

AIR-SEA BALANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. POWER-RADIATING AREAS

The Mediterranean area enjoys a strong personality of its own because of a large number of circumstances given there which are not found anywhere else in the world. The most important among these circumstances are perhaps the following:

- Being the cradle, the source and the historical and cultural centre of Western Civilization.
- Being a meeting-point for peoples of widely different races, religions and ideologies.
- Being the maritime link between two great oceans: the Atlantic and the Indian oceans.
- Being the point where three continents come in touch with each other: Europe, Asia and Africa.
- Being the area with the highest concentration of maritime and airborne traffic in the world.
- There are huge economic and social contrasts between the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean, which range from highly developed countries such as France and Italy to underdeveloped countries such as Albania and Morocco.
- Being the most attractive tourist and cultural area in the world.
- Being the sea most seriously threatened with environmental decay anywhere in the world.
- Being an area which holds perhaps the largest deposits of natural products used as energy sources: oil and natural gas.

- Being an area which has a special political, strategic and cultural pull on countries in other parts of the world.

INTRODUCTION

(By JESÚS SALGADO ALBA, Admiral).

General

The transverse shipping routes that necessarily converge on the Mediterranean passages, together with that which links together the two ends of the Mediterranean, have clear strategic implications in both the Western and the Eastern basins, and stretch into the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea. The Peninsulas and large Islands can be used as bastions, redoubts, or bases, or can become separate operating theatres. The theatres, which in principle are the Western Mediterranean, the Italian, the Greek and the Turkish Black Sea theatres, are all linked together by the Mediterranean. Movements of forces between one theatre and another are geographically unthinkable.

Conclusions

Power-radiating Centres

From a geographic viewpoint we cannot speak of true Power-radiating Centres, only of strategic places as described above. In order to bring the above analysis to bear on the subject-matter of this review, however, we shall note those areas which can intuitively be described as possibly projecting influence or power.

The Rota-Gibraltar area. American-Spanish and British air-sea power is projected out of this area towards both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, besides the significant power it can exert over world maritime traffic.

In the Marseille-Toulouse area significant air-sea power is coupled with manufacturing and trading potential. The same happens in the Genoa-La Spezia area.

The Vatican, for its part, is the main Centre of spiritual influence in the world.

The Peninsula of Crimea and the surrounding valleys of the Dnieper, the Dniester and the Don, project their air-sea and economic power out into the Black Sea.

In the Alexandria-Suez area we find the strategically important Suez Canal along with the influence of Moslem Integrisim.

REVIEW OF THE GEOGRAPHIC FACTOR

(By JULIO ALBERT FERRERO, Admiral).

Since the 18th century, the prevailing Powers have used it as an arena for settling their disputes or as a well-situated geostrategic area for undercutting the Continental Power that had succeeded in upsetting the balance of power in Europe to its benefit. Naturally, it was also used as an alternative and shorter route between the North Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

The historic power-radiating areas identified in this review are the following:

- The Levant and the adjacent Syrian area. This became a power-radiating area with the Phoenicians and with the Arabs when they chose Damascus as the capital city of the Caliphate.
- Cape Bon and the surrounding area of Tunisia. That is where the city of Carthage was built as the head of a thalassocratic State. In the same place the Vandals built the capital city of a kingdom that spread through Sicily and Southern Italy in the 5th century.
- The Aegean shores and islands as well as the Turkish straits. This power-radiating centre existed —despite having ebbed during some periods— for nearly thirty centuries under the Greeks, the Macedonians, Constantinople and the Ottomans.
- The Italian region around Rome. The Roman Empire has been the only State that has succeeded in controlling the whole Mediterranean.
- The Adriatic cul-de-sac, out of which the Republic of Venice built a trading empire which spread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. It later became the Austrian Empire's outlet to the Mediterranean, when the Austrian Empire succeeded in controlling the Dalmatian coast on the Adriatic Sea.
- Genoa and the surrounding region of Liguria. The Republic of Genoa developed in a similar way as Venice, competing for the same markets.

In the 19th century it was the centre out of which the Sardinian-Piamentese Kingdom strove to unite Italy.

- The mouth of the Ebro River in Spain, around which lay the kingdoms ruled by the Crown of Aragon, midway between Barcelona and Valencia.
- The mouths of the Rhone River and the Provence region. An area out of which French power has radiated into the Mediterranean.

Upon becoming a World Power in the 18th century, England conquered possessions in the Mediterranean which were extended in the following century when the Kingdom of Egypt was created. But none of these was a power-radiating centre in itself. Rather, these possessions were used to support and spread British power, which radiated from outside the Mediterranean. The same applies to the bases built, leased or shared by the United States in Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Libya and Morocco when, after the Second World War, the United States gradually filled the vacuum left by Great Britain until it became the dominant Power in the *Mare Nostrum*, whose control of the area was tempered during the Cold War by Soviet naval Power radiating into the Mediterranean mainly out of Crimea and the Ukrainian coast.

The First and Second World Wars showed that the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations was a secondary one for the main contenders. The winners used it, without too much conviction, for indirectly approaching the Central European redoubt.

ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORICAL FACTOR

(By RICARDO ÁLVAREZ-MALDONADO MUELA, Admiral).

Conclusions

In the interest of all countries on both shores of the Mediterranean, and for the sake of their security, it is necessary to find a political strategy that reduces the fragility of peace and the potential for conflict in the area, by exploring new channels to help narrow down the big contrasts seen there. Such strategy should be based on four pillars:

1. Transforming North African political structures with a view to calling on civil society to play a bigger role in shaping Government decisions, in order to assure greater respect of the rights of individuals and enable political freedom to be exercised without restrictions.

2. Improving the economic prospects of Mediterranean countries which are not members of the European Community through suitable domestic, foreign aid and trade measures.
3. Boosting subregional interdependence within the Maghreb and the Eastern Mediterranean basin, as well as regional interdependence, through increased economic cooperation and integration.
4. The need for Mediterranean countries themselves —both those which are not members of the European Community and those which are— to find and guarantee solutions to the problems of the area. However, no consistent or permanent solutions can be assured without other countries and super-national organisations becoming politically and financially involved.

It seems natural to draw the conclusion that, in respect of the political factor, we may only speak of one Power-radiating Area proper: the Mediterranean countries which are members of the European Economic Community, where the Southern Mediterranean countries expect to find sufficient support for strengthening their economies.

ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL FACTOR
(By ANÍBAL VILLALBA FERNÁNDEZ, Infantry Captain).

Conclusion

The economic factor perhaps accounts for more of the differences among Mediterranean countries than the rest of the factors.

Even though population numbers are similar on both sides, the territory on the Northern side is a third of the size and accounts for 90% of total production.

The Southern side is featured by a general absence of infrastructure works, no savings, foreign indebtedness, as well as a lack of technology and productive investment.

From an economic viewpoint there is no country which can be described as a Power-radiating Centre, because Russia, which might fit such description, is going through serious economic and financial problems.

ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC FACTOR
(By JAVIER GUISÁNDEZ GÓMEZ, Lt. Colonel).

Background

An important point is that, during these decades, the area has been steadily changing. In fact, major events have taken place in the area including: the defeat of Communism in Greece, the birth of the State of Israel which has been opposed by the Arabs and has been a source of continuous and very serious conflict that has degenerated into local wars on several occasions, and de-colonisation of the Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East many of which were under Soviet influence virtually until the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Conflict and friction

There is no longer a confrontation between the two big blocs, yet there are local conflicts, some of which as serious as the war in the former Yugoslavia, or the Arab/Israeli confrontation which continuously gives rise to incidents, or others which despite taking place away from the Mediterranean are close enough to fall within the Mediterranean area of influence, such as the Gulf War, or the United Nations intervention in Somalia.

Besides, the Middle East remains a volatile area. Iran promotes Islamic Fundamentalism, which spreads across North Africa. Iraq continuously conducts de-stabilising actions, and there is the problem of the Kurds, as well as the conflicts in nearby regions that used to be part of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This is merely a sample of the situation in the area; as we shall see below, however, conflicts are possible not only in the Middle East. We shall now look at the regional situation.

Summary and conclusions

Summary

Along with the USSR has gone its influence as a world Power, which protected and backed anti-Western attitudes, provided military aid and showed its naval presence, as well as encouraged and propagated political movements similar to Communism. The situation has changed, as mentioned above, and the events taking place in the area or nearby, which are developing very fast, spring from the situation that each country is going through and often rest on centuries-old grudges.

Besides, we have to take into account the possible causes of friction between European and North African countries mentioned above, such as the different standards of living, poverty, cultural gaps, the influence of Islamic Fundamentalism on religion, the African demographic explosion, etc. Thus, as discussed above, we find poles of disturbance that can turn into focal points of instability.

General

The Mediterranean has very marked geographic, hydrographic and oceanographic features. Merchant shipping routes are restricted by the geography of the area. Although surface Naval Forces have a larger space for maneuvering, their operations are influenced by the land-based Air Forces; logistic support of these Naval Forces may have to cross passages or straits. From the oceanographic viewpoint the Mediterranean is a complex sea; temperature and salinity are frequently uneven, which has major implications for detecting submarines.

ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC FACTOR
(By JUAN ANTONIO GÁRATE COPPA, Admiral).

Indicator of human development

The Mediterranean is certainly a Unique sea. Anyone sailing around the Mediterranean as a geographic area cannot help being surprised by the similar look of faces and skylines, the kinship between landscapes, as well as by traditions and cultural features which are quite close to each other. As F. Braudel has noted, in the Mediterranean area we find more elements of unity than of diversity.

From a historic viewpoint we find, century after century, a whole series of conflicts and confrontations, long before Islam appeared. In sum, passion seems to dwell in the people living on both shores and to drive them towards confrontation with each other. In the Mediterranean there are currently two groups, one belonging to the South and the other to the North, in the face of which we must find a formula for mediating and reaching a synthesis between them so that both regions become allies and supplement each other, rather than being enemies.

Islam and politics

Foreword

Islam is undoubtedly on the move. From Africa to Asia, in meetings at mosques, on the streets, in the marketplace, at the shoemaker's, in Government offices and during get-togethers at home, one hears a versicle of the Koran being quoted ever more frequently, which illustrates the conviction of millions: "They See IT Far Away; We See IT Nearby"... (referring, of course, to the final victory of Islam).

When these countries of Islamic religion adopt a new form of political organisation, the big problem is that the dividing line between Spiritual Power and Secular or Political Power is not clearly marked out. So much so that, until not very long ago, the same term was used in the Arab language to refer to these two types of power.

At that time experiments began with Real Socialism, which failed precisely "because the dogmatic model learned in foreign countries ignores the wealth of symbols, of unifying signs and values of the great ancestral cultures of their peoples". All that can be summed up with a phrase coined by Gramsci, who wrote: "There is no Takeover of Political Power Without a Prior Takeover of Cultural Power".

ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FACTOR

(By JOSÉ GARCÍA RODRÍGUEZ, Colonel - Air Force).

Second part

Geo-strategic conditions

Merely on account of the polarisation that can result from considering the nuclear arms capability of two neighbouring countries, as is the case with Russia and Ukraine, who use the same technology and the same supply channels, the area can be described as being of primary strategic interest.

Another equally important point for the purposes of analysis was the location of most of the former Soviet Union's fleet in the port of Sebastapol, the most important naval base in Southeast Europe. That turned the Black Sea into a strategic table around which NATO member countries, such as Tur-

key and others whose future course was still pending to be defined, placed their bets.

The area, on the side of both the Black Sea and the Straits, is very close to the major sources of tension in the world such as pseudo-religious nationalism and the permanent level of risk in the Near East.

The current picture

There are seven nations which are geopolitically compelled to share this area, and eight nations that militarily and strategically plan, with different degrees of intensity and ambition, to influence the above-mentioned seas and the airspace that envelops them. Those acting for geopolitical reasons, which include Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, share basically the same seas and a sizable common airspace. The second group with military-strategic plans includes a late-comer, the United States, which has kept the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean since the 1950s, initially for blocking the threat of the Soviet 5th Squadron and later on with a virtually unbudging determination to stay in order to bring United States air-sea power close to the focal points of tension and risk in the Near East.

If there is a Power-radiating Area that can be described as being local, supplementary or of relative value in its own right that is the Turkish Straits. However, that Area is not important in itself but on account of a number of circumstances around it, as a result of which it plays a decisive role:

It is close to a point of vital economic and political interest: the Suez Canal.

The sizable deployment of nuclear arms in Ukrainian territory, and uncertainty as to the future of those arms.

The possibility of strangling Russian/Ukrainian naval communications by controlling the Straits.

The Area is an advanced platform of the Western World for the tension points in the Near and Middle East.

TURKISH STRAITS - BLACK SEA AREA

(By JOSÉ GARCÍA RODRÍGUEZ, Colonel - Air Force,
and JAVIER GUISÁNDEZ GÓMEZ - Lt. Colonel - Air Force).

The current picture

General

In the Eastern Mediterranean the area comprising Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt is one of the main sources of instability in the World and at the same time one of the most dangerous and complex in the Mediterranean area. The State of Israel as a Western enclave under the protection of the United States, having advanced technology, updated Armed Forces which are well equipped and even better trained, having nuclear weapons, can become a Power-radiating Centre for the whole of the Middle East.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has in turn acted as a catalyst bringing together neighbouring Arab nations which, taken as a whole, can act as another Power-radiating Centre of a different mark, Islamism, and in the very long run might perhaps become integrated with the former.

Air-Sea control over the eastern mediterranean

None of the above-mentioned nations can permanently enjoy Sea Control in the Eastern Mediterranean. Until the Soviet Union disintegrated the Eastern Mediterranean could be considered a sea in dispute between the 5th Soviet Squadron, which at one time had bases in Syria (Latakia) and Egypt (Alexandria), and the United States 6th Fleet which has supporting bases in Turkey (Iskenderum) and Crete (Suda). At present, the 6th Fleet can be considered the Master of the Mediterranean.

In a purely regional context the outstanding feature is air supremacy by the Israeli Force, as has been shown in the six Arab-Israeli conflicts and in in-depth actions such as the air raid on Entebbe, Uganda, in 1976, and the attack against the Tammuz Nuclear Power Station in 1981.

The Naval Forces there generally lack ocean-going capability as they mainly consist of missile-carrying Coast Guard units; these are mainly for use in a defensive strategy, although Israel's small submarine force fitted with Harpoon missiles, Egypt's eight submarines and Syria's three submarines can undertake operations to deny Sea Control.

The Eastern Mediterranean permits rapid action by the Western Powers in the East, which calls for assuring freedom of action and stability in the focal areas of Suez and the Red Sea. There is a sea and air communications route along the Red Sea for both the European countries having shores on the Mediterranean and for the oil exporting countries. It is very vulnerable to military and terrorist actions.

Comments on the conflicts of the future

There are two opposite trends pulling at the concept of Nation-State: a centrifugal trend, that of separatist Nationalism, and a centripetal force, that of integrating Globalism, Samuel Huntington, the Head of Harvard University's Olin Institute of Strategic Studies, says in his essay on "The End of History". In the future, both trends will give rise to peculiar conflicts, as the main reason for these will normally be cultural rather than ideological or economic as has been the case so far. Religion and culture will carry more weight with the peoples than ideologies. The clash of civilizations will prevail in international relations.

The West's efforts at imposing its values of Democracy and Liberalism as universal values and at protecting its economic interest give rise to reactions of opposition in non-Western Civilizations. In the Islamic culture, the Western ideas of Democracy, Liberalism, Human Rights and Freedom have little resonance.

There currently is no Power-radiating Centre on the Eastern Mediterranean coast although, as mentioned above, throughout History the Phoenicians and the Arabs radiated their trading power from the Syrian-Lebanese coast and Alexandria radiated the Hellenistic culture from the Egyptian coast.

We have also seen that this part of the Middle East is an extremely conflicting area, particularly since the State of Israel was established. On account of being a crossroads between three continents, of the different cultures there are in the area (one for each of the three monotheistic religions), of the oil reserves in Gulf countries with the implications of these reserves for Western nations, and of the opening of the Suez Canal, the area is very important from a geo-strategic and geo-political point of view. The current beligenous factors and those foreseen for the future all make for great instability in the area.

The United States exercises Air-Sea Control in the Eastern Mediterranean by keeping the 6th Fleet there, in cooperation with Nato Air-Sea Forces. Such control assures the defence of the West's economic interests, basically in the form of energy supply sources and an outlet for Western manufactured products towards the East by way of the Suez Canal, which calls for protecting maritime traffic by assuring Sea Control.

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AREA

(By JULIO ALBERT FERRERO, Admiral).

The current picture in the sea

The current political situation

There are three European nations in the area. All of them are members of the European Union, which reinforces the links between them under other alliances (NATO, the Western European Union). In this context we must consider the fact that, of the three nations looking on to the area, only two of them have Naval bases and support facilities there.

Summary and Conclusions

I believe we must note the current trend towards a united Europe, which includes having a common international policy and a common Defence policy. A united Europe will hopefully wish to increase its influence in the Mediterranean, which is such an important area for Europe, and to exploit the possibilities of the area.

France, which has a decisive nuclear force that is currently being updated with a new generation of Surface to Surface Ballistic Missiles, will undoubtedly have a chance of opposing with that force the possible nuclear blackmail we have mentioned elsewhere. But besides, as a Mediterranean Power, and given the deployment of its fleet, France has the most capable Air-Sea Force among European Community countries in the area, whose main feature is the Force of Nuclear Attack Submarines.

On account of the important commercial ports and the manufacturing capacity in the Gulf of Lyon-Ligurian Sea area, the military capability of the Air-Sea bases and facilities located there, the level of development of

the peoples living on its shores, the commercial shipping traffic in general and in particular the tanker traffic, the significance of this area from the point of view of tourism, the air traffic, the air defence facilities, the Naval and Air Forces deployed by the countries on its shores, etc., it is undoubtedly one of the most important Power-radiating Areas in the Mediterranean.

THE GULF OF LYON-LIGURIAN SEA AREA
(By JUAN ANTONIO GÁRATE COPPA, Admiral).

General

The layout of this maritime route, which runs parallel to the North African coast, and the fact that it runs so close to the coast, make it highly vulnerable to the tactical threat posed to merchant or military traffic by hostile environments established on said coast. The vulnerability of this route increases as it passes through the narrow part of the Sicily Channel.

Besides, as the African coast is so close to the European coast there, making it easy to across from one shore to the other, the Sicily Channel has been the traditional route for invasions both ways.

Geo-political and strategic factors

The Libyan leader's fickle, erratic and aggressive foreign policy, which is a mixture of Pan-Arabism and acute Libyan Nationalism, has turned him into the biggest "disturber" in North Africa, at odds with the USA, the United Kingdom and France. He is also in confrontation, albeit more slyly, with his Arab neighbours.

In general, the features that the three Arab countries on the Southern shores of the Sicily Channel have in common are political instability and social problems, while those of Algeria and Tunisia are the difficulties that their economies will have in meeting the population growth expected in a not too distant future.

Military capabilities

In fact the most serious weakness of Algeria and Libya—the military capability of Tunisia is insignificant—is that neither of them has an arms

industry to enable them to make arms of average-advanced technology, sensors or spare parts. Nor can they be assumed to have fully solved the problem of maintenance or of ammunition supplies so, in all these significant aspects they must depend entirely or to a very large extent on foreign sources.

Closing comments

The Italian boot, with its Sicilian appendix, has a controlling geo-strategic position on the Sicily Channel and the neighbouring area. The controlling position is strengthened by the location of Sardinia on the Western access to the Channel. On the Eastern end of the crossing, the route sailed by the ships that cross the narrow part lies far from the African coast and much closer to Sicily. On the other hand there is the possibility of diverting the ships through the Strait of Messina.

All of the foregoing means that Italy has an advantageous geo-strategic position on the main Mediterranean shipping route through this area. The advantageous position would not be of much use, however, if the balance of Air-Sea power in such a small maritime area were not markedly favourable to the Italian side, as shown by the comparative review we have carried out.

On account of the area being considered the centre of gravity of the whole Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, and control of the area resulting in control of the crossing from one basin to the other, it does not seem likely that the United States, as the prevailing World Superpower, will give up its presence there: on account of its interest in the Middle East where the USA may have to send in forces, of the support the USA can provide to Israel, of not trusting Libya, and because the USA will probably adopt a maritime strategy of peripheral Naval deployment in the face of the risks arising from the Eurasian continent.

The possibility of Algeria and/or Libya having access to nuclear weapons would alter the picture, undermining to a large extent Italy's superiority in conventional Air-Sea forces and increasing Italy's dependence on United States retaliation capability.

The review we have carried out of the current picture and future prospects, despite focusing on the Sicily Channel, confirms that the Power-generating Centres outside the Mediterranean seek to reserve for themselves strate-

gic points in the Mediterranean from which they can spread their influence into neighbouring areas. The possibility of new, genuinely Mediterranean Power-radiating Centres arising in the future is doubtful.

THE SICILY CHANNEL POWER RADIATING CENTRE
(By RICARDO ÁLVAREZ-MALDONADO MUELA, Admiral).

Maritime traffic in the area

In the first place, the geo-strategic significance of the Strait of Gibraltar results from the high density of maritime traffic moving through the area. The number of ships crossing the Strait has continued to grow steadily, to more than 70,000 vessels carrying nearly 900 million tons of cargo in 1992.

The most common type of cargo is oil, averaging 270 million tons gross carried on nearly 25,000 ships each year, which makes the Strait area economically and strategically valuable on account of controlling the crossing of such sizable energy resources.

Review of the strategic concerns

The majority of ships sailing through and crossing the Strait of Gibraltar are Spanish ships, for three main reasons:

- Crude oil traffic from the Middle East towards the refineries in Algeciras and La Coruña, and the subsequent distribution of oil products by coastal ships.
- The general cargo and passenger traffic between Spanish Mediterranean and Atlantic ports or coming from overseas.
- The traffic across the Strait between Spain and Morocco.
- The passage of Spanish Navy units, both surface ships and submarines, between Mediterranean bases (Cartagena, Palma de Majorca, Mahón) and Atlantic bases (Cádiz, Rota, Ferrol).

In the past, during the British imperial period, the Strait was vitally important to the United Kingdom for communicating the Mother Country with its Colonies, particularly with India (which is why the Rock of Gibraltar was so valuable to British strategy in those days), yet nowadays it is of very secondary value, as Britain has very few interests of its own in the Mediterranean, and these are merely a matter of prestige.

Political and military background of the area

During the War of Succession, a powerful Anglo-Dutch squadron made up of sixty one warships carrying twenty five thousand seamen and nine thousand landing troops, armed with more than four thousand guns, commanded by the British Admiral Sir George Rooke, attacked Gibraltar on 1 August, 1704, in the name of the pretender, Archduke Charles. Gibraltar was defended by a militar garrison of 100, reinforced by three hundred volunteers living in the area, and about 100 guns, most of which were useless, under the command of General Diego de Salinas.

The people in Gibraltar withstood the attack by the stronger Anglo-Dutch squadron for three days. Following continuous bombing and troop landings, the Anglo-Dutch force succeeded in breaking the weak defences of Gibraltar which had to surrender on 4 August, 1704. The garrison surrendered to Archduke Charles, whose flag was raised on the walls of Gibraltar, rather than in benefit of Holland or England. Despite that, the British Admiral Rooke, ignoring the Prince of Darmstad, who represented Archduke Charles and before whom the stronghold had surrendered, ordered the Archduke's flag to be lowered by force and the English flag to be raised, taking possession of Gibraltar in the name of Queen Anne of England.

Conclusions

The arguments used by the British for continuing with this anachronic situation of having a colony in an ally country which is a member of the Western community and takes part in the same political and Community institutions, a country belonging to the Atlantic Alliance, and for retaining sovereignty over the Colony, do not hold, particularly as Spain has shown sufficient flexibility in seeking acceptable solutions for putting an end to the dispute, and the United Kingdom has refused to comply with the decisions repeatedly adopted by the United Nations calling for de-colonisation of Gibraltar.

THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR AREA

(By ANÍBAL VILLALBA FERNÁNDEZ, Infantry Captain).

The first overall conclusion which may be drawn more or less explicitly from this review is the fact that the whole of the Mediterranean Area, formed by

the two large geographic component elements —the maritime area, consisting of the Mediterranean itself and the Black Sea appendix, and the continental area, formed by the territories of the nations on the shores of these seas and the relevant air space— is a powerful Power-radiating Area in the World geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic framework.

Summing up, the first and most important pillar of the three that support the very high strategic value of the Mediterranean Area is the huge amount of shipping and air traffic circulating in the Mediterranean sea and in the airspace above it.

The second pillar or factor accounting for the strategic value of the Mediterranean Area as a whole is the fact that the conflict or polemologic level in this Area is one of the highest, and probably the highest, in the World, leading to substantial instability and a lack of Security which threatens peace not only in the regional context but also in the World as a whole.

The third factor of its strategic value, i.e. the third pillar supporting the high strategic value of the Mediterranean as a continental Air-Sea area, is —as may be inferred from the review of Power-radiating Areas— the close and extensive links between the sea and the surrounding land in the geo-strategic framework. Naval Power can be projected inland throughout the Mediterranean through three major tactical efforts: landing actions, airborne attacks with fighter bombers, and missile attacks on land targets from surface ships or submarines. Similarly, Continental Power can be projected on to the sea through airborne or missile attacks out of airports or from fixed or mobile ramps situated on land.

Finally, a third conclusion which may be drawn for Spain from the two previous overall conclusions, and one which we shall come back to later on, is that, as the Rota Naval Base taken jointly with the Moron Air Base are the most important operational as well as logistic supporting bases for the US 6th Fleet or even for joint action by the US and Spain throughout the Mediterranean and even beyond the Middle East, as has been clearly shown in the Gulf wars, these two Bases should be considered a matter of top priority by both Spain and the United States.

CLOSING CONCLUSIONS
(By JESÚS SALGADO ALBA, Admiral).