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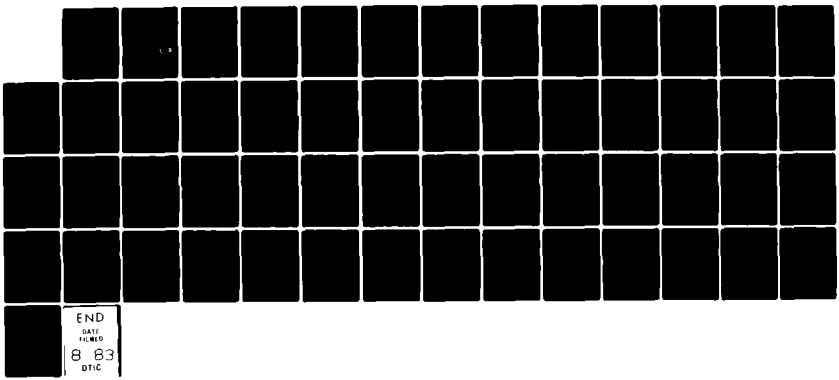

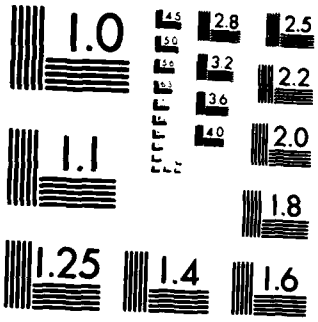

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U.S. efforts to develop a defense capability for the Gulf have been extensive and costly but they do not offer the U.S. -- or the Europeans -- much cause for confidence. The challenge is a vital and formidable one yet, oddly enough, has been almost ignored in a U.S. - European dialogue that is minimal and pro forma. Europeans, among themselves consider it hardly at all. This paper discusses the reason for this lapse, as well as some developments that provide hope that the essential discussions can begin

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ADDITIONAL AUTHORS:

Lawrence J. McDonald,
Lieutenant Colonel, USMC

W. Nathaniel Howell
Department of State

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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

STRATEGIC STUDY

ATLANTIC COOPERATION FOR GULF SECURITY

BY

David M. Ransom
Department of State

Lawrence J. McDonald
Lieutenant Colonel, USMC

W. Nathaniel Howell
Department of State

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

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DISCLAIMER-ABSTAINER

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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

STRATEGIC STUDIES REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Atlantic Cooperation for Gulf Security

AUTHORS: David M. Ransom and W. Nathaniel Howell, Department of State and Lawrence J. McDonald, Lieutenant Colonel, USMC

DATE: April 1983

U. S. efforts to develop a defense capability for the Gulf have been extensive and costly but they do not offer the U.S.--or the Europeans--much cause for confidence. The challenge is a vital and formidable one and yet, oddly enough, has been almost ignored in a U.S.-European dialogue that is minimal and pro forma. Europeans, among themselves consider it hardly at all. This paper discusses the reasons for this lapse, as well as some developments that provide hope that the essential discussions can begin toward a workable Atlantic security strategy for crucial Gulf oil flows. Some mechanisms and an agenda for critical military elements are outlined to initiate U.S.-European cooperation.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

David M. Ransom served most recently as Director of the Near East and South Asian Office of International Security Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He was earlier Deputy Chief of Mission in the American Embassy in Sana, Yemen and a member of the Staff of the National Security Council. A 1983 graduate of The National War College, he holds an A.B. from Princeton (1960) and a M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies and International Relations from the Johns Hopkins School of International Studies (1962).

Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence J. McDonald, USMC, M.S., Troy State University is a naval aviator whose primary experience has been operational. He has served most of his career in aircraft maintenance, both in helicopter and transport aircraft. He commanded a KC-130 detachment in Vietnam in 1970 and a Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron and Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron in the Second Marine Aircraft Wing. In 1980, he was one of the original officers assigned to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, where his duties involved development of strategic concepts and serving as country officer for six Middle Eastern countries. In the latter capacity, he was responsible for overflight and access planning with NATO countries. He is a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College and a 1983 graduate of The National War College.

W. Nathaniel Howell (B.A. with Honors, Ph.d., University of Virginia) is a Foreign Service Officer with more than fifteen years of experience in Middle Eastern affairs and an abbreviated tour with USNATO in Paris and Brussels (1967-68). With an academic background in Soviet Middle East policy, his direct experience in the Gulf dates from 1972 when he helped establish the American Embassy in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. As Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State, NEA, he contributed to inter-agency deliberations preceding enunciation of the Carter Doctrine. His most recent assignment as Director of the Office of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syrian Affairs placed him in day-to-day supervision of U.S. policy toward the Iran-Iraq war during the early months of the conflict. In various capacities, he participated in periodic consultations with European and Japanese allies in Washington, London and Bonn. He is a 1983 graduate of The National War College.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the oil flow from the Persian Gulf remains the Achilles heel of Europe and Atlantic well-being and security, Atlantic cooperation for Gulf security is minimal. The reasons for past failures are numerous and there have been some efforts made so far to bridge the gap in U.S.-European perceptions. There are, however, new political, economic and military reasons for hope that past failures of cooperation can be overcome by new U.S. efforts.

There are three different threats to Atlantic interests faced in the Gulf and surrounding areas of the Middle East. The threats vary in likelihood and impact on the West and the global strategic balance. They must be viewed in terms of Soviet interests and opportunities in the region, including likely Soviet need for access to Gulf oil in the relatively near future.

To meet these threats it is essential to recognize the essential links between security policy, on the one hand, and political and economic policy, on the other. The European bias toward the latter and the U.S. focus on security form the backdrop for the case made here that there must be a harmonization of the two approaches if a consensus capable of defending vital Western interests is to be achieved.

The paper continues with a critical examination of U.S. military efforts to date, arguing that the essentially unilateral course pursued is inadequate despite the expense and effort. It is flawed, both militarily and politically. There are, by contrast, large advantage to both the U.S. and Europe in cooperation in this critical endeavor.

The paper outlines an agenda for the security dialogue with the allies, leaving to an Appendix the details of specific items for early enhancement of Western defense capabilities. It turns in part on a new role for Turkey. Procedures and mechanisms for dealing with the unprecedented challenge of defense of an extra-alliance region are suggested.

A final "Conclusions," urges a major U.S. effort to invigorate a U.S.-European discussion of and planning for Western strategy from assuring Gulf security. In so doing, it draws together the threads of earlier chapters--the threat, the range of military and non-military instruments of policy, the immediate agenda, and institutions for discussion and coordination--to provide a basis for a U.S. initiative.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Growing differences between the United States and Europe strain NATO. Balances in and between nuclear and conventional weapons, defense costs and disarmament strategies, trade with the Soviets, relations with the Third world, the U.S. security guarantee, and imperfect forms of consultation are all subjects of discussion that separately and collectively strain NATO's fabric.

Surprisingly, scant consideration is accorded to one Atlantic problem--security of the Persian Gulf--that combines elements of all these burning issues. It is not by accident, therefore, that German Foreign Minister Genscher could produce a proposed "Overall Western Strategy"[1] in 1982 which never mentions the Middle East.

Yet, the Middle East and particularly the Persian Gulf is an Achilles heel of the Atlantic community now and for the foreseeable future. It need hardly be documented that Europeans would be more directly and immediately affected by problems in that region than the U.S. Security there should be a central military and political concern because events there can shift the balance of power adversely against the West.[2]

Reasons can be found for this strange omission. Other issues crowd the agenda and overload circuits. More fundamentally, however, it appears that complicated and deep-seated differences in perspective explain the lack of result and the limits of dialogue.

Since 1979, under two Administrations, the U.S. has sought to discuss and forge a common defense strategy with only tepid European response. The U.S. has, however, preferred defense spending and a security focus to the difficult task of coalition building, offering Europeans a role in military cooperation but no input into diplomatic and economic strategy. This preference has preserved U.S. independence in energy matters and on sensitive issues like the Arab-Israeli peace process--a division of responsibility and authority Europeans find unappealing, even dangerous.

Given the failures of the past several years, one may ask whether it will be possible to achieve a consensus within the Alliance on a coordinated political-military approach to the Middle East. What will move Europeans to assume added costs and commitments to protect vital interests there? What will move the U.S. to give up a measure of its independence of action in an area of such high stakes to its closest allies?

Two compelling reasons for seeking common ground with the Atlantic community suggest themselves. The U.S. has invested heavily in an RDF without producing what its own military would term a workable military strategy for the defense of Southwest Asia. The backlash in Congress over NATO's failure to help could produce legislative revolts against proposed U.S. funding and troop levels for NATO. These are serious shortcomings which could be substantially remedied by Atlantic cooperation. Second, the time has never been better for building a trans-Atlantic consensus, with the present oil price collapse reducing pressure and the Reagan initiative, which builds upon Camp David, providing an opening for a political dialogue.

Our objective in this paper is to lay the basis for a discussion, overdue on both sides of the Atlantic, of Atlantic cooperation for Gulf security. This could produce a broadly shared strategy toward the region including both political and energy elements and a workable contingency strategy for defense of vital Western interests. Our focus is on an agenda for military cooperation and related mechanisms for coordination, but other aspects and habits of consultation are no less essential to success.

The outline is simple. We begin with a brief look at why the problem has been viewed so differently and discussed in such a limited way on both sides of the Atlantic. Chapter three considers Western interests, particularly oil, in the region and threats to those interests, and suggest in chapter four, an overall approach to Middle East policy. Subsequently, in chapter five, we review the development of current U.S. military strategy--both achievements and shortcomings, and chapter six outlines an agenda and possible procedures for a coordinated Atlantic effort.

CHAPTER II

WHERE SHALL THE TWAIN MEET?

It is not difficult to discern why the subject of coordinated policy toward the Middle East has received so little attention. The U.S. which has been extremely active, and partially successful, in the diplomacy of the peace process, has sought to retain a free hand in the region. It has recognized that it possesses unique assets in its ability to deal both with the Israel and important Arab states, although it is less clear that the U.S. has appreciated that this is a wasting asset unless it is able to shape a comprehensive settlement in a reasonable period. Because of its special relationship with Israel and particular energy, finance and commercial interests and because of the burden of "peacemaker" it assumed, the U.S. has not sought serious consultative relationships with its European allies on the broader aspects of Middle East Strategy.

Traditionally, and with particular emphasis since the enunciation of the Carter Doctrine, the U.S. has undertaken an important effort to deter, in the first instance, a Soviet threat to Gulf stability and, second, to limit Soviet influence elsewhere in the region. Efforts to forge a "strategic consensus" to confront Soviet inroads and threats in the early months of the current Administration foundered, not because friendly area state are unconcerned about Soviet intentions, but because they regarded local threats as a greater and more immediate source of danger. While this experience has led to greater emphasis

on resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict--continuation of which places severe limits on Arab security cooperation with the U.S., Washington has continued to hold Europe at arm's length regarding diplomatic planning.

In a sense, the European governments--insofar as one may disregard differences of view and nuance among the British, French, Germans and others--have sought to approach the Middle East from another tack. It is no accident, for example, that most available commentary in Western Europe concentrates not on defense of the Gulf, but on political, diplomatic and economic relationships and resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is difficult to say whether the tendency to ignore or play down Soviet and other threats not susceptible to negotiation or blandishments reflects conviction or a sense of impotence and risk. There can be little doubt, however, that the Europeans have sought, in varying degrees, to distance themselves from U.S. policy which they see as closely tied to the current assertiveness of Israel and overly focussed on the Soviet threat.[3]

Looking at the same set of problems, therefore, Europeans have drawn conclusions different from the U.S. and professed to pursue another course. They have behaved as if the problem of the Middle East and oil access is not a security matter, but a social, political and economic one. They believe that direct Soviet intervention is not likely and that emphasis on the possibility may exacerbate local instabilities. European dependency on Gulf oil is much greater than

that of the U.S., and the Middle East is a European market larger than the U.S. and Japan combined. Europe's stakes in the region are extremely high and they appear not to like the odds, particularly when the Soviets would have critical time and distance advantages in any confrontation. Then too, one might be forgiven for suspecting that at least some Europeans, contemplating the threat and U.S. responses, believe that the U.S. will have no choice but to meet a Soviet challenge should it eventuate.

European efforts, consequently, have been directed toward Euro-Arab dialogue, North-South talks, bilateral oil arrangements, detente with the Soviets and exploration of a Palestinian option. The U.S. has tended to see much of this activity as posturing and rationalization of a clear and present danger. And, to be fair, the Europeans do not appear to have a great deal to show for their efforts. One European commentator, for example, concedes that European efforts amount to little so far, and "can at best set a pattern for U.S. diplomacy, both complementing American efforts and exerting subtle pressure on the U.S.... one means of by-passing certain constraints on [the] flexibility [of both sides]." [4]

Out-of-area efforts also raise some excruciating questions of Allied military strategy. The U.S. proposals for Gulf defense pose in another form all too familiar U.S.-European arguments about flexible and inflexible response, or escalation dominance in an age of parity.

U.S. planning for Southwest Asia further skews the balance in Europe against NATO. It suggests, both in the Middle East and in Europe, a lower nuclear threshold. Avoiding that, in Europe, could mean a weakened commitment to forward defense. Horizontal escalation could involve the European homeland, engaging the U.S. strategic nuclear guarantee. Vertical escalation, given the time and distance advantages of the Soviets in Central Asia and the Caucasus, could bid for simple, quick conventional defeat of U.S. forces in the Gulf. The strategic issue has not been discussed; indeed it has been studiously ignored.

Before proceeding further, it should be noted that several strutural deficiencies amplify differences of perspective and judgment between the U.S. and its allies. The Middle East (Persian Gulf) is the first area outside the NATO geographic region to acquire vital importance to the well-being of the Alliance and, indeed, its ability to defend itself. Second, on a more mundane level, the problems posed by its security fall between bureaucratic stools in all concerned governments. European and Middle East specialists do not have routine opportunities to exchange views either within a single government or among allies. Finally, there is no forum within or outside NATO for sustained attention to such extra-Alliance issues. Thus, when Under Secretary of Defense Robert W. Komer, near the end of the Carter Administration, and Under Secretary of Defense Fred Ikle, at the beginning of the Reagan Administration, undertook to make specific suggestions regarding security cooperation, they addressed themselves to the NATO Permanent Representatives, with very little response.

Some limited NATO measures were adopted in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in anticipation of an out-of area contingency for the Alliance; these followed U.S. suggestions put forward by Mr. Komer. A further, more extensive set of measures was approved in December 1980, but a full-scale review was delayed to permit the incoming Reagan Administration to brief the Allies fully on contingency plans for deployment in Southwest Asia. This briefing, together with a detailed assessment of Soviet capabilities there, was provided in the Fall of 1981 by Mr. Ikle. The U.S. urged three steps on the Europeans: (1) facilitate U.S. deployments, which were to constitute the overwhelming preponderance of forces in Southwest Asia; (2) prepare for some deployments of their own forces; and (3) assume a heavier, compensatory burden in Europe. The U.S. also sought a public statement of a NATO consensus on the threat and NATO's response, and the development of specific contingency plans. [5]

The European allies have delayed action on all but the first of these requests, asking instead for a study of the impact of planned U.S. deployments on NATO defense plans. That impact is, of course, considerable in air, ground and naval forces, particularly for the U.S. force envisaged for the late 1980's. The study has taken a long time. It is now expected in June 1983, and can perhaps be used in shaping NATO force structure plans for 1983-90. To date, however, this process amounts to little more than talk.

CHAPTER III

WESTERN STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND VUNERABILITIES

European and U.S. interests in the Middle East are longstanding, but developments of the last decade have combined to raise them to questions of strategic importance. Whereas the region has always been regarded as a possible target of Soviet expansion, it is the dependence of the West and much of the Third World upon Gulf oil which renders its defense vital. Western vunerability on this score was dramatically demonstrated in the 1970's by price rises, an embargo, and producer instability. The collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran and the resulting chaos, local conflict between revolutionary Iran and Iraq, and the Soviet move in late 1979 into Afghanistan underlined the importance of the region and threats to its stability and security. It was in fact sudden demands by the Carter Administration for European cooperation after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the seizuure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by Iranians that focussed the issue squarely for the U.S. and Europe.

Reflecting one major trend in strategic thought in the face of these developments, the Atlantic Council's Working Group on Security Affairs concluded in early 1980:

> "The Western nations will have no satisfactory options and no range of action if they have inadequate capability to back up their vital interests with combat forces available to help in the Third World. Indeed, the very existence of such a capability will be a major factor to be weighed by any government deciding on whether or not to risk hostilities over an issue truly vital to the West." 6/

The United States, beginning with the Carter Doctrine and continuing with development of a military deployment capability, opted for a strategy of deterrence backed by a serious response capability. Implicit in all consideration of Gulf security has been a high degree of uncertainty or vagueness regarding the nature of the threat.

The first threat is perhaps the most overlooked. Apart from palpable threats in the region, the present dichotomy of view between the U.S. and Europe regarding Middle East strategy bears its own corrosive danger.[7] The U.S. appears to act alone frequently in both diplomacy and security policy. As we have noted, the arguments that divide the Allies regarding the Middle East tend to deepen over time without corrective action. Untreated, this malady has the capacity to produce a drift toward a relationship of revalry and disgruntlement. Because the stakes and risks in that region are so important to both the U.S. and Europe, a growing percepion that we are acting at cross purposes would add a substantial, perhaps fatal, strain to the Alliance and its ability to preserve a stable world order.

A second order of threats, not dependent upon Soviet instigation but clearly to Moscow's advantage, has a similar capacity to undermine NATO and the Atlantic relationship. Indigenous instability a la Iran, local conflicts exemplified by the two and one-half year long Iran-Iraq war, or political decisions to halt oil flows for a prolonged period would be equally disruptive. Remedies for this range of contingencies must of necessity be flexible, covering a range of Western and local responses.[8] Military intervention need not be the only or the preferred remedy, but the lack of a capability to react militarily, in cooperation with local forces or in response to local invitations deprives the Western policymaker of a crucial option.

Clearly, a Soviet decision to move militarily into the region presents the most dangerous, if perhaps less likely, challenge to Western interests and the global balance. We see this as the third threat. Soviet control of the region would position it to deny vital oil supplies to the West or to use the threat to force Western political accommodation. Soviet denial or control of Gulf oil supplies would decisively alter the global strategic equation, undermining U.S. economic, political and military leadership and leaving the Soviets dominant on the Eurasian land mass.

Direct Soviet invasion may, as many Europeans argue, be highly unlikely; and no Middle Eastern state, however closely tied to the USSR, seems likely to surrender willingly its sovereignty and well-being to the Soviets. It is imprudent, however, for the Alliance to fail to put itself in a position to contest so momentous and adverse a shift, laying Europe itself open to paralysis or incapacity for defending itself, except by relatively brief nuclear warfare.[9]

Clearly, the USSR's proximity to the Gulf gives it important potential for access and leverage even without invasion. Aside from its historic urges toward the Gulf ports, it might be argued that relative weakness in this strategic area near the southern extremities of the Soviet empire is an artificial situation, a circumstance made possible by the presence of great power influence--Britain in an earlier age, the United States today.

A credible case can be made that Moscow has pushed hard, if opportunistically, to carve out a position in the area and establish leverage there. Soviet efforts to gain positions in Aden and Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Syria, and Iraq can be viewed in this context, although it is not clear that a master plan has driven Kremlin policy. Whether it has or not, it must be concluded that Moscow has derived little real influence for its efforts. Relations with Syria are hardly sound and are countered by U.S. relationships with Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia. Soviet fishing in Iran's troubled waters has yielded little to date beyond further estrangement from an independent-minded Iraq. Its position in Afghanistan is not consolidated.

It is possible that the Soviets have concluded, quite sensibly, that acquiring a direct position that would enable them to halt or modulate the flow of oil to Europe and Japan--and shift the global power balance in their favor--would provoke war with the West. If so, the Carter Doctrine and subsequent U.S. military preparations would appear to have been effective in their deterrent role. The Soviets ought logically to calculate that there is a fundamental assymetry in Soviet and Western interest in the region--the West must have it to maintain its strength; while the Soviets see it only as a means of weakening the U.S. and its allies. So long, but only so long, as the readiness and will of the West to respond effectively is credible; this equation provides the basis for deterrence.

In any case, the Soviets must recognize that a vital Western pressure-point lies tantalizingly close to the south. Prudence compels the Atlantic community to recognize that among the many factors that might tempt the Soviets to seek, directly or through surrogates, to grasp this lever is Moscow's calculation of relative risks. Will a new generation of Soviet leadership be less cautious and yield to temptation, particularly if seizure of the Gulf resources carried less certainty of global conflict than an attack on Europe? Could the Soviets see the Western stake in the Gulf as a means of off-setting threats to their vital interests elsewhere--a closer Western strategic relationship with China, the disintegration of Moscow's Eastern European empire? And, what will be the risk should the USSR lose (as Eastern Europe has already lost) its capacity to sustain growth and international commitments without resort to the international oil market? Access to Gulf oil may be critical to the USSR, in the future, for its security and well-being. Melvin Conant, for example, has imaginatively suggested that a Soviet energy plan for itself and for Europe might even provide a fulcrum for prying Western Europe from the U.S. and creating a system of cooperation and accommodation excluding the U.S.[10]

How much Middle East oil the Soviets will need, and how soon, are important questions. Conant estimates the total could be 2 MMB/D by 1985. Others have speculated that the Soviets will be prepared to pay a very high price domestically to sustain an oil autonomy that is one of their great strategic advantages. Nevertheless, our inability to respond with confidence to these fundamental queries underlines, at the same time, the strategic importance of the Middle East/Persian Gulf and the uncertainties we face regarding Soviet intentions and risk calculations there.

Soviet interest in the oil of the Gulf may be as much an opportunity as a threat, at least in the short term. Assuming they will prefer to have recourse to the international market rather than seize control of one or more producers, their access will have costs for them and, perhaps, benefits in terms of Soviet behavior worldwide. It is not in our power to set market prices; Gulf producers will do so. The major producers in the lower Gulf, and possibly the Iraqis, are well-disposed toward the West. They would have to set production levels high enough to accommodate Soviet demand in a market where Western economic revival is likely to have eliminated the current glut and some of the softness in spot-market pricing. The Atlantic community has leverage in such circumstances in protecting the marketing system, providing, as it does, the banking system, reserve and transaction currencies and markets for investment and purchases. But economic cost is only one of the prices the Soviets might be expected to pay. Good behavior, and potentially detente which is indivisible for Moscow as for the West, is another. To achieve this benefit, and to divert competition into peaceful channels, U.S. and European security cooperation is crucial as a buttress to its regional friends.

CHAPTER IV

ATLANTIC COOPERATION IN GULF SECURITY

The Atlantic community's success over the post-war period owes much to shared perceptions of the military threat to Europe and the free world posed by Soviet might. The allies concluded decades ago that failure to provide the means for a credible deterrent in Europe increased the possibility of conflict. At a more fundamental level, however, the Alliance sustained its vitality because participants shared, in the main, a concept of the kind of Europe and, indeed, world they sought to build behind its shield. European recovery and prosperity, European unity, a pluralistic international order of independent and responsible states have been ideas at least as important as military preparedness in animating the Alliance. One may, in fact, question whether a fundamentally defensive alignment would have proved a durable institution if it were not more than an association of individual military capabilities.

The important problems and challenges posed by the question of Gulf security today require similar cooperation and a new focus for the ideas and values integral to Alliance politics. Both the U.S. and its allies support the integrity and independence of the friendly states of the region. Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic concede the vital importance of the region and its resources to their strength and the world balance. None of them seeks a conflict with the USSR in that or any other region and all agree on the importance of supporting stability in the area, including resolution of destabilizing local conflicts. There is, thus, a substantial basis of commonality within the Alliance on which to base a viable security strategy.

Despite the lack of joint attention to the larger problems of the Middle East on a sustained basis, some progress has been achieved in nibbling away collectively at the marginal issues arising from the situation there. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has analyzed Western energy dependence and options for minimizing in the long run the costs and risks. IEA was instrumental in averting panic at the outset of the IranIraq war. Western banking circles have collaborated to provide liquidity and new loans for countries with severe debt servicing problems and have worked together to rationalize national efforts--disinflation in the U.S.for example--with international financial flows. Energy conservation and stockpiling have been advanced, with prior consultation, to common advantage. Yet, many marginal differences and doubts remain which call for closer cooperation if the agenda is to be cleared.

Attention to marginal issues alone, however, will not be sufficient or commensurate with Western stakes in the region. What is required is nothing less than a broadly-shared Western Strategy--political, economic and military--to cope with the demonstrable vital common interests there. While the ability to respond militarily to Soviet or other threats is an unavoidable element of an effective policy, cooperation will be difficult if some or all of the Europeans feel that some U.S. policies heighten the chances of instability and reduce prospects for cooperation with states in the region. On the other hand, Europeans must be prepared to assume practical responsibilities beyond issuing declarations and principles for the U.S. to implement for example, in a Middle East peace process or implying that resolution

of this issue will dissolve threats there to Western interests. It would seem, furthermore, that Europe has an interest in contributing to a credible deterrent to Soviet or Soviet-inspired moves in the Gulf with the objective of forestalling conflict, in the first instance, and of limiting it to the region, should deterrence fail.

What is required to undergird and sustain effective security cooperation in defense of Southwest Asia and Western interests there is nothing short of a trans-Atlantic bargain, recognizing the essential trade-offs outlined above. For all of its new-found strength and assertiveness, Europe will continue to depend for the foreseeable future upon U.S. strength and commitment, not only for the security of Europe but also to provide the leadership in assuring Western interests in the now-vital Gulf region. The U.S., while a global power, likewise needs the cooperation and assets of Europe in the balance. Even an antagonistic Europe not under Soviet sway or intimidation would be a distressing prospect to contemplate. Diffusion of power, thus, suggest coalition diplomacy as the answer at least in regions of deeply shared interest. The challenge of the 1980's will be to devise and perfect habits and procedures for coordination in responding to threats in new areas, of which the Middle East is the most compelling.

CHAPTER V

LIMITS OF U.S. UNILATERAL STRATEGY

Despite periodic excursions into consultation, the U.S. has generally acted alone as much in pursuit of an Arab-Israeli peace as in more recent efforts to bolster regional security. From preference, affirmed by frustration at European attitutdes, billions have been spent, with billions more planned, to create additional military assets, although these assets have applications other than Southwest Asia.

Employing three separate military commands, the U.S. can claim to have an enhanced ability to project power into the region. European Command may be able to use military bases in Turkey--most yet to be built and cooperation yet to be negotiated--to interdict Soviet approaches through Iran or Iraq. EUCOM, which also covers Israel, will continue to try to work out shared responsibilities for U.S. avenues of approach from the west and any other mission which Israel might be willing and politically acceptable to perform. Current thinking, considering the desirability of Arab cooperation, foresees no projection of Israeli strength eastward but rather a contribution in the Mediterranean.

The Pacific Command controls all assets in the Indian Ocean, up to the shores of Oman. It is constructing, with British agreement, a huge main operating base on Diego Garcia. Its carrier task forces provide the only real U.S. combat presence in the region since no country has been prepared to garrison American air and land forces on its soil. Even Egypt--sympathetic and sophisticated regarding the political and military vunerabilities of the Gulf--refused to permit the U.S. Army battalion in Sinai to bring all organic equipment and support/transport needed for rapid deployment eastward. Equipment for a Marine brigade is deployed with ships off Diego Garcia, but its manning echelons would have to be flown to a location where they could join it, requiring the permission of one or more host governments in the Gulf for landing both men and materiel. Since the Navy will not risk its carriers in the narrow confines of the Gulf, the forcible entry capability of the Marines in the region is modest. Consequently, while amphibious lift for a battalion or two is available, air and naval artillery cover will be limited if operations are mounted anywhere but in the lower regions of the Gulf--far from the largest oil fields at the northern end of the Gulf and closer to potential Soviet lines of advance. Despite the "over-the-horizon" presence which the Navy supplies--and over which it jealously guards it control--the PACOM role is probably best suited to protection of sea lines of communications and early lodgement of U.S. forces in distant locations like Oman and Bandar Abbas. Even these efforts would require local support and approval, which might well be forthcoming. After all, a Soviet attack through Iran or Iraq is not only going to concentrate the minds of many local governments, but probably also will be accompanied by attacks out of Afghanistan on the narrows of Hormuz and in the Indian Ocean.

This situation leaves the major task to the newly-created Central Command. It can, as noted, probably count on some help from Marines landing in the lower Gulf. The main body of its force, however, must cross the Atlantic, Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, and Egypt and Saudi Arabia to deploy. Included would be both Marine ground and air elements, as well as larger contingents of Army and Air Force personnel. There are severe limits to the number of men and aircraft that can be moved there in a short time and sustained in combat over a longer period. The limits sharply increase if Turkey does not participate, and if the Saudis do not actively participate, U.S. capability is questionable at best.

Deployment, not employment, therefore dictates the size of the force. The force is not sized to the Soviet threat and, in fact, it seems clear that the Soviets, possessing enormous advantages in nearby bases on Soviet soil and in Afghanistan, could overwhelm an American force of almost any conceivable size in that theatre, even if we could deploy with adequate warning--a critical and risky assumption.

Nevertheless, the size of the projected force is not the critical weakness of the RDF. It is not, in fact, a military weakness at all which is most troubling; it is a political weakness. In the Middle East, unlike Europe and Asia, we lack the organizational structure and support facilities of an alliance altogether. The region is, in fact, so divided against itself and us that alliances are impossible. Certain kinds of cooperation, varying from state to state, are possible with Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Israel, Somalia, and others. This has made for a strategy that is highly adaptive and idiosyncratic. Each initiative must be weighed against its impact on one or more other relationships. The absence of cooperation in one place vitiates cooperation elsewhere; the wrong kind of relationship in one case makes others impossible. The entire CENTCOM mission depends upon an invitation from--and advance coordination with--states which, so far, have not been prepared either to host U.S. facilities or undertake prior coordination.

It was not strange, therefore, that the Reagan Administration shifted its thinking from a reactive conflict at the point of invasion--with an RDF size large enough for the task--to a conflict that would spread quickly outside the region, at U.S. initiative. The present strategy emphasizes horizontal, not vertical, escalation. This policy was the opposite under Carter, and dictated a large force. In making this change, the Administration did not reduce the requirements of the force, concerned as it is generally with force build-up. The RDF would ultimately be larger than as proposed by the Carter Administration.[11] But it made it much less likely that U.S. forces would be released to CENTCOM when escalation is planned elsewhere

But where? This poses questions of a very different order, questions of direct impact to the Europeans. What target is comparable in importance to the Soviets? Not the Soviet fleet in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, not Cuba. The painful fact is that the West, Europe in particular, stands to be stopped in its tracks if oil ceases to flow from the Gulf and no one has bothered to explain how, even with a successful blocking logement in the mountains of central Iran, we could seriously hope to prevent crippling blows against the fragile oil loading facilities in the Gulf. Indeed, the small and weak states of the region might in those cirucmstances worry that a U.S. presence might produce, not deter, such attacks. One solution would be to make clear that attacks on Gulf oil facilities would justify, in our view, counter-attacks on comparable Soviet oil facilities. This would even out the oil stakes but also open up an ominous scenario for homeland retaliation by the Soviets against us.

European cooperation, by bolstering the capacity of the West to respond rapidly and effectively in Southwest Asia, offers both enhanced deterrence against Soviet threats <u>and</u> greater prospects for controlling escalation and confining a confrontation to that region as well as terminating it short of more general hostilities.

Such European efforts would seem to be even more in their interests than ours, considering their greater dependence on Middle East oil and, incidentally, their growing stake in Soviet energy supplies. What would be required is an arragement which goes considerably beyond the familiar conceptual framework of Atlantic security cooperation to encompass direct European military participation on a planned basis. This could be done alongside NATO or through it, although the task of wrenching the attention of EUCOM from the Fulda Gap is a daunting one and there are, as some observers have noted, institutional difficulties conceiving a confrontation with the USSR in the Gulf that would not inevitably affect Europe itself and involve NATO in any case. How could the U.S. engage Soviet forces there without expecting a Warsaw Pact/NATO alert? If this prospect is distasteful for Western Europeans, it is not less so for Eastern Europeans who would have an interest in restraining a Soviet challenge, thereby adding to the deterrent impact of Western Preparedness.

Establishing a formal security linkage between Europe and the Middle East might be wrenching to our allies, although NATO already holds exercises in the Caribbean. The Gulf is, of course, north of the Tropic of Cancer and not much to the east of Turkey. It is not unthinkable,

therefore, to contemplate. Europeans must decide whether, in any case, hard choices would not be forced upon them by a faltering U.S. defense effort in the Gulf. They must consider as well whether it is not subversive of the alliance--both with Congress and the U.S. public--to have the U.S. perceived as bearing alone the defense of important western interests in the Middle East/Persian Gulf.

The potential costs of creating such linkage moreover are at least partially offset by some advantages. A basis would be laid for multilateral--not just U.S.--security assurances to major oil producers. European participation would not only enhance the deterrent effect upon the Soviets and go far toward assuring successful reaction to a Soviet adventure within the confines of the Middle East; it would also broaden the range of western options in dealing with threats of lesser magnitude than Soviet invasion, permitting the use of European assistance where appropriate without requiring great power involvement on the ground. Finally, this reorientation would justify substantially greater aid to Turkey, an ally which would become a pivot between Western defense of Europe and prevention of a Soviet drive through Iran and Iraq.

CHAPTER VI

AGENDA FOR DIALOGUE

A serious new dialogue with Europe on the defense of Southwest Asia requires, in the first instance, an agenda and a venue. There is no need, at least at the outset, to expand the formal boundaries of NATO. Progress does required initally an agreed analysis of the threat to the members of the Alliance and to the viability of its military posture from the major threats outlined above--(1) Soviet control or denial of oil; (2) internal instability, subversion and local conflicts; or (3) a prolonged estrangement and drift apart between Europe and the U.S. on questions of oil and Middle East policy.

The Harmel Exercise and Report provides a precedent for an exhaustive review by the Alliance. Oil disruption and the undeniable importance today of the Gulf certainly rivals French withdrawal from military participation and detente as a new and vital issue facing the Atlantic community. The threat analysis and broad strategic review might be undertaken for the Military Committee, postponing consideration of the vexing question of whether NATO's operational boundaries should be extended or other arrangements put in place.[12]

It may be that the question of political boundaries can be sidestepped, perhaps by forming a new group, such as the High Level Group which dealt with certain nuclear questions. A Group on the Middle East could seat select countries on a regular basis, adding others in rotation or, as desired by them. Alternatively, it may be found preferrable to institutionalize, outside the formal NATO structure, intensified consultation and planning, among Middle East and European experts of selected governments. The U.S., Great Britain, France, Italy and West Germany--whose military role would be, for constitutional reasons, within the NATO area (e.g., in Turkey)--appear to be the Alliance states with both substantial interests and capabilities to contribute. Such an extra-NATO arrangement would have the additional advantage of permitting interaction and participation with other free world nations, such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand, possessing substantial interests in Gulf security as well as naval, transport and political capabilities to contribute.[13]

Whether established within the NATO structure or alongside it, the new consultative and combined planning body would have as its initial task consideration in detail of the shared threat analysis and a report on recommendations for common action. Among the concerns of the security subcommittee would be (1) declaratory policy, existing and recommended; (2) questions for force size and

composition, including European contributions; (3) force presence in the Middle East; (4) bases, facilities and other projection requirements; (5) U.S.-European contingency planning; (6) command arrangements and location; (7) combined exercise plans; (8) common acquisition programs, particularly ships, aircraft and air defense; (9) relative financial contributions and overall costs; (10) coordination mechanisms (politcal and military); (11) triggering events for deployment; and (12) political objectives and liabilities of operations in the Middle East.

Special attention should be given to consultation with Turkey on its role in a military contingency in Southwest Asia. Turkey's location would allow positioning forces to menace the flanks and rear of a Soviet move southward through Azerbaijan. This would give the defending force an opportunity to engage the Soviets well before they reach the Gulf littoral. An expansive system of secure bases in eastern Turkey would be required and Turkey would become, in such a scenario, a NATO trip-wire. At least limited NATO reinforcements as well as heavy economic and military assistance to Turkey would be needed in advance of a Soviet move, but such recognition of Turkey's role as pivot could give the current NATO effort the focus it presently lacks. It is evident that this role could involve Turkey in complicated ways in security missions in areas of the former Ottoman empire as well as Iran, but Turkey's oil supply is no less at risk than that of the rest of Europe.

One of the most important and sensitive issues that must be confronted is whether the allies should seek to counter a Soviet move into the Gulf region so as to confine it geographically to that area or expand it to other areas, including Europe.[14] Whether contemplating escalation or horizontal expansion, resolution of this issue will be extremely difficult. It must be faced, however, by Europeans because the answer largely determines force size and composition, specifically a European contribution. The U.S. at present has opted for a small force in the area, but is developing a larger force--that it cannot sustain with other commitments and its own resources--as part of a deterrent strategy, which is part calculated bluff. It will probably work, but it has the grave defect of requiring escalation outside the area and the possibility that the limited force could be overcome.

What is not an adequate response to this situation is reversion to the argument that, perhaps, the Europeans and the U.S. should not discuss these matters because they are too difficult. The U.S. might be tempted to accept as persuasive the failure of the Europeans to address them seriously thus far. After all, the effort to improve the coordination and effectiveness of a Western political and military strategy in the Gulf could deprive the U.S. of its relative freedom

of action, so important to many elements in the American body politic. For Europeans, it could create controversy at home, problems in the Middle East and costs to meet a threat that may not eventuate. The argument that any effort to cope with the situation should be bilateral and ad hoc and should leave defense of the Gulf to unilateral U.S. response is a head-in-the-sand approach, one not likely to work. Palatable or not, both sides of the Atlantic must face the fact that neither can succeed in the Middle East and minimize the risks without the other. U.S. strategy, as now designed, won't work to protect European interests and leave them unaffected.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

It appears incontravertible that, at present and for the foreseeable future, the security of the region centering on the Gulf will constitute a shared vital objective of the Atlantic community. The question for the U.S. and its allies, whether it has been adequately aired or not, is not whether these interests will be defended, particularly against direct Soviet challenge, but how! How effectively and within what geographic and other limitations? Allied cooperation in the face of a concrete Soviet military move would likely be forthcoming, but the effectiveness of the effort--indeed, the capacity of Western readiness to deter a Soviet move--will be weakened, perhaps critically, by the failure to plan and prepare a coordinated response before a crisis.

How, then, to focus and channel allied energies into the effort required? In substantial part, the problem is complicated by the absence of precedent. For the allies, it is of a different order than existing security arrangements which commit the U.S. to come to their defense. For the U.S., the challenge is not qualitatively different--to project military power into an area thousands of miles from home. What is different is that much of the on-the-ground infrastructure assumed in formal alliance arrangements is nonexistent and the need for support from allies much nearer to the focus is increased.

The unprecedented security threat discussed in this paper calls for imaginative and dramatic solutions. The problem does not fit neatly into any of the compartments--geographic, functional or institutional--with which we and other Western governments have been accustomed to deal in the post-war world. Not only does it require our European and Middle East specialist to cooperate regularly with counterparts from Europe, but the effort to define the Gulf area narrowly, delineating the security problem there from political and security problems in the surrounding Middle East flies in the face not only of logic and experience but of the objections of both local governments and Western partners. Nor will it do to equate potential U.S. partners in such an effort with NATO alone, some allies will be reluctant to participate actively and, in any case, have little to contribute. Others, not members of NATO, have deep interests and much to bring to bear.

If neither geographic nor institutional compartments will serve, much the same can be said for reducing the problem to a purely military one, if we are to attract and sustain the active cooperation of allies. Military preparedness is only one, though not the least important, element in avoiding military challenges to vital Western interests. Equally important, particularly in regions of chronic instability such as the Middle East, is the full range of political, diplomatic, economic and security assistance relationships. For, unless we are prepared to enter into a far more serious diaglogue with the allies on such problems as the Arab-Israeli conflict and its resolution, we are likely to gain neither the diplomatic support we deserve nor the security cooperation which the Atlantic community needs. What appears to be needed, is regular consultation on a full range of Middle East issues, including Gulf security, as a framework within which specifically military coordination can take place on premises which can be explained to European and other publics. So long as our global security policy is European-based, such consultation would be a normal part of any effort to provide leadership. Some measure of U.S. capacity for independent action would, it is true, be relinquished in the process, although it is easy to exaggerate the extent; it is difficult to conceive of any important U.S. goal, including support for Israel's legitimate defense interests, that could be compromised in the process. And the President's initiative of September 1982 provides, as noted above, a broadly-acceptable basis for policy so long as it is not permitted to languish as another example of U.S. good intention and ineffective leadership.[15]

If there is to be effective allied cooperation it will require U.S. initiative. Europe has demonstrated neither the will not the imagination to provide such impetus. As a beginning we recommend the establishment of regular consultations with selected European governments, as suggested above, on a full range of Middle East political and security interests, drawing not on intelligence specialists. as is the case with the semi-annual NATO experts meetings, but on officials at the Assistant Secretary-level and below with operational responsibilities for both European and Middle East policy. The goal would be not only a frank exchange of views and proposals, but personal familiarity and the development, over time, of a greater area of shared assumptions regarding both threats and opportunities.

Concurrently, existing NATO machinery could be used as a springboard in the manner outlined in Chapter six to develop an agreed threat analysis for the Gulf region. With this in hand, a High Level Group, comprising leading NATO members and other states, such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand, should be encouraged to consider both the threat analysis and to begin consideration of what resources each could contribute in the event of a Soviet move into the Gulf region.[16] The question of the relative likelihood of this threat need not stall the proceedings at this stage, as various scenarios are considered. With rigorous examination of U.S. capabilities and strategy, along the lines presented in Chapter five, it should become clear that there are serious deficiencies in the capacity of the West to meet a Soviet threat in that region. Even more clear to non-U.S. participants will be the fact that,

as planned, even a unilateral U.S. defense effort there will inevitably affect Europe in a number of ways, including the probability of horizontal escalation. While there can be no guarantee that the allies will decide to undertake coordinated planning, the debate will at least be shifted from U.S. requests for assistance to contemplation of what the allies can do with us to improve their own prospects and minimize risks.

At the outset, at least, the most critical needs would be not for significant allied combat forces, but for commitment of facilities and resources to support the U.S. deployment. It may even be argued that, in a major operation, substantial combined operations in a Gulf theater would have serious operational drawbacks, but this is a question for later consideration. The task now is to focus attention and push measures with short-term payoffs. At the Appendix, we have included a list of marginal measures which the allies can take immediately to enhance the capability of the U.S. deployment. Although some, such as transit and basing facilitation, are clearly of a higher magnitude than others, each would be important in developing the sense of shared burden and stake the situation demands.

Even in the short-run, there are likely to be important advantages to even minor allied troop contributions to such a putative force. the signal the designation of elected units would send to the Soviets and others would, in itself, have a deterrent effect. Beyond that, however, it is not difficult to imagine situations in which limited forces from European states might be more acceptable locally and less disruptive

globally than the dispatch of U.S. troops, with all their implications for superpower rivalry. Given the sensitivities of both Europeans and others, this is not a minor consideration. It is possible that we are seeing some manifestations of increased European awareness of this fact. French, Italian and British contributions to the multilateral force in Lebanon as well as European contingents in the Sinai Multinational Force constitute highly responsible contributions which stand out all the more in the general absence of serious considerations of the potential demands of Gulf security.

Ultimately, only our European and other allies can decide whether they have the will and capability to participate effectively in the defense of their own interests. The process which we have recommended the U.S. put in train provides the opportunity for placing the choice and the decision squarely before them. If they see and accept the challenge, not on our behalf but for themselves, we will have gone far toward restoring allied consensus and focussing it upon a new and vital area of challenge. From that consensus, new institutions, such as a combined command for the Gulf, could follow. But, as we made woefully clear at the outset, we are far from such a point in terms of political consultations and public acceptance. If, despite our best and most sincere efforts, the allies choose to ignore or fail to discern the need for shared effort, they cannot but accept the right of the U.S. to pursue its interests by whatever means remain.

APPENDIX

AGENDA FOR SHORT-TERM ENHANCEMENT

There are a number of measures that could be developed quickly by European partners, simply to buttress U.S. efforts, without involving Europe deeply in new commitments immediately:

-Access/Enroute Basing/Overflight Rights: With all the problems that CENTCOM has in planning a deployment none is so complex and uncertain as the routes for deployment. There are bilateral air agreements with Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey--all NATO countries--but no combined agreement. In the bilaterals each country has the perogative to deny access/ overflight and, in instances of exercises in the region, access has been denied. A maximum of 300 sorties per day could transit NATO countries. If an agreement could be worked out so the U.S. knew for sure how the airflow would go, it would enhance planning. As it is, assumptions are made that may not be corrected and bottlenecks due to available ramp space or fuel might result.

-Strategic/Tactical Airlift Support: All the allies have capability in airlift assets, which have been made more important by the absence of basing in Southwest Asia.

-Sealift: The European allies have double the merchant ships that are available to the U.S. In the NATO pool, there are over 400 dry cargo ships and Japan has considerable assets. These ships are vital to the supply line to either Southwest Asia or NATO. An agreement should be negotiated between the U.S. and NATO for the availability of these ships. U.S. shipping is spread around the world at any one time and only a portion would be available on short notice.

-Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC) security: The 600 ship U.S. Navy is not a reality--even if it was, it is doubtful whether it could protect the SLOC to Southwest Asia. The distance is 13,000 miles and the threat from the Soviet submarine fleet is large. The NATO fleets could assist in this endeavor.

-Air Lines of Communication (ALOC): The primary air route to Southwest Asia goes through the Mediterranean. Both Libya and Syria could pose potential threats to the ALOC. Positioning aircraft carriers enroute precludes their use in Southwest Asia. Both the Italians and French could provide support if Libya became involved.

-Unit Support: The U.S. is short in combat support/combat service support units to Southwest Asia e.g., engineer, port handling, intelligence, air defense, etc. If the allies could designate or form special units in these areas, training and planning could be coordinated. Both France and the U.K. have special operations type forces that could assist the U.S. Both have experience and intelligence assets in some areas that could be invaluable. It was not an area of concern until recently while both France and the U.K. have past colonial ties to the region and could provide invaluable assistance in theis area.

-Medical Support: Critical shortage exists both in capability and treatment facilities. Almost all allies could assist in this endeavor.

-Anti-Mine/Mine Warfare: The U.S. has four minesweepers in the regular Navy and 52 in the reserve fleet. There are none in Southwest Asia and it takes them 45-60 days to arrive on scene after mobilization. The French have a squadron of minesweepers in Djibouti--the NATO allies have several hundred in NATO waters. Rotation of a squadron of minesweepers from NATO countries to the area, the sharing of deep-sea antimine warfare with the allies and joint R&D in this field could make important contributions. The U.S. Navy has three mine counter= measures squadrons of helicopters but they are not in Southwest Asia and require extensive airlift to deploy.

-Security Assistance: This effort requires coordination. Rather than each country trying to sell weapon systems in every country in Southwest Asia--a coordinated, planned effort should be presented to the regional countries that will enhance their regional security framework, e.g., there are several air defense systems in the region but, in the absence of interoperability, they cannot be combined to contribute to regional defense. If any one country sold air defense, another tactical aircraft, another land weapons, then maybe some standardization could be effected that would contribute to a framework for regional security.

-Linguists: It takes several years to train Arabic or Farsi linguists, not to mention the problem of incentives to maintain fluency. A study in OSD, MRA&L is under consideration to decide the best course, but in the meantime the deficiency might be filled by linguists from the U.K., France and, perhaps, Italy.

-Contingency Planning: If efforts are successful with NATO allies in providing a share of the burden, then the next logical step would involve them in planning for the area. As mentioned in the strategy, U.S. response is threat oriented. Take this one step further and NATO allies could be the responsive part vice the U.S.

There are a number of lower-magnitude threats that European allies could handle by deploying their own units to the region. A combined strategy could be developed for regional areas within Southwest Asia for response to requests from specific countries, e.g., France-Horn of Africa; U.K.-Persian Gulf Littoral; U.S.-Saudi Arabia; etc. It should be understood that U.S. support may be required for airlift or logistics but it would improve the perception of the regional countries toward the U.S. and could avoid super-power confrontation in the area.

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