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**Interagency  
Intelligence  
Memorandum**

*Prospects for Soviet Naval Access to  
Mediterranean Shore Facilities*

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PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET NAVAL ACCESS  
TO MEDITERRANEAN SHORE FACILITIES

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## PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET NAVAL ACCESS TO MEDITERRANEAN SHORE FACILITIES<sup>1</sup>

### KEY JUDGMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY

- The Soviets strongly desire to compensate for their loss earlier this year in Egypt of their only adequate Mediterranean facilities for major naval repairs and replenishment. However, with current limited shore access the Soviets will be able to maintain essentially the same level of naval *surface* operations and presence in the Mediterranean that they had supported in recent years. This will apply during crisis periods as well as for their normal low tempo of operations. Without further access to shore facilities, it will be more expensive, more difficult to manage, and harder on the crews, but it can be done.
- Diesel *submarines* on deployment to the Soviet Mediterranean Eskadra come from the Northern Fleet, and have *much more need* of shore access than do Soviet surface ships with their freedom to use closer Black Sea home port facilities. Without suitable new shore

<sup>1</sup>This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for the USSR and Eastern Europe. It was drafted by Navy/ONI [ ] and State/INR [ ] and was coordinated at the working level among CIA, DIA, NSA, State/INR and the intelligence organizations of the Air Force and Navy.

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access, either submarine on-station time in the Mediterranean will probably have to be reduced or the number of support ships increased. Either or both would present significant operational obstacles, but we judge the Soviets can manage it if they have to. At a minimum the Soviets will probably seek to maintain their previous level of submarine operations.

- For the near term, we believe that Soviet prospects for the kind of controlled access to Mediterranean shore facilities that they desire for substantial repairs and sustained replenishment are dim except in Yugoslavia, where Moscow's prospects are marginally better but still problematical. Syria may be the next best bet, but, like Yugoslavia, Syria continues to insist on restricting Soviet use of and access to its limited port facilities. Moreover, Syrian-Soviet relations continue to deteriorate over Lebanon.
- Over the longer term, major political variables in countries all around the littoral could dramatically affect Soviet prospects. Albania, Egypt itself, Libya, Malta, Syria, and Yugoslavia are all examples.
- In the meantime the Soviets are likely to plug away at insinuating themselves and their Mediterranean ships into more *modest port arrangements* with the more promising potential hosts.
- With Algeria and Libya, the Soviets are likely to engage in some active effort to erode these countries' resistance to granting the USSR *routine naval access* to include *major repair* facilities. They may mount a somewhat stronger effort of the same sort in Tunisia than in those countries. Their current prospects, however, are not good in any of the three.
- The Soviets are likely to expend their highest level of effort over the near term on Syria and Yugoslavia, where current Soviet port use, as well as some Soviet political and military leverage with each of those countries, provides a basis to press for the kind of major, less restricted access *now denied* the USSR in these countries.
- Some Mediterranean countries might well cope with Soviet pressure for naval facilities by adopting a modified version of the Yugoslavs' approach, inviting Western as well as Soviet use under carefully specified conditions. And if Yugoslavia itself feels constrained to yield to Soviet pressure for less restricted port use, it is likely to hedge any concessions by heightened solicitation of use by the US and other Western powers.

## DISCUSSION

### I. SOVIET NEEDS

1. The Soviet naval presence has become a permanent feature of the Mediterranean since 1964. Serving as a counter to Western naval forces, these ships have played a role in most of the Mediterranean area crises of recent years. Further, their very presence has served notice that the Soviet Union is a superpower possessing important interests in the region. This Fifth Eskadra<sup>2</sup> has both a strategic defensive mission vis-a-vis Western ballistic missile submarines and carriers, and a wider role in the support of Soviet clients and the symbolic and actual promotion of Soviet state interests. The Soviets are anxious to continue to maintain the Fifth Eskadra's capabilities to perform its roles and to solve problems connected with its support.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The Fifth Eskadra is the fleet organization of Soviet forces operating in the Mediterranean. Prior to 1976 its presence averaged 11 major combatants, 13 submarines (of which about 11 were diesel attack submarines), and minor combatants and supply ships for a total of around 50 units. It regularly includes some of the navy's most modern and effective surface combatants, and is under the control of a flag officer usually embarked on a major surface unit. The Eskadra's normal operational activities include surveillance of Western carriers, ASW, and occasional large exercises. Although a large portion of the Mediterranean deployment is spent at anchorages or in port visits, the Soviets have exhibited the ability to respond quickly to crises and to augment the Eskadra with additional surface ships, mostly from the Black Sea Fleet.

<sup>3</sup>Discussion of the *objectives* which have led the Soviets to have their navy operate in the Mediterranean and other distant areas lies largely beyond the scope of this Memorandum. For fuller treatment the reader is referred to NIE 11-15-74 (Soviet Naval Policies and Programs) and the forthcoming NIE 11-10-76 (Soviet Military Policy in the Third World).

2. We expect that the Soviet navy's presence in the Mediterranean will be maintained, probably at roughly the same levels as have existed over the past few years. Although the Soviet navy is self-sufficient in its peace-time logistics practices, operating ships at sea for extended periods without shore support is expensive in terms of operational efficiency. For this reason, as well as for the potential use of any shore access to enhance their political presence and influence in the area, the Soviets perceive naval access to shore facilities as highly desirable.<sup>4</sup>

3. The degree of Soviet dependence on access to Mediterranean shore facilities varies for different kinds of forces: surface ships can operate almost completely independently of local support; diesel submarine operations are significantly complicated if access to local facilities is unavailable; and deployment of land-based naval aircraft would require almost continual use of local airfields. The Soviets have been able to maintain their naval forces in the Mediterranean with access to only a few shore facilities. They have done this by utilizing afloat support either in port or in anchorages. This effort has involved a continuous presence of tenders, repair ships, small food and stores ships, naval oilers, merchant tankers under contract to the navy, and a host of other support auxiliaries.

<sup>4</sup>We define access to naval facilities as the routine use of another country's airfields, shore facilities, or sheltered anchorages within territorial waters for repairs and substantial replenishment. Port calls, which might also include minor replenishment (e.g., taking on fresh water), neither meet full Soviet needs nor involve the same magnitude of physical or political requirements.

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4. Inasmuch as a key role of the Fifth Eskadra has been reaction to Middle Eastern crises, it is noteworthy that the unprecedented buildup which occurred during the October War of 1973 was not affected by limited logistics support nor was there any need to increase their utilization of then available Egyptian facilities. However, that time the Soviet were also lucky, in that scheduled relief diesel submarines were already enroute from the Northern Fleet. Both these and the diesel submarines they were scheduled to relieve stayed on station in the Mediterranean for the duration of the crisis. (Deployment from the Northern Fleet requires two and one-half weeks for diesel submarines and about ten days for nuclear submarines.) Oil was supplied by merchant tankers and by naval oilers operating out of Soviet Black Sea ports. Further, the evidence indicates that many merchant tankers which had previous experience in supporting fleet units were available and could have been pressed into service had the Soviets chosen to disrupt their own civilian operations. We can expect that the Soviet navy's role in a future *short-term* Mediterranean crisis will not be affected by logistics considerations so long as they have unimpeded access

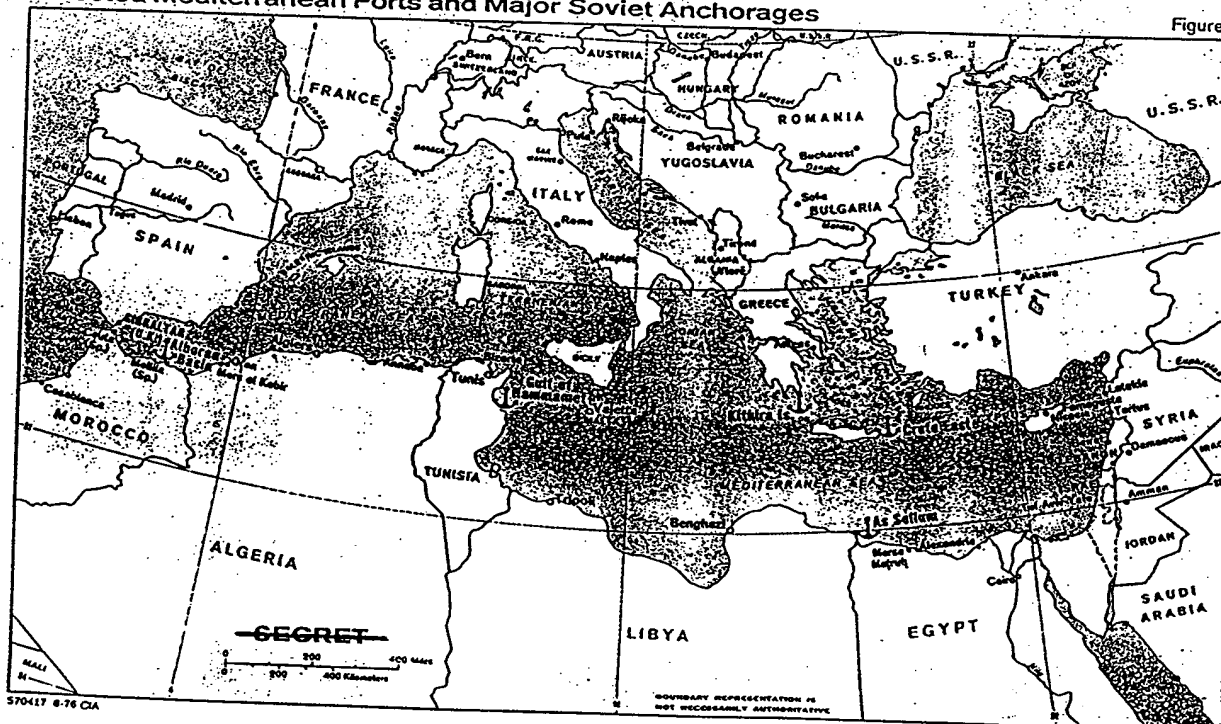
to and from their Black Sea home ports and time for any necessary submarine augmentation.

5. Since Fifth Eskadra surface combatants spend a majority—perhaps as much as 70 percent—of their time at anchor or in port visits rather than underway or in exercises, their logistics and support requirements are somewhat less than would otherwise be required. A certain level of replenishment, maintenance, and minor repairs to combatants can be accomplished in anchorage rather than in ports—a frequent Soviet practice less used by other navies. The primary anchorages used by the Soviets, even when access to Egyptian facilities was available, are located in the Alboran Basin, the Gulf of Hammamet, near Kithera Island, east of Crete, and north of Sollum, Egypt (see Figure 1). These anchorages are situated near the principal operating areas of the Fifth Eskadra.

6. In fact, the Soviets have seen some compensating advantages in Soviets making do with logistically awkward arrangements of this sort. Even during the years when they had continuous and reliable access to Egyptian ports the Soviets carefully avoided becoming too dependent on foreign facilities. Soviet naval

Selected Mediterranean Ports and Major Soviet Anchorages

Figure 1



officers may have preferred to have the means available to support their own forces from their own resources rather than come to rely on other sources which might be denied at a crucial moment. Indicative of the Soviets' naval logistics philosophy and practice has been their complicated effort to avoid dependence on foreign sources of fuel oil. In the Mediterranean some five to seven Soviet POL ships are normally present to provide fuel from their own internal sources to combatants and auxiliaries. In general the practice is for the merchant tankers to refuel naval oilers which in turn go from ship to ship topping them off. The Soviets have held tenaciously to this arrangement in the Mediterranean and any change would require a major policy decision. On the political level, the Soviets have to reconcile their naval involvement in foreign countries with their contradictory desire to minimize the appearance of an international policy driven by naval expansionism.

7. The expanded deployments of the Soviet navy since the mid-1960s, however, have in fact been accompanied by some modification of past practices. Since that time the Soviets have begun to seek rather limited (by Western standards) access to shore facilities not only in the Mediterranean but also in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere. Some of the port services which are now used by the Soviet navy in the Mediterranean include routine replenishment, minor and major repairs, and crew rest. Moreover, Soviet standards of control over their military support have led them to seek agreements with littoral countries in several ocean areas allowing them to establish facilities for their exclusive use.

#### Past Ups and Downs

8. The Soviets have, however, had mixed results in their efforts to obtain access ashore. Beginning in 1958 they based some 12 submarines in the Albanian port of Vlore. However, they had to pull out these units in 1961 with the break in Soviet-Albanian relations. In the following years the Soviets made a determined effort to gain access to Egyptian facilities, but despite much importuning they were admitted only in the wake of the Six Day War of 1967 when the Egyptian government was in no position to resist the strings attached to Soviet offers of assistance. As indicated below, these facilities in Egypt were of great convenience to the Soviets. When Egypt expelled Soviet advisers in July 1972, however, Soviet naval

support activities were curtailed. By early 1976 the Soviets had been completely excluded from Egyptian port facilities following Sadat's abrogation of the 1971 Soviet-Egyptian Friendship Treaty.

#### Naval Air

9. The most significant loss to the Soviet navy from the 1972 ouster was the removal of their naval aviation unit based in Egypt at three airfields. This air organization consisted of ASW, reconnaissance, and missile strike aircraft. The ASW and reconnaissance aircraft conducted missions in the Mediterranean against US and other units, and there is some evidence that the strike aircraft were being prepared for operations over the Mediterranean when Soviet use of Egyptian airfields was terminated. Soviet ocean surveillance in the Mediterranean is currently accomplished primarily by Soviet ship shadowing of major Western ships, through high-frequency direction finding (HFDF) and by satellite reconnaissance; however, use of a Mediterranean airfield did add valuable flexibility and redundancy and regaining access to such a facility probably remains an important Soviet goal. Some agencies would also note that in a crisis, with Syrian concurrence, the Soviets could also use the three electronic warfare aircraft they have maintained in Syria since 1972 to assist their reconnaissance operations. Should the Soviets choose to rotate the Kiev-class ASW carriers in future regular Mediterranean deployments, they would have a continual afloat naval air capability, but they would also want at least emergency airfield access ashore. Soviet use of airfields of Mediterranean littoral states for reconnaissance, ASW, and strike aircraft is an even more politically sensitive issue than access to ship repair facilities. Thus the Soviets are likely to seek naval air access, however desirable, only after any improved ship access they might manage, for all Mediterranean countries would be far less likely to grant naval air access than ship facilities.

#### Other Egyptian Conveniences

10. The Al Gabbari shipyard at Alexandria provided major replenishment and repair services—both routine and emergency—to the Fifth Eskadra, particularly to its diesel submarines, in conjunction with Soviet support ships stationed in the harbor as a floating base. The Soviets had constructed this yard where some 350-



400 Soviet personnel worked on Soviet ships under the control of a Soviet admiral. Until 1972 the Soviets had managerial control of the shipyard; after that they apparently lost control of and even access to facilities ashore—except for the graving docks and perhaps the workshops. These they continued to use, with their floating base, until their final expulsion this year. Prior to 1972, the Soviets had been developing additional and more secure facilities for their own use further west along the Egyptian coastline at Mersa Matruh, but the Egyptian government also quashed these Soviet plans.

11. Alexandria was also convenient in connection with the important operating requirement for fresh water. The presence of at least one water tender in the Mediterranean suggests that Soviet naval combatants—especially the older units—have a restricted capacity to distill their own water in adequate quantities. Fresh water is also transferred to Soviet combatants by oilers and by merchant tankers under naval charter. When the Soviet navy had access to Alexandria, a water tender frequently operated from this port and resupplied naval units in the eastern Mediterranean. To date the Soviets have apparently not found an acceptable shore substitute and so have had to deploy water tenders from the Black Sea.

#### The Diesel Submarine Problem

12. Logistical support is much more a problem for Soviet diesel submarines in the Mediterranean than for surface ships. Since the surface ships primarily deploy from the Black Sea Fleet, major repair facilities in home waters are more readily available. Additionally, crews of surface ships do not have to face the same habitability problems as found on submarines. Soviet submarines which routinely deploy to the Mediterranean, however, come from the Northern rather than Black Sea Fleet. In part the Soviets seem to have chosen this arrangement because of provisions of the Montreux Convention. Article 12 states that submarines belonging to Black Sea powers may exit the Turkish Straits only for overhaul outside the Black Sea, that notice must be given to the Turkish government, and that the submarines must transit on the surface. No provision allows passage of submarines based elsewhere into the Black Sea. Transit through the carefully monitored Straits inhibits flexibility and compromises security. For these reasons the Soviets have chosen to deploy Northern Fleet submarines to the

Mediterranean since they began nearly continuous submarine deployments there in 1964. (Exceptions have been Black Sea Fleet submarines which conducted Mediterranean patrols before and after overhauls in the Baltic.)

13. Use of Alexandria subsequent to 1967 by Soviet diesel submarines for major repair and overhaul was therefore a significant expansion of Soviet use of foreign facilities. Of the average 11 diesel attack submarines deployed, about three used this port at any one time. Most work was performed on submarines afloat in the harbor, but the yard's graving docks were also utilized for more extensive repairs lasting for several months. Further, submarine crews could get away from the confined and uncomfortable quarters found on these diesel boats. Now Soviet submarines can only make limited use of repair facilities in Syrian and Yugoslav ports.

14. Having been expelled from Alexandria, the Soviets must make alternate arrangements to maintain the previous level of submarine operations and presence in the Mediterranean.

—At a minimum the Soviets will probably seek to maintain their previous level of diesel attack submarine operations. They can do this by either increasing the frequency of turnover of their submarines or by increasing the number of submarines tenders and repair ships deployed to the Mediterranean. Either more frequent turn-around times or increased numbers of support ships would be expensive and difficult to manage, but the Soviets could probably accomplish this without a major reduction in their Mediterranean submarine operations. Since their final expulsion from Egypt earlier this year the Soviets have in fact had fewer diesel submarines in the Mediterranean than earlier (e.g., 8 instead of 11). However, they formerly kept more in Mediterranean ports or anchorages than in the last few months, netting out to essentially the same number operationally underway. The result, although at the same level of operational activity, is a lower Mediterranean diesel submarine presence.

—The Soviets could also maintain their former average Mediterranean diesel submarine presence by further straining their logistics support.

—The most preferable alternative for the Soviets would be success in one or more of their efforts to acquire additional shore facilities, as major repair of diesel submarines at sea is impossible, and even lesser support is far from easy.

#### Current Soviet Port Access

15. Current access by Soviet naval units to shore-based facilities (other than as part of official port visits) is essentially limited to *Syria* and, for repair facilities only, *Yugoslavia*. Syrian port facilities in both Tartus and Latakia, despite improvements, are limited. Neither of these two crowded harbors can be used on the same scale as Alexandria since they lack graving docks and other requisite facilities. There has been, however, a near continuous presence of a support ship in one or the other Syrian ports since the 1973 war, providing services to visiting Soviet diesel submarines and minesweepers. In addition, most of the Soviet support ships which were until recently stationed in Alexandria are now stationed in Tartus. Replenishment of water and provisions is probably available to the Soviets calling in Syria; however, there are currently no indications that Soviet naval units obtain fuel oil in Syrian ports. There is evidence that the Soviets have been pressuring the Syrians, thus far unsuccessfully, for some additional access.

16. The Soviets have long been interested in *Yugoslavia's* facilities on the Adriatic, but Tito's government has so far strictly limited Soviet access. Nevertheless, by late 1973 the Soviets were granted limited access and began to send unarmed naval auxiliaries to Yugoslav shipyards for overhaul. In April 1974 Yugoslav maritime law was revised to permit the repair of foreign combatants and auxiliaries in Yugoslav ports. The provisions of the law are strict, however, limiting the number of ships to two of the same nation under repair at any one time in any one port. Foreign combatants can be repaired only in a Yugoslav military shipyard; currently, Tivat is the only Yugoslav port so designated. Furthermore, work must be done exclusively by Yugoslav personnel, using Yugoslav material and repairs and must be completed within six months. Munitions and armaments must be unloaded and placed in the care of Yugoslav military authorities, and only one third of the foreign crew is allowed to stay on board. The law also specifically prohibits foreign installations or fuel depots on Yugoslav territory. Finally, a size limitation of 4,000

tons for warships and 10,000 tons for auxiliaries is imposed. The Soviets apparently have accepted all these restrictions. They delivered a large 12,000-ton floating drydock to Tivat in 1975, thereby increasing its capabilities, and since 1974 several Soviet diesel submarines have undergone overhauls. Soviet access to Tivat is still far less than the facilities and conditions of use they enjoyed at Alexandria, however.

17. The Soviets are not known to have other logistics support arrangements in Mediterranean countries. In the western Mediterranean merchant tankers, supporting naval operations through replenishment of fuel, water, and limited provisions, make frequent port calls to purchase water and provisions. Port visits by these units are accomplished without the prior clearances and formalities required of naval vessels, and such visits are relatively frequent to Tunisia, Calabria, Cagliari, and Palermo, Italy; Algeciras, Spain; Gibraltar; and Algiers and Annaba, Algeria.

#### II. LIKELY PROSPECTS, COUNTRY BY COUNTRY

18. Moscow's general desire to improve its naval access to shore facilities in the Mediterranean focuses on specific possibilities in the light of two sets of considerations. The *physical* aspect involves the nature and location of existing facilities and/or their susceptibility to improvement. There are innumerable ports along the littoral where water, consumable supplies, or even POL might be obtained and minor repairs to Soviet combatants undertaken. Moreover, there are a number of ports suitable for the type of major repairs formerly made at Alexandria. In order to protect the seaward approaches to the Black Sea and to maintain a presence close to several important crisis areas, the Soviets have focused the Fifth Eskadra's major operations in the eastern Mediterranean. We expect them to continue this practice in the near term and thus Soviet naval planners would logically prefer to seek shore access reasonably close to these normal eastern Mediterranean operating areas, but would of course accept it elsewhere. Facilities for fairly extensive work on submarines in sites also suitable for crew rest are higher in Soviet priorities than repair facilities for surface ships. And, their past use of Alexandria notwithstanding, the Soviets would prefer a less conspicuous site to enhance their ships' security. For all the advantages of an established harbor, the precedents of Soviet interest in Mersa Matruh suggest

they would prefer to avoid a busy commercial entrepot.

19. More problematical is the *political* aspect of the Soviets' problem—the likelihood of various littoral countries allowing Soviet shore access, and what kind under what conditions. For the near term, we believe that Soviet prospects for increased access to Mediterranean shore facilities for substantial repairs and regular replenishment are dim, except in the case of Yugoslavia, where they are marginally better but still problematical. Over the longer term, major political variables in countries all around the littoral could dramatically affect Soviet prospects. In the meantime the Soviets are likely to plug away at insinuating themselves and their Mediterranean ships into more modest port arrangements with the more promising potential hosts.

#### Unlikely Prospects

20. An otherwise disparate collection of Mediterranean countries is unlikely in the near term to be actively wooed by the Soviets for their shore facilities. Port calls by Soviet combatants to *France* and *Italy*, for example, appear to be motivated more by broader political objectives—the USSR's demonstration of its legitimacy as a Mediterranean power, weakening NATO, and improving state-to-state relations—than by any reasonable expectation of securing access to naval facilities in those countries. Increased Communist Party influence, or even formal participation, in the government of Italy is unlikely for the foreseeable future to change this situation. The party would presumably want to avoid the sort of political-military favor to the USSR that would validate NATO governments' concerns and stimulate a sharply negative reaction.

21. *Greece* or *Turkey* present equally unlikely short-term possibilities for Soviet naval access. Any Soviet effort to acquire facilities in one would greatly complicate relations with the other, of course. Moreover, the Soviets appear to be playing for much higher stakes than naval facilities in both these countries—namely, enticing them out of the Western camp into at least the nonaligned Third World. Any premature attempt to obtain naval access to facilities in Greece or Turkey, and the unwanted attention it would surely draw, might very well be counter-productive to this larger objective. In the case of

Turkey, other Soviet military priorities—freer naval transit through the Turkish Straits and military-related overflights through Turkish air space—outrank port access. Both Greece and Turkey contain considerable anti-foreign base sentiment in general. Moreover, both have expressed concern in NATO forums about Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean, indicating that both would probably be reluctant to permit much more than periodic Soviet naval visits such as those to France and Italy.

22. There are three ports in *Cyprus*—Larnaca, Limassol, and Famagusta; only the last is a deep water port. The island has no graving docks or other major shipyard facilities. This unpromising physical base, plus the continuing uncertainty over the political future of Cyprus, make it unlikely that the USSR sees any hope for significant naval facilities there. Moreover, the USSR would be reluctant to set in motion naval access gambits which might risk direct Soviet involvement in the event of renewed conflict. Additionally, Greece and Turkey would probably be no more willing to accept Soviet access to Cypriot ports than to their own, and even Makarios would be unwilling to contemplate such action.

23. In three other Mediterranean countries—*Spain*, *Albania*, and *Lebanon*—Soviet naval access by combatant ships is a remote possibility for the foreseeable future. In order to transform any of these countries into viable and high priority prospects, drastic domestic and regional political shifts would be required.

24. With *Egypt*, however bleak the present and near-term prospects, the Soviets probably nurture some hope that Cairo will eventually come again within pull of Soviet influence and allow at least some renewed access to the kind of extensive facilities there that they previously enjoyed. It would be premature, however, to rule out a unilateral move on Egypt's part allowing for some resumption of Soviet naval access. [

] it would certainly be conceivable for Egypt to adopt something like the Yugoslav legal formula. [

] that would allow both US and Soviet warships to use Egyptian shipyards. [

]

### Some Soviet Effort

25. *Morocco's* location in the far western Mediterranean probably reduces its attraction, at least for use by the Mediterranean Eskadra as presently deployed, to Soviet naval planners. The two major ports on Morocco's Mediterranean coastline, Ceuta and Melilla, are enclaves under Spanish control. Casablanca on the Atlantic has better facilities including a graving dock of some 150 meters (490 feet). Rabat may have agreed in 1975 to allow the Soviets more freedom in using its ports in exchange for expanded military assistance. But, even before the USSR's support for Algeria over Morocco in the Spanish Sahara dispute cast a pall over Soviet-Moroccan relations, Morocco tended to regard Western naval visits more favorably than Soviet port calls. And since the Sahara crisis Morocco's attitude toward the US navy has become even more favorable. While this favor could certainly deteriorate, Moroccan caution in dealing with the Soviets will probably be more lasting. And, in the near term, the Soviets will probably not press for naval access there.

26. *Malta* offers an excellent location for central Mediterranean naval operations, and Valetta's extensive facilities include five graving docks—the largest 292 meters (962 feet) long—and well trained, experienced personnel. Prime Minister Mintoff's willingness to discomfit Western powers is also celebrated, but Malta's overall political relations with the USSR have been too poor to offer much present hope for Soviet naval access there. Indeed, Malta now has better relations with the PRC than the USSR. Any future attempts by Mintoff to exploit fears in the West of Soviet naval access to Malta would complicate his desire to figure prominently in the nonaligned movement and would alienate Libya. Malta's entry into the nonaligned group in 1973 was apparently conditioned on a promise that no foreign military presence would be allowed after the British lease expired in 1979. The 1979 expiration of the base agreement awkwardly (for Mintoff) coincides with a triennial meeting of the nonaligned conference. Any continued foreign military presence (Western or Soviet) in his country would also discredit Mintoff's attempt to set himself up as the spokesman for the Mediterranean world in any expanded follow-on European security conference. Nevertheless, the Soviets will presumably be alert to any signs of further shifts in Mintoff's foreign priorities that they might

exploit for even conditional naval access. Meanwhile, they may play on Mintoff's nonaligned pretensions to argue for greater equality of treatment vis-a-vis British and other Western ships. The economic consequences of British withdrawal, particularly if sufficient Libyan financial aid is not forthcoming, may also offer Moscow some leverage. A Soviet promise of regular dockyard revenues, perhaps initially associated with service for noncombatants, could prove attractive—particularly as Western ships will probably continue to use the facilities, allowing Mintoff to argue the case of impartiality. Malta is one of several Mediterranean countries that might in some circumstances choose to develop the Yugoslav model of port access that is strictly regulated but available to both Soviet and Western ships.

### Some Active Effort

27. *Algeria* is rather well endowed with port and related facilities:

—Of some eight well-equipped major commercial ports, seven (Annaba, Arzew, Bejaia, Ghazaouet, Mostagnem, Skikda, and Oran) have fairly extensive anchorages and berthing facilities but lack shipyards for major repair work. Algiers has one of the largest ports on the African continent with two shipyards, the larger having two graving docks and extensive related equipment.

—Mers-el-Kebir, once a French naval base but now inactive, has a deep and well protected harbor. Although it now possesses no major repair facilities, Mers-el-Kebir, in combination with the excellent commercial facilities at nearby Oran, has the potential for a major western Mediterranean complex.

28. Although the Algerian government has for many years permitted periodic port calls by Soviet ships at Algiers and Annaba for showing the flag and replenishment, it has steadfastly rebuffed all Soviet attempts to obtain any access to Mers-el-Kebir and to repair facilities at Algiers. There have been no indications of any shift in Algeria's position. Still, the physical attractiveness of Algerian facilities, combined with the USSR's large political investment in that country, will probably motivate the Soviets to some level of continued effort. Should the Soviets at some future time move toward expanded naval activity in the western Mediterranean, the attraction of Algeria's

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excellent facilities would obviously increase. Moscow's status as Algeria's principal arms supplier gives the USSR potential leverage. The unhappy Soviet experience with Egypt, however, has probably made the USSR more conscious of the hazards of (although not necessarily wiser in) manipulating an arms supply relationship. Moreover, the USSR's reliance on Algerian overflight rights and landing privileges to support its southwest African interests provides Algeria with significant bargaining power of its own. A deterioration in the Algerian-Moroccan situation might provide Moscow with some opportunities to press its case by exploiting Algeria's probable desire for greater military and political support. But even in this case, barring an Algerian debacle of unlikely proportions there seems little prospect that Moscow would gain the kind of access it wants to Algiers or Mers-el-Kebir.

29. *Libya* does not have developed port facilities or natural harbors. The three principal ports, Benghazi, Tripoli, and Tobruk, lack shipyards and other facilities of the sort available in Egypt. Benghazi and Tripoli do have shipyards with limited facilities, and Tripoli apparently has recently acquired a floating drydock. For relatively low levels of usage, various other Libyan sites offer possibilities, but it would still be necessary to construct facilities nearly from scratch along the lines of the Soviets' endeavors in Berbera, Somalia, or as they started to do at Mersa Matruh.

30. The Soviet-Libyan courtship of the last two years has not flourished in the naval access area. Despite some reports from time to time [ ] of impending access, there have been no visits by Soviet naval combatants to Libya since the September 1969 revolution. Other evidence indicates that Libya is still resisting Soviet overtures for some degree of naval access. Nevertheless, in the long term Libya is probably destined to remain attractive to the Soviet navy. In the last two years, Moscow has substantially increased its involvement in Libya's military development. Along with large quantities of Soviet armor, aircraft, and other land-based equipment Libya is to acquire naval ships. Soviet training of Libyan naval personnel, the probable growth of substantial requirements for Soviet technical/training support to maintain Libya's Soviet-supplied ships, and assistance in developing port facilities, all may provide Soviet personnel with greater opportunities for influence in Libya. We think it

highly probable that Moscow, using its various assistance projects as the wedge, will keep on trying gradually to gain access to Libyan facilities. Although this process is likely to be painfully slow and the short-term returns minimal, it could lay a foundation for the contingency of a favorable change in present Libyan attitudes or leadership. Moscow would also be in a good position to try to exploit any increased leverage should Qadhafi's Libya come under pressure from hostile neighbors.

#### Probable High Soviet Effort

31. *Syria* is one of the USSR's current principal clients in the Arab world, and the Soviet navy has enjoyed a near continuous presence in Syrian waters since 1975. Nevertheless the Soviet navy's access to Syrian ports remains uncertain. Moreover, the Soviet-Syrian political relationship appears currently to be deteriorating over Lebanon. Existing port facilities are crowded and were inadequate for Soviet needs, especially submarine maintenance, even before the Soviets lost facilities in Egypt. Syria has no graving docks or trained shipyard workers. Further, prominent Syrian officials have expressed the view [ ] that

Egypt went too far in extending Alexandria's port facilities to the Soviet navy. They have argued that Syria has, by contrast, agreed only to a Soviet presence whose nature was clearly in its own national interest. And Syria continues to reject Soviet requests for increased access.

32. The Soviet navy's present use of Syrian ports appears to be part of a *quid pro quo* for political support and economic and military assistance. Assuming that their present relationship continues, the Soviets will probably try to take advantage of Syria's increasing military and economic debt to them as leverage for expanded access. Syria's proximity to the Mediterranean Eskadra's principal deployment areas and the USSR's heavy military investment there probably guarantee continued Soviet pursuit of improved port access. The Syrians would surely require that the Soviets build the new facilities necessary to accommodate much additional naval access there. And, under no foreseeable circumstances are the Syrians likely to grant unrestricted access to any naval facilities in their country. Moreover, Soviet lack of influence over recent Syrian military involvement in Lebanon does not augur well for other Soviet efforts to parlay aid into increased influence.

33. *Tunisia* has four principal ports:

- Tunis, a large commercial port with extensive anchorage space, but only a small shipyard.
- Bizerte, an improved natural harbor and the major homeport of the Tunisian navy. Some 18 kilometers (12 miles) to the southwest is the Socomena Shipyard with four drydocks, the largest being 250 meters (820) feet long.
- Safayis and Susah, with small shipyards suitable only for minor repairs.

34. Soviet warship port calls began in 1974 and increased in frequency during 1975. Their initial successes apparently led the Soviets to adopt a hard-sell approach. But repeated badgering by Soviet diplomats seeking a more liberal port call policy has cumulatively served to antagonize Tunisian officials, including President Bourguiba. Recent evidence indicates that the government has revised its initially sympathetic attitude toward Soviet naval visits. There is no sign, however, that the Soviets have toned down their approach. Now that they have been expelled from Egypt, Tunisia is all the more attractive to them. Moscow might additionally proffer economic aid or arms supplies. Tunisia has long sought to revitalize the port facilities at Tunis, and a Soviet offer to assist such a project might be well received. In general, the Soviets probably hope to gain a foothold in Tunisia before Bourguiba dies, in hopes of improving their position during the uncertain succession period that will probably follow.

35. Tunisian bureaucratic inefficiency in coordinating Soviet requests for visits has been a helpful element in Moscow's effort to keep its program of port visits alive. However, we expect the Tunisian government to review Soviet requests for naval visits more closely and when they occur, to control them more tightly than in the past. Moreover, recent heightened tension with Libya [ ]

[ ] is likely to affect Tunisia's willingness to accept more frequent Soviet naval visits.

36. Beyond trying to expand their present limited access to *Yugoslav* repair facilities at Boka Kotorska—which encompasses Tivat—the Soviets are reportedly maneuvering for naval access to other suitable facilities, including:

- Pula, with its two graving docks, marine railways, building ways, etc.;

- Rijeka, with two large shipyards capable of major repairs.

There are also various naval yard facilities at Split, but the Yugoslavs are least likely to allow any Soviet presence adjacent to their own main naval headquarters. Yugoslav ports have the additional attraction for the Soviets of potential overland resupply, albeit easier to Pula and Rijeka than over the treacherous Montenegrin terrain to Boka Kotorska; on the other hand, they are all located in the Adriatic, which is susceptible to closure in crisis situations (see Figure 2).

37. These excellent Yugoslav shipyards appear to be the only viable Mediterranean shore access alternative to Egypt for the Soviets in the near term. Moscow will probably use whatever leverage—political, economic, or military assistance—it has to try to secure the greater access it seeks in Yugoslavia. There is some reason to think that the Yugoslav government might show a willingness to open an additional shipyard to foreign, including Soviet, use under the strict legal provisions outlined in Section I above. The Yugoslavs have also recently indicated to US officials that they have no intention of allowing a greater Soviet naval presence ashore, and have specifically invited US navy use of Yugoslav shipyards.

38. For the present, although Soviet hopes of increasing their use of Yugoslav ports may not be very high, Moscow obviously intends to keep trying to increase its access under the current law and, if possible, to open new ports to Soviet use.

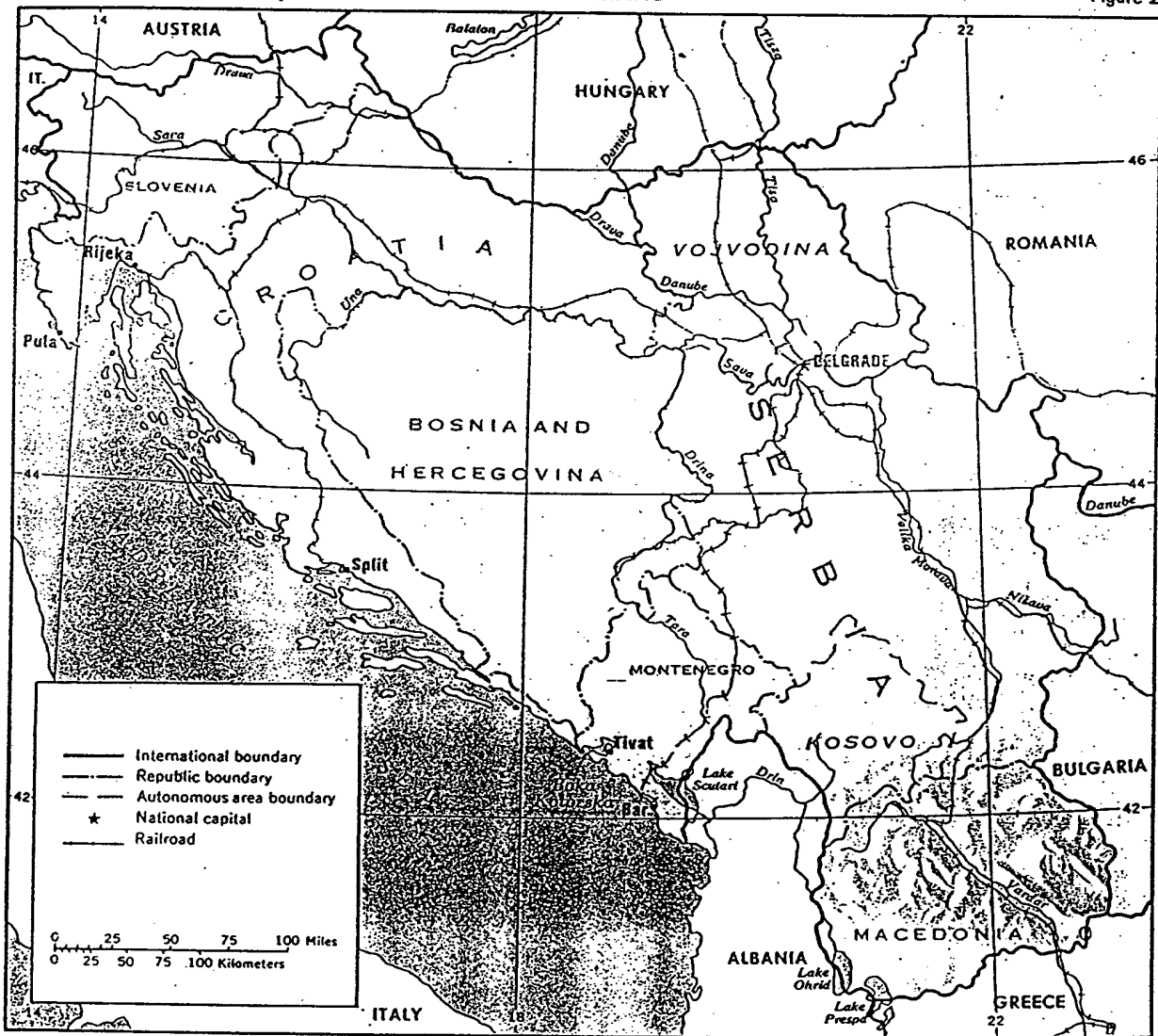
39. [ ] during final Yugoslav-Soviet negotiations over the European Conference of Communist Parties (ECPC), Tito promised that he would issue instructions to allow greater Soviet use of Yugoslavia naval repair facilities, although Yugoslavia restrictive laws would remain unchanged. Whether the Yugoslavs will follow through on this carrot, now that the ECPC has come and gone with the Soviet "concessions" desired by the Yugoslavs, is problematical. Other Soviet incentives might include offers of assistance and economic credits or increased Soviet work orders for Yugoslav shipyards. Yugoslav present dependence on Soviet supplies of the more sophisticated types of military equipment may provide some leverage. In the longer term, Tito's departure could provide Moscow with increased

opportunities. While the eventuality of severe strains in Yugoslav cohesion would favor possible augmented Soviet leverage, this might not pertain on the naval access issue. The Croatian Republic contains most of the attractive port real estate, and Croatians might be more rather than less resistant to Soviet port access in

any deterioration of the Yugoslav federation, fearing a Belgrade deal with the Soviets at Croatian expense. An orderly transfer of power and strict adherence to Tito's policies of nonalignment would probably leave Moscow no better off in naval access terms than at present.

Yugoslav Naval Repair Facilities and Rail Links

Figure 2



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