *Desert Shield*), and possible diversion of tankers to strategic airlift and combat support, the advantages of the more centrally located Crotone base are most apparent.

Table 1

COMPARISON OF CROTONE AND TORREJON AS AN IMPORTANT HUB OF USAF LIFT OPERATIONS

	Crotone		Torrejon	
Destination	Lifter	V-22 Mission Feasibility	Lifter	V-22 Mission Feasibility
Lajes	R/F Req'd[a]	No	C-130	Yes
Dover	R/F Req'd	No	R/F Req'd	No
Helenikon	C-130	Yes	C-141	No
Ben Gurion	C-130	Yes	R/F Req'd	No
Dharan	C-17	No	R/F Req'd	No
Izmir	C-130	Yes	C-141	No
Incirlik	C-130	Yes	R/F Req'd	No
Cairo West	C-130	Yes	C-130	No
Baghdad	C-130[b]	No	R/F Req'd	No
Frankfurt	C-130	Yes	C-130	Yes

[a]Approaching the outer range of envelope for this type of aircraft.
[b]Aerial refueling or ground staging of an outsize lifter.

[9]In terms of ascending range with full payload, the aircraft compare as follows: C-130 < C-141 < C-5A < C-17. The range figures are nominal "book values" and do not include the effects of extensive routing, range reductions attributable to extreme weather, etc.

Crotone is also well suited for provision of a range of supporting operations, including:

- The operation of AWACS and interceptors to provide safe passage through the region for transports and other deploying air and maritime forces.
- Support of tanker operations to facilitate movement of transports and tactical aviation units en route to forward locations.
- Operating and recovery bases for long-range bomber aircraft.
- Support of intelligence, targeting, electronic warfare, and other aircraft.
- Staging of transports and other combat units (to reduce base burdens that may accumulate at other installations and to free up aerial tankers for other missions).

Although Crotone is not intended to serve as a main operating base for combat operations, it is well located for a range of tactical air force and bomber deployments and even operational missions with and without refueling support through a large region.

Crotone and Joint U.S. Operations. The base's central location makes it particularly well suited for the support of a broad array of joint U.S. missions in the Mediterranean and adjacent waters. With an inevitable U.S. Navy posture drawdown in the cards, there are obvious advantages in thinking of Crotone as a "joint" facility.[10]

Crotone as a Multinational (NATO) Facility. By virtue of its location and the conditions surrounding its conception and implementation, Crotone could be an important first step in the definition of the terms for a "new NATO" more appropriate to the post-Cold War requirements of the Alliance. One area meriting some attention is combined training and doctrinal development. Currently, U.S. and Allied training installations are dispersed through the Southern Region. With a major "off-site" NATO training range either at Konya or at Goose Bay falling victim to the outbreak of peace, it may make some sense to support a fully instrumented, multifunction (including electronic warfare) training range for the use of all NATO members somewhere in the Southern Region. In addition to supporting any permanent or rotational units, Crotone is a logical site for staging operations to and from such a range.

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[10]Some of these do not require any adjustment in the overall concept for Crotone as it now exists. For instance, Crotone would be well suited for temporary duty deployments of the Navy's DACT F-16N units.

Beyond such requirements, an enhanced Crotone option could also be configured to everyone's advantage as a true multinational enterprise. In fact, Crotone might be viewed as a prototypical concept for certain aspects of the modern Alliance. For instance, two of the areas in which NATO has always had an interest (but that have been somewhat overshadowed by the traditional NATO planning process) are the requirements for a more multinational approach to planning and implementation and preparing for a broader range of threats to the Atlantic Alliance than the canonical Central Front general war scenario. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait highlights both of these points clearly. The response to this act of aggression has involved (1) a true multilateral response and (2) an indirect, economic threat to all members of the Alliance (and, indeed, to the world community at large). The importance of a resource like Crotone for enhancing not only a U.S. but a coalition response to such challenges cannot be stressed too highly. Cast from the beginning as a flexible, Alliance resource and not just a U.S. capability of a certain type that happens to reside physically and organizationally within NATO, joint and combined capabilities will be invaluable for security in the future and will do much to support the rational retooling of strategy, doctrine, and operational concepts.[11]

We further believe that, with few exceptions, the factors likely to affect overall U.S. and NATO military capabilities enhance the value of a permanent U.S. presence at the Crotone installation. These factors include contraction of the European-U.S. base structure in general, the budget-driven decline in the Navy's available carrier force, and the strategic and political requirement that NATO credibly redefine its role away from the canonical Soviet-led threat to a larger conceptualization of security requirements and objectives. In other words, to best meet the uncertain demands of the future, it is desirable to build a solid foundation for joint and combined operations into our posture, and not to rely on cobbled together schemes whose resilience in untested contingencies has been less than fully desirable.

In addition to this array of possibilities, we ought to consider some ancillary functions and capabilities that might be supported from a Crotone installation:

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[11]It is not too extreme to suggest the possibilities for a Crotone facility in supporting various objectives associated in the past with the now-deactivated NATO Tactical Leadership Program operation. Similarly, if proper training ranges, range instrumentation, etc. were to be located suitably near Crotone, Crotone could be the home base or a staging base for the conduct of NATO "Red Flag"-style training and exercise operations.

- *A full range of U.S. and multinational support and logistical capabilities for both peacetime and wartime needs.* Such support would include storage of equipment, munitions, supplies, etc.; housing and processing of mobilization personnel and personnel in transit to forward locations and evacuating out of forward locations; and provision of a secure rear-area facility for equipment repair, personnel rotation and relief, medical support, etc.

- *Housing and maintenance of particular mission aircraft.* All three U.S. services have procured and are procuring certain special-mission air vehicles. Such aircraft have particular security, operational, logistical, and other requirements. Providing staging/operating facilities for such forces (e.g., secure hangar and ramp areas) is one option for an augmented Crotone mission. Crotone's isolated coastal location renders it quite appropriate to the operations of such units.

- *Provision of various "civil" aviation capabilities.* Again, Crotone's location means that it is well suited for the conduct of search and rescue, weather reconnaissance, and other assorted operations. Such capabilities would inevitably pay political dividends (e.g., the positive image of USAF assistance to regional maritime emergencies).

- *Airspace control and early warning.* Given the sparse air traffic burden of the area in which Crotone would be located, Crotone approach control and surveillance resources could augment Italian (and European) civil, and NATO military, airspace management systems.

- *Support of limited ground force (including special operational forces—SOF) operations in the immediate region.* For instance, Crotone could be used as a support facility for the "Allied Command Europe" Mobile Force or its successor, for special forces teams (SOFs operating from Crotone could deploy from that base and recover without staging in combat-loaded CV-22s to operational locations in North Africa, and could fly to points in the Middle East with a return recovery location).

This menu of scenarios suggests that Crotone be designed and configured with both the operational and logistical requirements of diverse contingencies in mind (with the runways, ramp space, and support equipment to handle the largest and heaviest of USAF aircraft, and so on). In the event of an extended Southern Region-Mediterranean contingency, it might be possible to improve Crotone to provide certain secure rear-area functions—for instance, for aerial refuelers (operating similarly to Clark, Andersen, and Kadena during the Vietnam conflict), including crew rest and recreation, medical support, maintenance, modification, and battle damage and other logistical work. Although these capabilities may not be part of the initial construction concept, they should be at least considered.

A BUILDING BLOCK CONCEPT FOR CROTONE

Whatever our ultimate objectives, and whatever near-term constraints we might face, it is important to keep in mind the value of committing in principle to proceeding with the base.

The nature of base construction and deployment planning works in favor of incremental options. Compared with other investment programs (aside from operational, beddown, political, and other considerations), basing decisions can often be implemented in a highly incremental fashion with minimal disruption to the initiative as a whole, providing decisions or inactions that foreclose such options do not intervene. Congressional approval even if only for the time being for an austere, minimalist Crotone/401st project would be sufficient not only to address current requirements, but also to conduct a thorough assessment of worldwide requirements. This would also send a salutary signal to our Allies.

SOME COST IMPLICATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE CROTONE CONFIGURATIONS

The savings involved in an austere basing configuration are quite modest compared with, say, sea-based alternatives or the life-cycle costs of even a rotational presence. They are sufficiently small that varying assumptions characterizing the larger planning problem (e.g., more carrier days in the Mediterranean) dominate the range of possible cost outcomes for the Crotone base.

Many of the costs involved in austere basing concepts for Crotone are indirect ones (e.g., reduced personnel retention caused by lengthy, unaccompanied tours of rotational squadrons). However, the size of these indirect costs' effects may or may not dominate the extra costs of going with a greater rather than lesser Crotone concept.

The Costs of Alternative USAF Deployment Concepts for the Southern Region

The total cost of moving the wing to Crotone, at current exchange rates, is estimated at $1-1/3 billion, the U.S. share of which would be roughly $350–375 million (not including some costs associated with moving personnel and equipment, along with, for example, MAC units from Torrejon, for which NATO will not pay). Some estimates have placed the ultimate cost to the United States of the move from Torrejon as high as $500 million.[12] The NATO infrastructure fund normally supports the construction of "mission-essential"

[12]See, for instance, General Accounting Office, *Costs of Relocating the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing*, GAO/NSIAD-89-225, Washington, D.C., September 1989, p. 2.

facilities only. The existing Crotone agreement goes considerably beyond this to include the construction of barracks and other facilities for U.S. personnel, the construction of a new runway and aprons, hangars, etc.

Regarding various Crotone/401st options, unpublished RAND research by Charles Kelley has indicated several important facts about the costs of alternative European forward basing concepts. To summarize:

1. The incremental costs of basing a TFW at an overseas location rather than in the continental United States total about $200 million per year because of different pay and allowances, accounting rules that allocate more of the costs of overseas bases to base operations, and various other unique effects (foreign currency exchange and fluctuations, higher local cost of, say, energy, etc.).

2. The costs to the United States to construct the baseline Crotone main operational base (MOB) amount to about $300 million (one time). By opting for an austere U.S. MOB at Crotone, the total one-time savings to NATO might be on the order of $25 million (of which the U.S. "share" would be less than $10 million, if the current cost-sharing scheme were adopted). The costs of an expanded presence are unknown, as are the cost-sharing aspects of such a plan among participating U.S. services and Allies.

3. To design Crotone as a rotational MOB would yield a one-time construction savings to NATO on the order of $200 million (with about $80 million representing savings to the United States, all things being equal).

4. The annual savings in terms of operations of a scaled-down (austere) MOB at Crotone would be $25 million.

5. The annual savings in terms of operations of a rotational base at Crotone would run to $60–110 million compared with a full Crotone MOB, and $120–170 million per year if one squadron were rotated from an existing U.S. MOB to a rotational Crotone MOB (with each squadron of the 401st deploying every four months and the other two remaining stateside).

In summary, and assuming that the 401st TFW is not demobilized outright, fairly substantial savings (more than $1.5 billion over ten years) are possible only if the 401st can be redeployed to an existing USAF CONUS base, and if the rotational base at Crotone is fully available as planned (that the prospect of only one TFS at a time deployment at the base does not lead the Italians or NATO to terminate the plan). Simply scaling down the Crotone base would not produce commensurate savings and might even cost a great deal in the long run because the majority of what constitutes "scaled-back" measures in fact adversely affect the quality of life of the personnel stationed at Crotone and their dependents. This would have some inevitable downside when it came to personnel retention and possibly

reduced combat readiness on account of morale effects. Currently, some USAF personnel (e.g., in Korea) serve one-year unaccompanied tours; we were unable to find data indicating what effects that had on personnel career choices, though several unfavorable anecdotal findings came to light. A scaled-back base also might involve the degradation of the base's utility as a contingency installation, which would have other indirect effects (barring the ability to rapidly accommodate for such diminished capacity).[13]

Options for an "Operationally Austere" Crotone Facility

A rotational "dual based" concept has the promise for some savings. In determining the desirability of this option, many factors need to be quantified, including:

- Whether the NATO/Italian offer to support the base would receive continued support (if a U.S. presence at the base and in the Southern Region is one of the priorities behind this support). The meaning of a suitable "presence" would have to be determined and agreed upon by all concerned.

- Whether a satisfactory stateside base could be found. (The proposed contraction of the tactical air forces posture, from around 38 TFW to as few as 25 or even 22, might create many suitable base "vacancies.")

- Whether the operational degradations involved in rotating forces in and out of the theater would be deemed acceptable. On the one hand, there would be some unknown reduction in mission effectiveness simply as the arriving rotational TFS got to know its way around its temporary facility and surrounding airspace. On the other hand, some might argue that the practice in rapid deployment gained as a result of unit rotation (and, depending on the siting of the rest of the wing, possibly superior access to training and other resources) could enhance combat capability.

- The nature of the routine peacetime activities envisioned for units located at Crotone. For instance, the in-theater units might be hard-pressed to engage in training and joint coordination preparations if there was a simultaneous requirement to maintain a short-notice air defense or nuclear alert responsibility.

- What an emphasis on a contingency-oriented concept of operations for both Europe and the CENTCOM region requires, from a strategic perspective.

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[13]For instance, if for some reason an austere Crotone were to be rendered unsuitable for support of airlift operations into the Central Command area of responsibility, it might place added logistical burdens on other bases, require more tankers to support a sustained airlift (at the expense of the other use of those tankers), require airlifters to fly with reduced payloads, etc. Thorough review of such issues would obviously be in order.

The cost to the United States of operating the 401st or certain other units through Crotone on a rotational basis—$1.5 billion over ten years—is no trivial sum. This amount is, however, marginal when compared with either (1) the cost over ten years of operating a full TFW (with all overhead and pro rata costs included) of between $2.75 and $3.50 billion or (2) the total USAF military construction budget (in recent years about $1.5 billion). Obviously, cost alone cannot be a metric for making these decisions, but over the long run, the costs of Crotone are not major ones for the United States and its Allies, whereas the installation itself may have major strategic value. In other words, depending on the outcomes of detailed analysis, Crotone may in fact be a bargain.

Figure 1 describes the downstream costs of various basing and operational concepts for Crotone. At the top of the figure are cumulative costs in budget authority (millions of $FY91) for alternative configurations defined in terms of the combined costs of the Crotone base, plus the costs of units to be based there, and selected alternative dispositions of the 401st TFW. Option A would involve immediate termination of the base construction plan, plus return of 401st to CONUS (followed by disbandment.)[14] Except for options A and B, the options tend to cluster into a fairly narrow envelope (from $2.1 to $2.5 billion over five years). The shaded "range of uncertainty" shown in some cases reflects either uncertainty about the nature of an enhanced Crotone concept (for Option F) or uncertain indirect operational costs associated primarily with austere deployments and austere basing options as a consequence of such factors as reduced personnel retention.

The second part of this figure shows the year-to-year costs of all options (except Option A), with the outlays broken down into investment (primarily military construction) designated "I," and operational costs (both personnel and operations and maintenance) shown by the "O" column. The shaded areas show the variance in costs, depending on which option is being considered. Regardless of which option is selected, the investment (construction) costs are substantially less than the operational costs associated with the force structure that might or might not occupy a Crotone facility of some sort or another. The base and its construction may not be cheap, but compared with the operational costs for either tenant or rotating units, such costs are relatively minor.

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[14]The costs of Option A, even though it assumes the immediate deactivation of the 401st, still run into several hundred million dollars because of cancellation costs of base development efforts already begun and costs of redeploying the TFW stateside for final disposition.

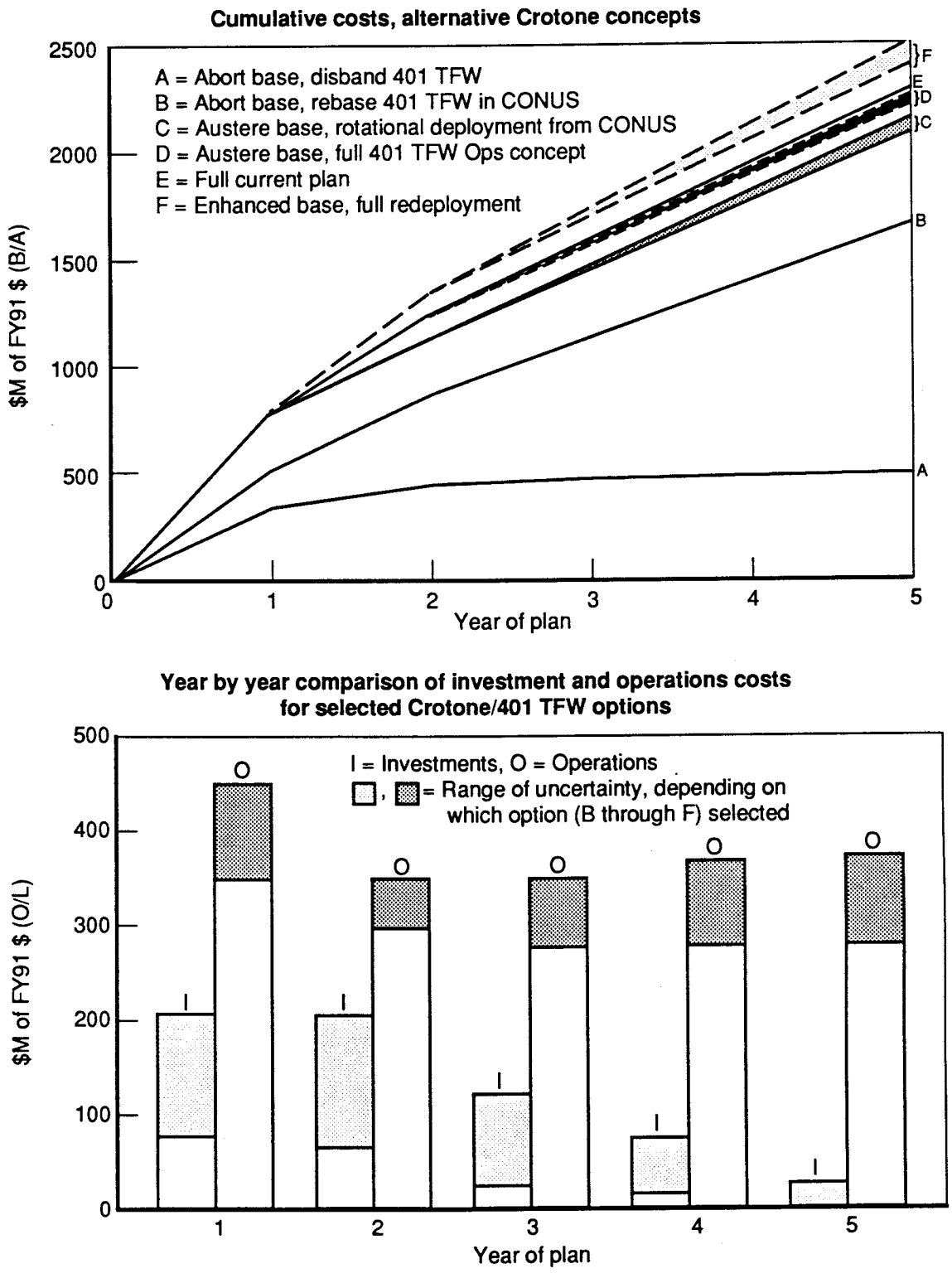

Fig. 1—Estimated cost profiles of alternative Crotone concepts

The costs of modifying the original construction plan have only a modest effect on the total price tag of a Southern Region capability. The longer the period over which this effect is reviewed, the smaller the differences in the costs attributable to construction augmentations or constraints. In any event, in each year, and in outlay terms as well, operational costs dominate the costs associated with construction of a Crotone facility of any type.

IV. CROTONE AS A U.S. JOINT SERVICE RESOURCE

Crotone's centralized location on the Mediterranean littoral makes comparisons between it and sea-based alternatives inevitable. In fact, there are far more areas for cooperation than for competition in the present basing consideration.

MELDING USAF AND NAVY TACTICAL AVIATION CAPABILITIES IN A RANGE OF SCENARIOS

The operational and strategic demands of large and complex scenarios decisively endorse the maintenance of both Air Force and Navy resources in the Mediterranean region, particularly a Crotone enhanced-base concept. A decline in deployable Navy carrier strength from 14 to 12 battle groups now seems unavoidable. Some have even spoken of a smaller carrier force, perhaps 11 or even 10. In addition, resource pressures seem very likely to influence traditional Navy deployment patterns and operational tempos.[1]

The implications of such operations for stationing of CVBGs in the Mediterranean in peacetime are important but uncertain. How these fewer ships would be allocated among stations would depend on a host of considerations. The Mediterranean deployment in the 1980s has been a very important one, because of the recurring problems with Libya, the rise and fall of tensions elsewhere in the Mideast, the requirements of traditional NATO commitments, and the relative richness of the support base. Deployment patterns stressing Mediterranean operations have been criticized in some circles as not meriting the priority placed on them for many reasons, including the growth in certain Soviet capabilities, the threat to far advanced carriers posed by land-based aviation, and so on. The growth in the deployable carrier force between 1981 and 1989 from 11 to 15 carriers essentially put this debate on ice, since sufficient force structure became available to meet several objectives.

A decline in overall carrier force levels would present the Navy with a variety of unappealing options, including depleting certain operating areas, accepting delays in responding to crisis until reinforcing carriers can be deployed, and operating solo carriers when the tactical preference would be for pairs or more ships.

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[1]Under any reduced operational tempo scheme, present peacetime forward deployment patterns would be curtailed. This means more time in port for active carrier groups, more training time in the two U.S. "home fleets," and the acceptance of gaps in day-to-day Navy battlegroup (CVBG) deployments.

With the force structure and budgets likely to prevail in the 1990s, however, the Navy is likely to maintain only one CVBG in the Mediterranean and perhaps will do so less than full time.[2] This places considerable constraints on Navy operations, because typical carrier employment doctrine calls for more than one operational carrier.

A locally based USAF presence in the central Mediterranean could greatly mitigate the effects of all three factors in many scenarios. Given availability of adequate tanker and AWACS support, F-16s operating from Crotone could sustain air defense patrols to a radius of 600 or more nmi; for F-15s, the figure would be 1000 nmi or more (see Fig. 2). Depending on assumptions, a full 72 PAA wing at Crotone could maintain 12 or so F-16s on air defense stations on a continuous basis throughout the central Mediterranean. This force is by no means sufficient to deal with the worst of possible aerial threats to the carrier, but (1) such a deployment would liberate Navy forces for other missions, (2) the USAF contingent could operate in a surge mode as necessary, and (3) AWACS and forward fighters would provide a wealth of vital data and complicate an enemy's attack plan on a carrier or other target in the defended area.

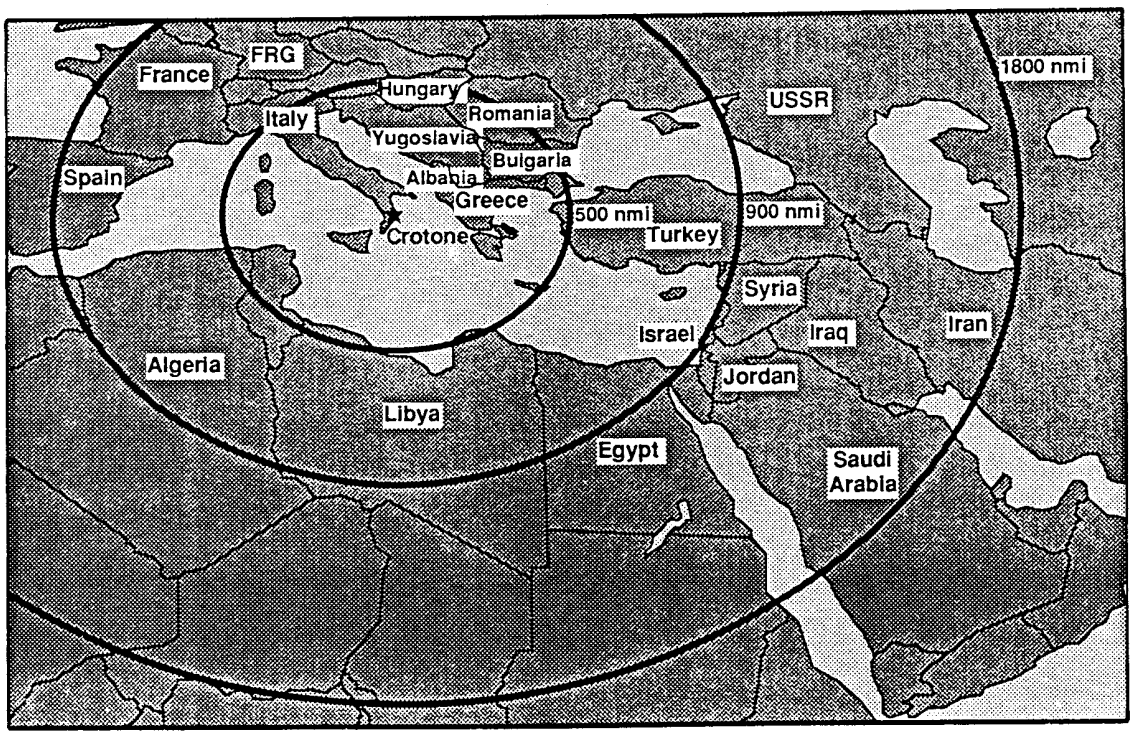

Fig. 2—Crotone and airpower coverage radii

[2]With the decision to retire the *Coral Sea* a few months early in the spring of 1990, the Mediterranean was without any U.S. carrier presence for the first time since 1946.

In each case, this USAF support could allow a carrier to remain forward (perhaps as required by the need to project offensive support or maintain a presence), to husband its air defense or ground attack resources for surge operations,[3] to buy time for reinforcement, and to augment carriers in the face of severe contingency requirements. In some situations, even a temporary suspension of flight operations might place a carrier at risk of attack and jeopardize its mission. In the absence of sufficient sea-based backup forces nearby, land-based aviation able to continuously support the carrier until it had restored operations or withdrawn from danger could be critical. Given the operational flexibility of the 401st TFW, similar calculations could show the augmentation in Navy ground attack resources (allowing either for a larger attack or for the commitment of more multimission resources to air defense).

USAF-USN Coordination in Mid-Level Contingencies

Turning to the next notional rung of the contingencies ladder, let us consider carrier operations as part of an extended, mid-level contingency (MLC). Such conflicts—e.g., the Korean or Vietnam episodes and the evolving Middle East situation—feature many complicating characteristics. In both Korea and Vietnam, the U.S. commitment of on-station attack-capable carriers has been a fairly constant three (in Korea and for a while with Iraq, four) carriers. In Vietnam and Korea, such carriers operated with few offensive threats compared with the problems they might face in the 1990s. Moreover, in both of those MLCs, the USN force structure was larger: Specifically, in the early 1950s, the U.S. carrier fleet amounted to 16 aircraft carriers and a few antisubmarine carriers (CVSs). In the mid-1960s, U.S. carrier forces amounted to about the same number (14–16 big carriers, and half a dozen CVSs, one of which operated periodically in an attack role off Southeast Asia).

Even given extensive forward support, these were probably the largest complements that could have been allocated to these theaters without drawing down U.S. resources for other requirements. Depending on many factors, anywhere from two and a half to four carriers in the force are required to maintain one carrier on a fairly remote forward station: Thus, a three carrier commitment in support of U.S. operations in the Mideast could lay some claim to the lion's share of U.S. carriers *on a sustained, steady state basis*. These carriers have provided very valuable presence and air support in all applicable cases. But

[3]Or cover one axis of approach to a maritime point while sea-based air concentrated on other azimuths.

the problems for worldwide commitments of maintaining a traditional three carrier, MLC-dedicated force could become severe when less than 12 carriers are deployable. Obviously, to the extent conditions permit, the closest possible coordination between land- and sea-based aviation is desirable even when 15 or more carriers are available for deployment—in the case of 12 or fewer, such coordination becomes essential. To the extent that forces operating and/or supported from Crotone are integrated with Navy operational units, the United States can mitigate some of the effects of a reduced carrier force.

Relevance of Joint Operations in General War

One major problem that vexes straightforward comparison of land- and sea-based tactical air power is the presumption of either low-level conflict or, at most, a scenario of the MLC sort. In the event of a major global contingency involving the USSR, however, different operational considerations will dominate carrier operating patterns. The Navy's first priority in a full-scale conflict will be the attainment of as close to worldwide maritime supremacy as is possible. In a large-scale conflict involving the USSR or a coalition of lesser powers, the Navy will almost certainly concentrate its forces for multicarrier task force operations. In even a 15 deployable carrier case, this would lead to the temporary abandonment of lesser priority theaters to concentrate on primary objectives. Navy forces in the Mediterranean might be pulled back or reduced to low levels to make possible major operations in other locales. If the setting for such major conflict were in fact to be in the Mediterranean or nearby, however, then the above consideration of joint operation of USAF and USN forces still applies.

In a general conflict escalating to the use of nuclear weapons, carriers might be temporarily withdrawn from areas of special danger. Some air missions might necessarily be performed by USAF units that can be better supported with aerial refueling.[4] SAC tankers fitted with drogue and probe refueling capabilities can also support Navy operations. The more forward the home base of these assets, the more fuel can be off-loaded and the more on-station time provided. This is yet another argument for a centrally located Southern Region base from a joint USAF-USN perspective.

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[4]This is also true even if no nuclear use were under way or expected.

NAVY/AIR FORCE COMPLEMENTARITY: ADDITIONAL ASPECTS

It is clear from both logical assessment and from a review of the pertinent history that the USAF and USN tactical postures can complement each other quite satisfactorily in many cases. The pressures now being applied to both services' force structures and deployment concepts add some new arguments for the maintenance of a mix of USAF and USN tactical aviation capabilities in the Mediterranean. When many operational and technical factors are introduced, the case for a multipurpose USAF installation at Crotone becomes even more compelling.

USAF operations from or through Crotone can greatly enhance overall U.S. joint effectiveness in all scenarios. In particular, given inescapable constraints on the number of deck spots and the operational demands of round the clock operations, the Navy has historically confronted an array of problems.[5] First, a Navy carrier wing maintains both offensive and defensive capabilities, some more or less dedicated (the F-14 or A-6), and some multimission (the F-18). One carrier, however, or even a pair of carriers, must carefully budget resources to assure an adequate number of on-station, ready, and recycling aircraft of all types, especially ones capable of air defense. In the early hours of an intense high-threat confrontation, all resources would be swung toward defensive missions. Combined with ships capable of antiair warfare, especially *Aegis* equipped combatants, the defense potential of a CVBG singleton or pair is formidable. However, in the face of a determined adversary capable of committing large numbers of forces in circumstances of his own choosing, the tactical situation could become unmanageable. Obviously, any additional resources able to contribute to defense of the carrier group or critical contested sea lanes could be vital in assuring both U.S. mission success and the survivability of the maritime group.

Second are the implications of the age-old argument that the CVBG might be spending too much time defending itself to deliver much useful firepower. We have already cited the USAF's potential role in mitigating such pressures. Depending on the target base being attacked, the nature of the defenses, the ranges and weapons loads required, etc. there

[5]Including (1) how to configure the tempo of its operations to satisfy both offensive and defensive requirements; (2) how to allocate multimission resources (primarily the F/A-18); and (3) provision of essential non-fighter-attack "services" such as electronic warfare, defense suppression, early warning and air and surface surveillance, vertical logistics support, search and rescue, antisubmarine warfare, etc.; (4) sustainment of operations or intense states of alert over an extended period; and (5) the tactical requirements of certain high-alert situations.

may be thresholds of offensive power required to make an offensive option feasible. By adding numbers, routing and penetration planning diversity, and special-purpose resources to offensive packages, the joint use of USAF/Navy forces can multiply overall force effectiveness. Crotone is here essentially a permanent relief carrier—or, depending on the facilities in hand—two or more relief carriers.

A third kind of consideration, alluded to above, involves special-purpose resources. For instance, only so many planes will fit on a carrier; the Navy can afford only so many procurement programs; the more unusual types of aircraft on a carrier, the greater the support burden; and, finally, Navy-based aircraft are subject to various design limitations. Many of these factors operate to a lesser or negligible extent on USAF land-based units operating from adequate bases. Given a requirement for both individual unit capabilities and total numbers of units, it makes sense for the USAF, in a sharing of local (in this case, the Mediterranean and Southern regions) responsibilities, to provide these resources. For instance, simply because it does not have to operate from the deck of a ship, the E-3A is greatly superior to the carrier-launched E-2C in terms of its endurance, detection capabilities, and on-board control functions. If we take into account the full range of requirements, the optimum division of labor between USAF and Navy units is again endorsed.[6]

Fourth, the long-term sustainment of carrier operations is a critical one for planners. Carriers engaged in continuous, intense operations can run through jet fuel, munitions, and parts in very short order and could require resupply frequently. With multipurpose underway replenishment logistics ships, these needs can be met for a while, but over an extended period, shuttle support and relief of deployed carriers for crew rest and extended resupply and maintenance would be vital. Ideally, other global requirements would not impede our abilities to support such tasks, but the risk remains that untoward developments could prevent our ability to sustain carrier operations indefinitely. Extensive complementarity with USAF resources would be enormously valuable here. And not only combat units are at issue. Crotone could provide certain maintenance, logistical, and staging

[6]The Navy could still deploy comparable resources in some situations. Given the compact and contained nature of the Mediterranean, however, reliably and centrally located USAF forces buy the Navy several options. For instance, given the assured availability of USAF or NATO AWACS, the carrier could, in principle, deploy or operate in the region with fewer on-board E-2Cs, freeing up deck spots for fighter-attack forces. Similarly, the Navy could base special-purpose and attrition filler aircraft at Crotone if an extended operation with attrition were expected anywhere in the region.

support for Navy forces in the region. Admittedly one of the worst possible cases, the remarks appearing elsewhere regarding possible inactivation of a carrier as a result of attack, deck accident, etc. should be recalled with regard to maintenance of adequate sustainability of joint USAF-Navy air operations in the region.

Fifth, the particulars of certain scenarios redouble the potential USAF contribution to Navy operations in crisis and war. For instance, the Navy prepares extensively for stealthy CVBG operations (to enhance tactical warning, minimize vulnerability, etc.). To this end, the Navy is prepared to exploit the operating environment, to operate under emergency conditions, and so on. However, when operating in, say, a zero-emissions mode, a CVBG's surveillance and communications abilities can be constrained, depending on the availability of externally provided intelligence and data, electronic support measures, etc. The ability of the USAF to support such operations on a continuous basis would be of enormous assistance to maximally stealthy Navy surface force operations. The use of AWACS, JSTARS, and other reconnaissance platforms is the most obvious application, but there are others. For another example, consider the ability to generate a stealthy air option. A Navy carrier group's arrival is often an arresting signal of U.S. resolve to a would-be troublemaker. That may not always be a desired effect. It may be desirable to mobilize some units or introduce reinforcements of certain kinds in secrecy. For this, a land-based facility has certain undeniable advantages.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

USAF and USN forces can be profitably coordinated for a range of functions and conditions. However, the exact nature of this cooperation is so scenario-dependent that simple metrics of effectiveness fail to highlight the many possibilities of interest. Virtually every USAF-USN coordination function is enhanced by the deployment of USAF forces as far forward as possible. The inevitable decline of available Navy sea-based aviation resources in the 1990s underscores the need for improved USAF-Navy coordination.

Certain Navy-specific options do independently mitigate some of the adverse trends and developments described above, including local homeporting, more effective aircraft in carrier wings, and the like. However, the costs of many of these are much greater than the USAF Crotone alternative and have at times proven politically difficult. Moreover, other solutions are not without costs, uncertainties, and competing priorities of their own. In sum, the arguments for close cooperation have always been and are still strong.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Developments in Europe and the Middle East, together with evolving U.S. priorities for defense planning and spending, provide a strong operational, strategic, and political rationale for the presence of U.S. and Allied land-based airpower in NATO's Southern Region. Specifically, the planned transfer of the 401st TFW to Crotone *and, more important, the construction of the new air base itself* will contribute to deterrence and defense across a range of potential contingencies in Europe, around the Mediterranean, and beyond.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

The U.S. presence and the availability of flexible facilities at Crotone would help to counter residual Soviet military power in the Mediterranean as well as possible Soviet reassertiveness, deter a variety of potential regional adversaries in North Africa and the Middle East, bolster the U.S. ability to project power into the Persian Gulf (and to protect the lines of communication for oil in the Mediterranean), and contribute to a "portfolio" approach to the maintenance of U.S. forces in Europe over the long term. Land-based airpower also provides a very useful hedge against a decline in the U.S. and Allied naval presence in the Mediterranean as a result of economics, arms control, or competing demands for carrier forces elsewhere.

POLITICAL RATIONALE

At the same time, the Crotone initiative will:

- Demonstrate a continuing U.S. and Allied commitment to the Southern Region, an area that will be a focus of post-Cold War European security concerns.
- Help allay German fears of "singularity" with regard to U.S. forces and provide a potentially useful vehicle for German participation in Mediterranean affairs.
- Contribute to the reassurance of those Southern Region allies who look to the U.S. presence as a stabilizing factor in regional security at a time of considerable political and strategic uncertainty.
- Reinforce the links among Turkey, the United States, and NATO when Turkish leaders themselves are seeking to reassert their ties to the West in the face of new tensions in the Middle East.

PROSPECTS FOR TORREJON EXTENSION

If an extension of the 401st TFW's tenure at Torrejon beyond June 1992 could be achieved, it would provide the simplest interim measure until the completion of Crotone (in 1995). The prospects for such an extension are unclear but by no means nonexistent. The Spanish government may have more latitude on this issue than is often supposed, and an extension request may well be received positively if Italy and/or NATO make the request and a proposed extension agreement explicitly reaffirms the eventual departure of U.S. forces. The sine qua non in this instance will be the clear perception that Crotone is moving ahead on schedule. The Spanish government has not been active in reminding the public of the impending U.S. departure from Torrejon, which is an encouraging sign, particularly against the background of Spain's increasing interest in NATO affairs and operations.

OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

The Crotone base should be viewed as a fundamental operational resource in an ideal location, able to support a broad array of possible options, rather than as a fixed-function facility (defined solely by a specific unit in residence and a particular set of missions and functions). Crotone should be conceived of as a *multipurpose* facility supporting broader U.S. and Allied security interests in the Mediterranean region—the "Crotone-Plus" concept. This option is not necessarily incompatible with the notion of a more "austere" facility, although a substantial and permanent U.S. presence will be preferable from a political, strategic, and operational perspective.

The opportunities for mutually supportive air and naval (and naval air) operations centered on Crotone will contribute substantially to the value of the facility in an era of declining deployed forces of all types.

CROTONE AS A PROTOTYPE FOR A NEW NATO: MULTINATIONAL/MULTIPURPOSE

We strongly recommend that consideration be given to exploring the prospects for multinational operations at Crotone, alongside the deployment of U.S. forces. Efforts in this direction would clearly be in line with the likely evolution of approaches within NATO generally over the next decade and would exploit promising operational synergies.

As NATO seeks to define its role in relation to the evolving security environment in Europe and elsewhere, *Crotone can also serve as a useful prototype for burdensharing, coordination between air and naval forces in the Mediterranean region, and possibly enhanced cooperation against threats originating outside the traditional NATO area.* The

current crisis in the Middle East, and the concerted Allied response (in which Southern Region allies have played a valuable role), could revolutionize attitudes on out-of-area issues in NATO just as Alliance policymakers begin to examine the development of *relevant* and politically and economically sustainable security structures and arrangements. Indeed, the Alliance need not undertake a formal expansion of its area of responsibility, although that should not be ruled out for the future. Expanded cooperation and greater predictability of response, however informal, will further the utility of facilities at Crotone in meeting force and support requirements for non-NATO contingencies.

Should the Crotone option be foreclosed, a range of valuable opportunities for the United States and its NATO Allies would also be foreclosed; a unique opportunity to demonstrate the practicality of positive new approaches to coalition defense and burdensharing will have been lost. *Although there are costs associated with Crotone, whether pursued as an austere facility or as a more elaborate undertaking, these are quite modest in relation to the strategic value of the capabilities acquired, the political and economic opportunity costs of cancellation, and the direct and indirect costs of other military alternatives.*