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STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOVIET ARMS AID:
DIPLOMACY IN THE THIRD WORLD**

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by

(10) Roger F. Pajak

(11) 20 June 1980

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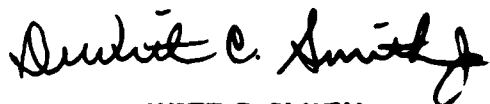
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FOREWORD

This memorandum evolved from the Military Policy Symposium on "The Soviet Union in the Third World: Success and Failure," which was hosted by the Strategic Studies Institute in the Fall of 1979. During the Symposium, academic and government experts discussed a number of issues concerning this area which will have a continuing impact on US strategy. This memorandum considers one of these issues.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.



DeWITT C. SMITH
Major General, USA
Commandant

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. ROGER F. PAJAK, Senior Foreign Affairs Advisor with the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, has been with ACDA since 1971. He received his bachelor's degree in international relations from Michigan State University, his master's degree in Soviet area studies from Harvard University, and his doctorate in international relations and Soviet studies from American University. He spent two years in the US Army as a military intelligence officer from 1961-63, and has been with the US Government as a Soviet foreign affairs specialist since that time. Besides speaking overseas on behalf of the US International Communication Agency, Dr. Pajak has lectured at the National War College, the Foreign Service Institute, the Army Russian Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations, and at various universities. He is the author of *Soviet Arms Aid in the Middle East* (1976), as well as a number of studies on Soviet Middle East policy and the international arms trade.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOVIET ARMS AID: DIPLOMACY IN THE THIRD WORLD

The peoples of the developing "Third World" countries—i.e., most of the states of Africa, Asia, and Latin America—have traditionally been regarded by Soviet theoreticians as potential allies of the Communist world. In the immediate post-World War II period the Soviet leadership, largely preoccupied with problems of internal reconstruction and with developments in Europe, devoted only superficial attention to the governments of the newly emerging states, which Moscow regarded as lackeys of the West. Although welcoming militant action by local Communist parties to seize power in some emerging countries, the Soviet Union did little beyond formally expressing opposition to Western influence in these areas. As more developing countries attained national status and independence, however, Soviet policy became increasingly out of date. New tactics were called for, tactics which would have an appeal to the widespread desire in the developing world for national independence and economic expression.

Following the death of Stalin in 1953, Soviet policy toward the developing countries underwent a dramatic change. The new Soviet

leadership, acknowledging the lack of success of the former tactics, became increasingly cognizant of the strength and potential of non-Communist nationalist movements in the emerging countries. The result was a gradual but fundamental reorientation of Soviet policy toward the newly emerging states. Instead of the hitherto traditional Soviet policy of fostering militant local Communist agitation and subversion, Moscow began to emphasize support of nationalist movements and to develop a variety of bilateral state contacts through a carefully orchestrated program of diplomacy, trade, and aid. This tactical shift apparently reflected Moscow's assessment that the most effective strategy for establishing and expanding its influence and for eroding that of the West in Third World countries lay in associating itself with the strong nationalist and anti-Western sentiment in many of these states.

One of the most consequential instruments in the transformed Soviet approach toward the developing countries was a newly-conceived program of foreign assistance, patterned somewhat after that of the West. The Soviet decision in 1955 to offer military assistance, in particular, was probably stimulated by at least three factors: the general success of the Soviet postwar recovery effort; the availability of surplus stocks of military equipment as a consequence of military manpower reductions and changes in military doctrine; and, the conspicuous lack of success of indigenous Communist elements in the developing countries.

The leaders of many Third World countries, motivated by their own political and economic aspirations, were warmly receptive to the post-Stalin changes in Moscow's policies and were generally prepared to accept Soviet foreign assistance. This receptivity was enhanced by the unwillingness of many developing states to associate their newly-won independence with the foreign policy objectives of the leading Western powers. The Soviet Union needed only to present itself as an additional source of political, economic, and military support to find a number of willing recipients.

In this milieu, foreign assistance immediately became an important policy tool for expanding Soviet influence in the Third World. Since the inception of the foreign aid program in the mid-1950's, Moscow has come to regard this instrument of policy as somewhat of an index of its power and influence in the Third World.

ORGANIZATION

Overall responsibility for implementing the arms aid and sales program is assigned to the Chief Engineering Directorate (GIU), a component of the Soviet State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations. The GIU, which acts as the "supplier" in military aid contracts, handles the negotiations with recipient governments. In addition, the GIU coordinates with the Ministry of Defense on the types and quantities of equipment and with the External Relations Directorate of the General Staff on training and technical assistance to be provided. Subsequent requests for modification of an arms agreement must be approved by the GIU. If any changes requested by a client exceed the value specified in an agreement or if they entail advanced weapon systems, the GIU apparently forwards the request to the Minister of Defense or to the Politburo. Finally, the GIU arranges for shipment of military equipment with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Maritime Fleet.¹

PRICES AND TERMS

Much of the attractiveness of Soviet military assistance to Third World countries has been due to the comparatively low prices and favorable terms offered by Moscow. The prices charged to developing countries have varied with the type and condition of the equipment, but on the whole Soviet prices have been substantially below Western prices for comparable equipment. For example, the price of the new US F-15 fighter charged Israel averaged about \$12 million per aircraft, while the price of a Soviet MIG-23 fighter reportedly averaged about \$6.7 million. The price for a MIG-21 fighter reportedly listed at \$2 million, while that of an F-4 was \$5.7 million.² While the types of aircraft cited are not fully comparable in terms of characteristics and capabilities, the wide variation in reported prices serves to illustrate the point.

Besides low prices, the Soviets have offered attractive financial terms to recipients. Credits generally have been made available at 2 percent interest, with repayment periods averaging 10 years, following a grace period of one to three years. Moreover, to clients hard-pressed for foreign exchange, Moscow frequently has permitted repayment in local currency or commodities. In addition, Moscow often has postponed payment when recipients have been

unable to meet their scheduled obligations.³

Discounts from list prices also have been an intrinsic feature of Soviet military assistance. Such discounts reportedly have averaged about 40 percent of the value of Soviet contracts. Although discounting probably is partly premised on Moscow's assessment of a recipient's ability to pay, political favoritism also may be discerned in the variations evident in Soviet practice.⁴

While the underlying motivation of the Soviet arms aid program remains essentially political, there has recently been an increasing emphasis on arms sales to provide hard currency revenue. For the past several years the Soviets have increasingly required payment in convertible currency, at least from oil-producing clients, such as Algeria, Libya, and Iraq. The Central Intelligence Agency estimated that the Soviet Union gained approximately \$1.5 billion in hard currency earnings from arms sales in 1977 alone.⁵ Sales for hard currency apparently have largely supplanted the "arms-for-commodities" trade of earlier years and will likely comprise an increasing share of total Soviet arms transactions as the program continues.⁶

COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

Equipment

In the early years of the program, it was common for observers to characterize the Soviet equipment exported as antiquated materiel, much of it delivered in various states of disrepair. However, even in the first decade of the program, a careful observation of the actual items delivered indicated that probably well over half of the total types provided was still in use by Soviet or Warsaw Pact armed forces, with a substantial number of items then still in production in the USSR.⁷ Although some purchases were tactically inept—a striking example was the light cruiser that Indonesia bought essentially for prestige purposes in 1960—most of the equipment provided meshed handily with the existing military framework.

An initial advantage of the program during the early years, and one which undoubtedly commended itself highly to Soviet military planners at the time, was that the Soviet Union was able to offer military aid at very little cost to itself by delivering primarily obsolescent, but still effective, weapons made available by its own

modernization program. The types of equipment provided ranged from small arms to artillery, armored vehicles, destroyers, submarines, jet aircraft, helicopters, engineering and communications equipment, plus spare parts and ammunition.

The importance that the Soviet leadership attached to its arms program was shown by its willingness, since the early 1960's, to make available to certain clients modern weapons systems which were not yet possessed in quantity, if at all, by other Communist countries. During the 1960's deliveries to major recipients included TU-16 medium jet bombers, MIG-21 jet fighters, An-12 turboprop assault transports, *Komar*-class guided missile motor gunboats, and a variety of surface-to-air, air-to-air, and air-to-surface missiles. Most of these items were then in use by the USSR or were just being phased into Warsaw Pact inventories.⁸

While Soviet equipment was generally delivered in satisfactory, usable condition, problems connected with usage sometimes arose in the developing countries. One of the most blatant examples was the delivery to the Arab countries of early models of the MIG-15 fighter without the ejection seats standard in jet fighter aircraft.⁹ This meant of course that, even at the MIG-15's subsonic speed, the chances for survival of a pilot of a crippled aircraft were practically nil. Given these circumstances, pilots understandably showed little enthusiasm for aerial combat in this type of aircraft.

Another perennial difficulty has concerned spare parts. The Soviets provided spares in an aid agreement supposedly sufficient for maintenance and repair for a specified period, but such stocks apparently have never been adequate to a recipient's needs. The recipients, moreover, through faulty operating and storage procedures frequently misused equipment and quickly exhausted supplies of spares,¹⁰ with the result that a lack of spare parts has remained a characteristic of the aid program to the present day.

Another important factor influencing the flow of new equipment has been the cyclical pattern of the program, reflecting the replacement of older items in recipients' inventories. The most obvious examples have been the periodic replacement of various generations of fighter aircraft (MIG-15/17s with MIG-21s and later, MIG-23s), acquisition of the TU-16, and in some cases the TU-22, jet medium bomber after initial purchases of the IL-28 light bomber, and replacement of the T-34 tank of Korean War vintage with the T-54/55 and T-62 main battle tanks, and more recently, the first-line T-72.¹¹

As the program matured, the Soviets made available an increasing proportion of late-model equipment to their clients. Especially during the 1970's, some of Moscow's Arab clients began receiving the same types of air defense equipment as the Soviet forces, again before the Warsaw Pact states in some cases. In 1970-71, Egypt—one of Moscow's most favored clients at the time—was the first non-Communist state to receive the SA-3 low-level SAM missile, the FROG tactical ground rocket, and the mobile ZSU-23-4 radar-controlled antiaircraft gun. Also noteworthy among Soviet shipments was some of the most sophisticated Soviet command and control and secure data transmission equipment intended to enhance the effectiveness of the Egyptian air defense system.¹²

Technical Assistance

The complexity of modern military equipment necessitates increasingly skilled personnel to assemble, maintain, and operate it. This has required the Soviets to provide a program—complementary to the provision of equipment—of technical assistance consisting of two parts: the training in the Soviet Union of military personnel from the developing countries and the dispatch of Soviet military technicians and instructors to countries receiving military aid. Every recipient country has received both types of technical assistance, illustrating the criticality of such assistance to the effectiveness of the program.

Trainees

In the period 1955 through 1978, an estimated 44,000 military trainees had gone to the Soviet Union for various types of training, with another 6,000 having received some military instruction in Eastern European countries.¹³ About 2,000 trainees were undergoing training in Communist countries at the end of 1978. Largely reflecting the size and importance of the key aid recipients, the vast majority of the military trainees have come from eight countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Syria, and Somalia. Although the arms aid program with Indonesia was discontinued in 1965, that country still accounts for the largest number of trainees, about 7,500, or 16 percent of the total.¹⁴

In the early years of the program, Czechoslovakia and Poland, in their role as Soviet intermediaries, played an important part in the training. Students initially received naval training in Poland, while Czechoslovakia provided flight training and instruction in elec-

tronics, communications, and maintenance. A wide range of courses was then established in the Soviet Union to provide all levels of instruction from motor vehicle maintenance and repair to a 3-year course for senior officers at the Moscow Military Academy.¹⁴

Although Soviet technicians usually arrive following the delivery of equipment, it appears that indigenous trainees frequently are sent to the Soviet Union prior to the delivery of the weaponry for which they are trained. Accordingly, more sophisticated equipment which requires a higher level of instruction can be provided at a later date, in keeping with the progress of Soviet-conducted training programs. Additional programs, as required, probably can be set up with a minimum of lead time because similar training courses are operated for Soviet military personnel.

Technicians

The continuing high level of deliveries of sophisticated Soviet weapon systems to the developing states has required increasing Soviet technical assistance in the operation and maintenance of such equipment in the recipient industries. During 1978, an estimated 10,800 Soviet and 1,300 East European military technicians and advisers were present in developing countries, about a 20 percent increase over the number present in 1977.¹⁶ The countries with the largest Soviet military advisory contingents (over 1,000 Soviet technicians present) were Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, and Syria.¹⁷

Soviet military advisers and technicians assist essentially in three functions: the delivery, assembly, and maintenance of military equipment; the training of local personnel in the operation and maintenance of equipment; and, the instructing of indigenous military officers in staff and operational units. Training courses have been established for the entire range of armaments from small arms to jet aircraft and naval vessels. Soviet officers also serve as instructors in the staff schools and military academies of these countries. In their capacity as advisers, Soviet officers have sometimes played key roles in modernizing and reorganizing the military establishments of recipient countries.¹⁸

Aid to Military Industries

Another significant aspect of the Soviet program is assistance designed to develop local arms industries and maintenance facilities

in the developing countries. The larger recipients have received substantial aid in the establishment of new military airbases, training facilities, and naval bases, while existing facilities have been expanded and modernized. In addition, a number of small arms and ammunition plants have been constructed in countries such as Afghanistan and Egypt.¹⁹ The largest and most sensational example of Soviet aid in this regard is the MIG-21 jet fighter production complex in India, where three large plants for series production of these aircraft and their ancillary equipment are now in operation.²⁰ The establishment of such sophisticated military complexes as these has necessitated substantial amounts of Soviet industrial equipment, financial aid, and technical support.

MAGNITUDE AND PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION

It is difficult to ascertain the magnitude of the Soviet military assistance program with precision, since many facets of the program are shrouded in secrecy. Arms deals oftentimes are buried in national statistics as general commercial transactions. Western reports vary widely as to the value and types of equipment provided, so that available data must be scrutinized carefully in terms of reliability of sources, consistency with other reporting, and reasonableness.²¹

Because the Soviet program has been partly a response to available opportunities and because it is influenced by the absorptive capacity of recipients, the annual magnitude of aid and sales commitments has been highly variable, as shown in Table I. Beginning in 1955-56, Czechoslovakia, serving as an intermediary for the USSR, extended an estimated \$200 million worth of military assistance to Afghanistan, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen.²² The Soviet military aid program began in its own right in 1956, when Moscow concluded arms deals directly with Afghanistan and Syria and subsequently with Egypt.²³ Although neither the precise quantities of arms provided nor the prices or conditions of payment were published, by the end of 1957 about \$400 million worth of Soviet arms aid was estimated to have been extended to Middle Eastern countries.²⁴ A dearth of reports for the next few years possibly indicates that new extensions of Soviet military aid temporarily fell off, perhaps to allow time for assimilation of previous arms deliveries.

TABLE 1

Value of Soviet Arms Transfers to
Non-Communist Developing Countries

(Million US dollars)

	Agreements	Deliveries
Cumulative		
1955-68	5,495	4,585
1969	360	450
1970	1,150	995
1971	1,590	865
1972	1,635	1,215
1973	2,810	3,130
1974	4,225	2,310
1975	2,035	1,845
1976	3,375	2,575
1977	5,215	3,515
1978	1,765	3,825
TOTAL	29,655	25,310

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1978, Washington, DC, September 1979, p. 2.

As the trade and aid offensive matured and the Soviets became embroiled in the complexities and slow fruition of economic development, the military aid program undoubtedly appeared even more attractive to supplier and recipients alike. With the open eruption of the Sino-Soviet conflict in 1960, the Soviet Union embarked on a vastly expanded wave of military aid activity,²⁴ evidently at least partly in an effort to demonstrate militant Soviet support for the "national liberation movement" to the rest of the Communist world and the nonaligned countries as well. The momentum of the arms program carried over into 1961, as Moscow signed additional large agreements, highlighted by one with Indonesia as its dispute with the Netherlands intensified.²⁵ The incidence of new military aid commitments decreased over the next several years, perhaps to allow time for assimilation of equipment previously ordered.²⁷ Then, due to heavy demands for equipment resupply resulting from the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 and the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, Soviet arms exports surged dramatically upward in the late 1960's.²⁸ Most of the arms aid and sales activity during the 1970's reflected the continuing military buildup and modernization in India after the December 1971 conflict with

TABLE 2

Regional Distribution of Soviet Arms Transfers to
Non-Communist Developing Countries, Cumulative 1955-68

(Million US dollars)

	Agreements	Deliveries
North Africa	4,965	3,875
Sub-Saharan Africa	3,900	2,750
East Asia	890	860
Latin America	650	630
Middle East	14,960	13,800
South Asia	4,290	3,375
TOTAL	29,655	25,310

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1978, Washington, DC, September 1979, p. 3.

Pakistan and in the Arab countries following the 1973 war and significant commitments to Angola, Ethiopia, Iran and Libya. Table 2 indicates a regional distribution of Soviet arms transfers over the course of the program. By the end of 1978 (the latest year for which comprehensive data are available), total Soviet military aid and sales commitments to nonaligned Third World countries approximated \$30 billion.²⁹ (For additional statistical data on the program, see the tables in the Appendix.)

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM IN RELATION TO SOVIET OBJECTIVES

Of the various types of foreign assistance employed by the Soviets—military, economic, and technical—military aid has proven to be the most dramatic and consequential. Besides directly contributing to the emergence, growth, and survival of nonaligned regimes, arms aid has fostered an image of the Soviet Union as a benign but powerful anticolonialist power. It has served as the primary Soviet vehicle for acquiring influence in regions important to Western interests, often providing the Soviets with political entree into countries where their role had hitherto been limited or nonexistent. Furthermore, military aid has often provided the opening wedge for a variety of diplomatic, trade, cultural, and

other contacts which would have been difficult or impossible to achieve otherwise, such as in the Arab countries in the 1950's, India and Indonesia in the 1960's, and Ethiopia more recently.

The Soviets were quick to perceive in military aid unique advantages which economic assistance or traditional methods of diplomacy did not provide. Arms agreements were easy to plan and could be implemented quickly, whereas economic aid required lengthy, detailed preparations before program implementation could begin and results seen. Arms and equipment which Moscow agreed to provide were often available from existing stocks or could be diverted from current production, and deliveries could begin relatively quickly after a deal was made.¹⁰ Soviet military technicians could rapidly be sent to a recipient country to begin assembling equipment and initiate training programs. More sophisticated equipment which required a higher level of instruction could be provided at a later date, in keeping with the progress of training programs conducted locally and in the Soviet Union. The ability of the recipient to maintain or use the equipment was usually not an overriding consideration.

Military assistance accordingly has proven to be one of Moscow's most effective, flexible, and durable instruments for establishing a significant presence in the nonaligned countries. By furnishing such assistance, Moscow became an advocate of a recipient's national aspirations and was able to facilely exploit this position to the detriment of Western interests. Arab-Israeli tensions, the Yemeni conflict with the United Kingdom over Aden, the Indo-Pakistani dispute, and Indonesia's territorial conflicts are examples of opportunities which were initially ripe for Soviet exploitation. The developing states generally sought Soviet arms for use against their neighbors or for prestige purposes and only occasionally, as in Afghanistan since 1978, has such a state procured Soviet weapons primarily to maintain internal security.

In addition to the broader objective of undermining Western influence in recipient countries, the Soviet leadership has used military assistance and sales to affect Western strategic interests and to eliminate Western military facilities and alliances adjacent to Soviet borders. Moscow sought to neutralize the Baghdad Pact (which subsequently evolved into CENTO) and SEATO so as to disrupt the West's "northern tier" defenses against the Soviet Union. Moscow at an early date provided military equipment to

Afghanistan to ensure that Kabul remained neutral and well-disposed toward its Soviet neighbor. Soviet aid to India was intended to diminish India's reliance on the West and to extend the Soviet presence into the subcontinent. Soviet arms aid to Southeast Asian and African countries was designed to strengthen Soviet influence at the expense not only of Western, but also of Chinese Communist, interests.

While the West has viewed its own military assistance to the developing countries as an influence for national stability, Moscow has regarded arms aid, *inter alia*, as a means for creating international instability and frequently has channeled arms to areas where the West has sought to limit or control military buildups. Arms shipments to rival Arab countries, for example, have been partially intended to keep the area divided and in ferment. Soviet sensitivity toward inter-Arab rivalries has been demonstrated by the care with which advanced weapons have been introduced to different recipients at about the same time.

A LIKELY SOVIET ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM

As Moscow assesses the returns from nearly 25 years of military assistance, it must conclude that, on balance, the program has served Soviet interests reasonably well. Although the Soviet Union has acquired no ideological converts directly through its arms aid (with the partial, qualified exception of the Taraki-Amin regimes in Afghanistan), it has acquired a substantial though unquantifiable degree of influence in the Third World. An arms agreement with a developing country has been the point of departure for nearly every major Soviet advance in the Third World, beginning with the first Egyptian accord in 1955. Soviet support for nationalist governments has contributed substantially to the weakening or elimination of Western influence in many countries and has facilitated an expansion of Soviet presence into a number of strategic and sensitive areas. Moreover, through the acquisition of Soviet arms, a number of developing countries—notably Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Libya, and Syria—now are largely or almost totally equipped with Soviet military equipment and are heavily dependent on Moscow for logistical and technical support.

Through its military training and technical assistance program, in conjunction with economic assistance and academic training, the

Soviet Union has exposed many of the nationals of these countries to a Communist orientation—an exposure which Moscow hopes will influence institutional developments occurring in the Third World. Moreover, the Soviets have established important relationships with military leaders, as well as junior officers who may eventually hold key positions in their countries.

Moscow undoubtedly has experienced its most salient successes among the Arab countries. For nearly a quarter of a century the Soviet leadership has taken advantage of the Arab-Israeli conflict almost to the point of displacing Western political influence among its major Arab clients, again with the dramatic exception of Egypt. Although Arab recipients occasionally criticize some of Moscow's policies, they have in effect retreated from their professed policies of nonalignment and tend to cooperate with Moscow on many international issues.

On the other hand, the military aid relationship has not provided the Soviets with strong or dependable control over their Arab clients, and the fortunes of local Communists have not improved as a result of the increased Soviet presence. Moreover, as a result of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 the Soviets learned that a special relationship with arms recipients can lead to risks of unwanted military involvement and possible confrontation with the United States, diplomatic and prestige losses emanating from the defeat of their clients, and the cost of replacing lost equipment and restoring a damaged relationship.

Arms aid also has produced beneficial results for Moscow in South Asia. By serving as the principal arms supplier to Afghanistan for over two decades, the Soviet Union has helped to ensure the friendly neutrality, and more recently the active friendship, of that government. Soviet military sales to India have enhanced Moscow's stature in New Delhi and circumscribed that of the West, while helping to place the Soviets on India's side in the latter's dispute with Pakistan.

In the economic sphere, the Soviet arms aid program in general has generated closer trade and economic relations with most recipients. Where aid provisions have called for repayment in commodities, this has resulted in some trade reorientation from traditional markets to the Soviet Union. Where cash terms are required by Moscow, the recipients presumably can afford these expenditures. Although no definitive figures are available, it is

probable that the bulk of credits extended by Moscow remains unpaid, and the Soviets in the end probably expect to write off much of this indebtedness. (One may ask what other choice do they have?) In the meantime, Moscow can continue to win additional political returns by generous debt rescheduling. In any event, existing indebtedness has not inhibited Moscow or its clients from entering into additional arms agreements.

Despite periodic setbacks or coolness in one client country or another, the overall impact of the arms aid program appears to lie on the positive side of the Soviet foreign policy ledger. While local Communists have not appreciably advanced their causes in the developing countries, the Soviet presence and influence in these areas have grown rapidly in the past two and a half decades to a level perhaps only dreamed of by Stalin. Moscow likely has concluded that, although the policies of aid recipients frequently have failed to parallel those of its own and though periodic polemics with some recipient states recur, the program has enhanced the Soviet Union's overall international position.

SOVIET INFLUENCE: HOW DURABLE?

How much effective leverage or influence the Soviets have gained in any particular area is, of course, difficult to measure. Still more difficult to ascertain is how much of any such gain can be attributed directly to military assistance and how much to broader political considerations.

While arms aid may have increased Moscow's potential influence in many developing states, it has not enabled the Soviets to control the domestic or foreign policies of these countries. Nor have the Soviets been able to reconcile the compatibility of their own objectives with those of their clients. Realizing this, Moscow for the most part has tried not to abuse the influence it has gained, and only rarely have the Soviets attempted to directly use their aid to exact political concessions.

A number of examples may serve to illustrate the limited nature of Soviet influence. Despite receiving large amounts of aid, Iraq and Syria have not hesitated to antagonize Moscow when vital interests of these countries were at stake. Algeria has remained aloof from developing overly close ties with the Soviet Union, and Libya has not hidden its suspicions of Soviet intentions in the Middle East.

Moreover, Arab moves to diversify sources of military equipment are challenging the effectiveness of the arms relationship as a policy lever. While the preponderance of Soviet-origin weaponry in Arab inventories will make diversification a slow process, even a moderate degree of success in the long run will erode potential Soviet influence.

At the same time, prominent Arab Communists have not been commensurately assisted by the Soviet presence. Many of Moscow's leading supporters in various Arab countries in fact have been purged or forced into exile. In one particularly dramatic example, Soviet-Sudanese relations were seriously weakened as a result of the Sudanese Communist Party's decimation following an unsuccessful left wing coup. No doubt particularly galling to the Politburo has been the inability of leaders which it viewed with favor—such as Kassem, Ben Bella, Nkrumah, and Sukarno—to remain in power, despite large infusions of Soviet aid.

The Soviet Union's most dramatic and outstanding failures have been in Egypt and Indonesia. The Soviet eviction from Egypt resulted in Moscow's loss of influence and position in the largest and most influential Arab state. Similarly, the Soviet ouster from Indonesia after the abortive Communist coup in 1965 was a serious blow to Moscow's strategic position in Southeast Asia. The Soviets to date have not been able to fully substitute for either of these critical losses.

CONFLICTING COMMITMENTS

Moscow has skillfully exploited the political openings provided by military aid by identifying itself with a popular cause or taking sides on a current issue. This has meant alienating some states to gain the friendship of others, but for the most part this probably has been a relatively uncomplicated calculation, especially in the earlier years of the program. Enmity with Israel was a small price for friendship with the Arab states, and the resentment of Malaysia was tolerable while Indonesia was being drawn closer to Moscow.

More recently, however, Moscow has discovered that the expansion of its military assistance program and its greater involvement in the international arena have led to conflicting commitments, complicating its bilateral relations and limiting its options. A number of examples could be cited, but the most ob-

vious recent illustration has been Soviet involvement in Somalia and Ethiopia. When the Ethiopian regime appealed to Moscow for aid in 1977, the Soviets opted to exploit this opportunity at the expense of its 14-year aid relationship with Somalia. Not only did such action naturally sour Soviet bilateral relations with Somalia and result in the loss of important Soviet naval support facilities there, but it undoubtedly sensitized Moscow's other client states to the possibility of the Soviets' choosing sides in similar situations in the future.

Moscow also has probably viewed with concern the prospect of arms recipients using their weapons for purposes not always congruent with Soviet interests, as has been the experience of other major arms suppliers. There is no evidence to suggest that the Soviet Union has prompted any major recipient to engage in open hostilities. Soviet leaders, however, obviously are aware that their equipment has been acquired for potential use against "hostile" neighbors, and the possession of sizable amounts of arms encourages countries to engage in political or military activity that they otherwise might not have undertaken. Despite its comprehensive and longstanding military aid relationship with Syria, for example, Moscow was unable to dissuade the Syrian government from intervening against the leftist/Palestinian forces in Lebanon in 1976.

BASE RIGHTS

It is unclear to what extent the Soviets have directly used their aid program in attempts to secure the establishment of formal military bases, as opposed to limited base rights arrangements. Until Egypt abrogated such arrangements in March 1976, the Soviets enjoyed the use of naval repair and fuel storage facilities at Alexandria and Port Said to support their Mediterranean Fleet operations. Similarly in 1977, as a consequence of strains resulting from the Soviet arms buildup in Ethiopia, Somalia evicted the Soviets from access to naval repair, missile-handling, communications, and other facilities at Berbera.³ The Soviets apparently are seeking similar support arrangements elsewhere in the area, but it is doubtful that they will enjoy the use of anything approaching their former facilities in Egypt and Somalia for the foreseeable future because of Arab and African sensitivities on this score. At the same time, it is doubtful that Soviet military planners contemplate ex-

tensive reliance on foreign facilities in their normal operations. To the extent that they have military interests in a recipient country, the Soviets' intentions appear to be to prevent military cooperation with the West, to seek the use of the recipient as a proxy for various initiatives against Western interests, and to improve opportunities for limited access by Soviet forces, when desired, to ports, airfields, and other facilities.

OUTLOOK FOR THE PROGRAM

The Soviet leadership undoubtedly will continue to use military aid and sales as a primary foreign policy instrument for maintaining and expanding Soviet influence in the Third World. Such aid has a more immediate impact and creates a greater degree of dependence than other forms of assistance. The bulk of the Soviet military aid flow probably will continue to be made available to countries which have been the principal recipients in the past and which consequently have developed a dependence on Soviet arms and political support. The Soviets will likely continue to upgrade the weapons in recipients' inventories to replace obsolete equipment and to meet competition. Such modernization of necessity will concomitantly ensure a continued requirement for technical assistance. Beyond these basic trends, the magnitude of Soviet arms aid and sales will depend on the vagaries of the international arena and events, such as regional tensions and conflict, which are largely unpredictable.

It seems likely that Soviet arms will continue to flow to the Arab countries, where Soviet prestige is deeply involved and the political cost of "letting down" the recipients would impact significantly on Moscow. In South Asia, Afghanistan and India will continue to receive a high volume of equipment to maintain the large investments made and influence achieved. The tensions and uncertainties of domestic and regional politics in Africa no doubt will perpetuate prospects for the Soviets to make political and perhaps strategic gains at the expense of the West, as well as China.

In Latin America, where Moscow has established an active arms sales relationship with Peru, in addition to its longstanding connection with Cuba, ongoing tensions may offer additional opportunities for the Soviet Union. Intensifying desires for modern weaponry on the part of some Latin states, frustrated in their

attempts to procure modern equipment from traditional sources, may increase their receptivity to Soviet aid blandishments.

The Soviet leaders appear confident that political and economic changes taking place in the developing countries and in the general international arena are favorable to the increase of Soviet influence and, moreover, are irreversible. Moscow appears to be relying on the cumulative effect of its diplomacy, trade, and especially its economic and military aid programs, to make at least some of the more important developing countries materially dependent and politically tractable.

ENDNOTES

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14. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.
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29. US Central Intelligence Agency, NFAC, *Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1978*, p. 2.
30. In the October 1973 Middle East War, for example, equipment was taken from Soviet troop units stationed in Hungary and airlifted to Arab forces. See Roger F. Pajak, "Soviet Arms and Egypt," *Survival*, July/August 1975, p. 170.
31. US Central Intelligence Agency, NFAC, *Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World, 1977*, p. 19.

APPENDIX

STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE 3

Major Nonaligned Recipients of Soviet Arms Deliveries,
Cumulative 1967-76

(Million US dollars)

Rank	Country	Amount	Percent of Country's Total Arms Imports
1	Egypt	2,365	84
2	Syria	2,015	89
3	Iraq	1,795	73
4	India	1,365	81
5	Libya	1,005	55
6	Iran	611	12
7	Algeria	315	71
8	Angola	190	60
9	Somalia	181	98
10	Southern Yemen	151	92
11	Afghanistan	100	32

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1967-1976, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1978, pp. 158-159.

TABLE 4

Military Personnel from Nonaligned, Developing Countries
Trained in Communist Countries, Cumulative 1955-78¹

(Number of Persons)

	Total	USSR	Eastern Europe	China
Total	52,890	43,790	5,965	3,135
AFRICA	17,525	13,420	1,400	2,705
NORTH AFRICA:	3,735	3,385	335	15
Algeria	2,260	2,045	200	15
Libya	1,330	1,265	65	...
Other	145	75	70	...
SUB-SABARAN AFRICA:	13,790	10,035	1,065	2,690
Angola	60	55	5	...
Benin	20	20	...	...
Burundi	75	75	...	...
Cameroon	125	...	...	125
Congo	855	355	85	415
Equatorial Guinea	200	200	...	...
Ethiopia	1,640	1,190	450	...
Ghana	180	180	...	...
Guinea	1,290	870	60	360
Guinea-Bissau	100	100	...	...
Mali	415	355	10	50
Nigeria	730	695	35	...
Sierra Leone	150	...	...	150
Somalia	2,585	2,395	160	30
Sudan	550	330	20	200
Tanzania	2,855	1,820	10	1,025
Togo	55	...	...	55
Zaire	175	...	...	175
Zambia	130	85	...	45
Other	1,600	1,310	230	60
EAST ASIA:	9,300	7,590	1,710	...
Indonesia	9,270	7,560	1,710	...
Kampuchea	30	30	...	...
LATIN AMERICA:	725	725	...	...
Peru	725	725	...	...

¹Data refers to the estimated number of persons departing for training. Numbers are rounded to the nearest five.

TABLE 4 (Continued)

	Total	USSR	Eastern Europe	China
MIDDLE EAST:	18,115	15,630	2,485	...
Egypt	6,250	5,665	585	...
Iran	315	315	...	...
Iraq	4,330	3,650	680	...
North Yemen	1,180	1,180	...	...
South Yemen	1,095	1,075	20	...
Syria	4,495	3,745	1,200	...
SOUTH ASIA:	7,225	6,425	370	430
Afghanistan	4,010	3,725	285	...
Bangladesh	485	445	...	40
India	2,285	2,200	85	...
Pakistan	430	45	NA	385
Sri Lanka	15	10	...	5

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1978, Washington, DC, September 1979, pp. 4, 5.

TABLE 5

Soviet and East European Military Technicians
in Nonaligned, Developing Countries, 1978(Number of Persons¹)

Total	12,070
AFRICA	6,575
NORTH AFRICA:	2,760
Algeria	1,000
Libya	1,750
Morocco	10
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:	3,815
Angola	1,300
Equatorial Guinea	40
Ethiopia	1,400
Guinea	100
Guinea-Bissau	65
Mali	180
Mozambique	230
Other	500
LATIN AMERICA:	150
Guyana	...
Peru	150
MIDDLE EAST:	4,495
Iraq	1,200
North Yemen	155
South Yemen	550
Syria	2,580
Other	10
SOUTH ASIA:	850
Afghanistan	700
Bangladesh	...
India	150

¹Minimum estimates of the number of persons present for a period of one month or more. Numbers are rounded to the nearest five.

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1978, Washington, DC, September 1979, p. 4.

TABLE 6

Major Weapons Delivered to Nonaligned, Developing Countries,
By Selected Type and Primary Supplier
Cumulative 1973-77

Equipment Type	Total	United States	Soviet Union	France	United Kingdom	China	Italy
TOTALS -----							
LAND ARMAMENTS -----							
Tanks and Self-Propelled Guns	15,411	4,921	7,300	585	1,015	1,580	10
Artillery (Over 100 mm.)	7,506	3,546	3,140	130	30	310	350
Armored Personnel Carriers and Armored Cars	14,249	7,104	5,510	1,145	90	170	230
NAVAL CRAFT -----							
Major Surface Combatants	90	73	5	-	12	-	-
Minor Surface Combatants	414	134	50	45	120	35	30
Submarines	36	18	5	-	8	4	1
Guided Missile Patrol Boats	51	-	44	7	-	-	-
AIRCRAFT -----							
Combat Aircraft, Supersonic	3,181	996	1,670	300	15	200	-
Combat Aircraft, Subsonic	1,248	793	325	5	50	75	-
Other Aircraft	1,640	750	200	70	270	60	290
Helicopters	2,562	1,202	410	550	40	40	320
MISSILES -----							
Surface-to-Air Missiles	20,219	4,459	14,870	270	620	-	-

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1968-1977, Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 1979, p. 159.

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