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other missile systems. But, Neumann reports, "the Syrian tail often wags the Soviet dog." Against Moscow's wishes, for example, Assad fomented a revolt against Yasir Arafat in the ranks of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) last year that split the guerrilla group.

Assad cannot be denied the dominant role in Lebanon that he wants, Neumann argues. Leaders of Lebanon's Druse and Shiite Muslims, and some non-Maronite Christians, have lined up behind Assad, albeit grudgingly. But Lebanon, created artificially after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, has long been "slippery ground" for foreign powers. The Syrian leader's success is by no means assured.

To win the wider leadership role that he seeks in the Arab world, Assad will have to tackle the Arab-Israeli question. That will require a choice between pursuing diplomacy or launching a new Arab war against Israel. Despite Assad's alliance with Moscow, damage to U.S. interests is not foreordained. Washington, Neumann cautions, will have to master "the traditional Middle-Eastern game of opposing and cooperating at the same time."

Reshaping NATO

"A Plan To Reshape NATO" by Henry Kissinger, in *Time* (Mar. 5, 1984), Time-Life Bldg., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

"An alliance cannot live by arms alone. To endure, it requires some basic agreement on political aims that justify and give direction to the common defense." So warns former U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger, pondering the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He calls for drastic action to save the alliance.

Intractable disagreements divide the United States and its European allies. U.S. leaders favor a tough stance toward the Soviet Union and Third World; their European counterparts take the opposite view. Most important, NATO cannot agree on a new defense strategy, needed now that Moscow's vastly expanded nuclear arsenal makes the American pledge to meet Soviet aggression with nuclear weapons much less credible.

Kissinger concedes that frequent flip-flops in U.S. foreign policy (e.g., on the SALT II treaty) give the Western Europeans some cause for complaint. But he thinks that the chief problem is Europe's long dependence on the United States for its defense, which has bred European "guilt, self-hatred, and a compulsion to display *independence* of the U.S." He detects a hint of "schizophrenia" in Europe: "a fear that the U.S. might not be prepared to risk its own population on a nuclear defense of Europe, coupled with the anxiety that America might drag Europe into an unwanted conflict."

Kissinger's solution: a new division of responsibilities within NATO. The Western Europeans, with twice the Soviet Union's wealth and half again its population, should concentrate on defense of the Continent by greatly strengthening their own nonnuclear forces. The United States, with 282,000 troops in Europe today, would maintain "highly mobile conventional forces capable of backing up Europe" but would assign more troops to the defense of the Middle East, Asia, and other areas.

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To reflect the new division of labor, Kissinger would name a European general to command the NATO forces, traditionally headed by an American. And he would give European governments primary responsibility for conducting the arms control negotiations with Moscow on conventional forces and intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

Our NATO allies have long been reluctant to begin a conventional build-up. But Kissinger maintains that continued reliance on the U.S. nuclear deterrent is no longer practical. If the Europeans refuse to do their part, he concludes, Washington should consider a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe and a lower profile in NATO.

Defending the Middle East

"Poised for the Persian Gulf" by Richard Halloran, in *The New York Times Magazine* (Apr. 1, 1984), 229 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Remember Jimmy Carter's Rapid Deployment Force? Critics "scoffed that it was not rapid, had little to deploy, and was not much of a force," recalls Halloran, a *New York Times* Pentagon correspondent. Today, it is called the Central Command, and while no longer in such a desperate state, it still labors under "enormous political and military handicaps."

The Central Command is one of six unified, multiservice U.S. commands responsible for military operations in particular regions of the world. Its chief mission is the defense of the Persian Gulf, which provides 10 percent of U.S. oil needs and 35 percent of Western Europe's. Its area of responsibility includes 19 nations, from Pakistan to Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia. Yet, unlike its five counterparts, the Central Command "has no forces under its operational control except those temporarily in its area, . . . no bases in its operating area, and no established communications and intelligence structures." Its headquarters are located in Tampa, Florida, some 7,000 miles from the Persian Gulf.

Egypt, Oman, Kenya, Morocco, and Somalia have agreed to let U.S. forces use certain of their military bases in an emergency. Rations and ammunition are stored on the British Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, 2,000 miles to the south of the gulf. (In 1984, the Central Command will spend \$9.1 billion on construction at these facilities and on arms aid and military training for 14 of the nations in the area.)

Within 48 hours, 800 Army paratroopers could be on the ground anywhere in the Persian Gulf region. Another 2,200 troops could follow within five days. But limited U.S. air- and sea-lift capacity would slow Marine and Army troop movements considerably after that. Cargo ships carrying tanks and equipment would need 31 days to reach Oman.

As a result, Halloran reports, the Central Command's basic tactic would be "a pre-emptive move—getting into position first in hope of deterring an adversary's strike." U.S. troops could defeat Iran's ragtag Revolutionary Guards if they attacked Saudi Arabia, but a full offensive involving Iran's regular army might be harder to handle.

The Central Command has its weaknesses, Halloran concludes, but four years ago nobody in the Pentagon even had a plan for getting U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf in case of a crisis.