

NATO Deploys Hilex Military Forces for Keeps

Ron Kastner
NCLC Security Staff

In Norway this week, the Conservative Party leader, Kaare Willoch, stated the following: "Norway will find itself in a special situation in case of an international crisis. The Soviet armament buildup on the Kola peninsula has additional ingredients which cannot be explained from global strategic considerations only." The Norwegian press is replete with comments like these which echo the war mongering speech of Sir Peter Hill-Norton at the current NATO conference in Brussels.

The Northern Flank

The key Norwegian Sea area is being beefed up with British naval deployments as a result of the "cod war." According to the Hilex 75 scenario, the Soviets would "take advantage of" such destabilized areas as that created by a "Cod War."

The geographical area between Iceland and the British Shetland Islands, as well as the North Sea, has received a great deal of attention from NATO planners. In terms of military strength, more ballistic submarines patrol within this area than in any other, simply because of the proximity to nuclear targets of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The approximate range of submarine-launched missiles is 3-4,000 miles.

Commercially, the North Sea is vital. It is the only access route to the Baltic Sea and ports like Leningrad and Riga, especially in the winter when the northern ports are frozen in. Since April, 1975 NATO has run three major

maneuvers in these areas, Bold Game, Reforger 75, and Ocean Safari, and has set up a new defense pact to protect the North Sea oil rigs, increasing permanent naval presence there.

The initial scare stories which were released specifically concerning newly realized Soviet naval strength and Soviet ability to interdict shipping lanes to and from Europe via the northern waters began in May 1975. At that time the Soviet Union conducted a massive global maneuver known as OKEAN '75 which was the Soviet military response to the Schlesinger policy of limited nuclear warfare known as MC 14-4.

The comments this week in Brussels by Admiral Sir Peter Hill-Norton were merely repeats of the original red-scare speech on the Soviet Navy given by Vice-President Rockefeller at the May, 1975 graduation ceremonies at the Annapolis Naval Academy.

NATO's southern flank is even now alive with covert military deployment. Two features geographically define Hilex "exercises" in the Mediterranean; 1) the active deployment of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and allied vessels into positions potentially threatening to Soviet sea lanes, and 2) an ongoing land army role in civilian population control.

This is now operational: As of Dec. 4, two large active maneuvers were taking place in the Mediterranean. One, called PHIBLEX '75, is a concentration of ships south of Spain controlling the Straits of Gibraltar, the key access route to the Atlantic Ocean. The highlight of the exercise was an

amphibious invasion landing in Spain at Almeria. The other "exercise" consists of joint French-Greek maneuvers, the "non-NATO" Hilex participants, in the Aegean Sea, simulating control of access and egress routes to the narrow straits through which Soviet ships must pass from the Black Sea.

In concomitant live actions, forces of the Italian army have commandeered communications facilities in both Rome and Abruzzo under the pretext of guarding them from terrorists. They have also taken the strategic rail line stretching from Bologna to Florence for the same reasons. Corriere della Sera reported that other services may also have to be "guarded."

Part of the Hill-Norton speech at the NATO conference dealt very specifically with such support contingencies, stressing "the urgency of involving civil agencies in Europe to augment the military in all aspects of logistics support" since "Soviet improvements have cut the time NATO has to prepare itself for attack."

That the Italian-type moves for population control are planned is further confirmed by similar exercises conducted last spring by NATO in central Europe. Operation Cargo Canoe combined territorial units of four countries specifically for the purpose of testing the logistics support functions of home-based units. Such simulations, and mobilizations of these types of civilian and local guard units are the mainstay social control capability of NATO governments under emergency conditions.