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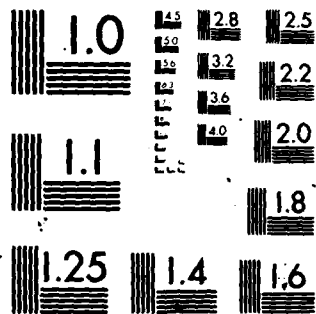
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Current Soviet Policies in Latin America

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Soviet interest in Latin America is of long standing. Unlike most other regions of the Third World, it has some of the oldest and most loyal communist parties which, despite their relative weakness, have been reliable tools of Soviet foreign policy. Effective Soviet penetration of Latin America, however, began only in the postwar period as a result of a combination of factors, the most predominant of which has been the upsurge of Latin American nationalism and a decline in U.S. influence and control over the region, as well as the emergence of the Soviet Union as a global power with the necessary economic, political and military capabilities and the reach needed to begin to play an active role in a region so remote from the Soviet Union. Above all, the Cuban Revolution and the survival of Castro's regime has been a critical factor in providing the Soviet Union with a base in the Western Hemisphere and in demonstrating the decline in U.S. ability to control political developments in Latin America. Even though Castroism itself failed to become a major political force on the southern continent, the success of the Cuban Revolution no doubt has given further impetus to the upsurge of Latin America's nationalism with its attendant anti-U.S. overtones which, in turn, has become the major vehicle for the penetration of that region by the Soviet Union. Although significant Soviet activity in this region is relatively new, and outside of Cuba has not achieved spectacular successes, the rate of growth of Soviet relations and actions in the region in recent years is impressive. This expansion of Soviet activities in Latin America has continued despite a number of major setbacks and some decline in Soviet expectations concerning the short-term prospects for the emergence of new reliable allies in the

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 6, 1980

Mr. Harry Schrecengost
Defense Technical Information
Center
Cameron Station
Alexandria, Va. 22314

Dear Mr. Schrecengost:

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Sincerely,

Edward N. Lundstrom
Research Documentation Officer
Office of External Research
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

region. Essentially, in the Soviet view, Latin America remains one of the principal fronts of the global Soviet "anti-imperialist" campaign, where major opportunities exist to affect a shift in the U.S.-Soviet "correlation of forces" in favor of Moscow.

Current Soviet Views of Latin America

The overthrow of the Allende Government in Chile, the Rightist coups in Bolivia and Uruguay, and the threat of a military takeover in Argentina, have led Soviet analysts to speak of a counterrevolutionary "offensive" sweeping Latin America which, at least "temporarily," showed a general shift of the political character of the continent to the Right. Not surprisingly, these developments have led to a certain pessimism and despondency not only among the Latin American Communists, but also among those who "consider themselves revolutionaries."¹ This pessimism was also reflected in an interview given by Cuba's Deputy Prime Minister, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, in February 1975, in which he acknowledged that there were no prospects for the rise of new socialist governments in Latin America.²

Such views are in marked contrast to those held by Soviet political leaders and analysts in 1971-1972. At that time CPSU Central Committee Secretary B. Ponomarev asserted that the revolutionary process in Latin America "is continuing to develop at a faster pace than in other parts of the nonsocialist world,"³ and the All-Union Conference of Soviet Latin Americanists declared that the "objective and subjective conditions" existed in Latin America for the "flowering of Lenin's

¹ V. Bushnyev, "Revolution and Counterrevolution in Latin America," International Affairs (Moscow), No. 5, May 1974, p. 32; V. Teitelbaum, "Prelude to Future Victories," World Marxist Review, No. 3, March 1974, p. 89; R. Arismendi, "Latin American Communists in the Vanguard of the Revolutionary Struggle of the Peoples of the Continent," Kommunist, No. 14, September 1975, pp. 90, 94.

² Cited in Latin American Report, Vol. III, No. 7, February 1975, p. 4.

³ B. N. Ponomarev, "Topical Problems in the Theory of the Revolutionary Process," Kommunist, No. 15, October 1971, p. 59.

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theory of the transition of agrarian revolution to socialist revolution as it happened in Cuba and in other areas of the world."⁴ Similarly, R. Arismendi, the First Secretary of the Uruguayan Communist Party kept asserting, and the Soviet press repeating, that "a revolutionary situation of a general character" existed in Latin America.⁵ At the same time, the U.S. was seen as increasingly unable to intervene in the region or to take radical steps to halt the advance of the "revolutionary process" on the continent.

In all fairness, one must say that Moscow's optimism concerning Latin America was always tempered by considerable caution. No serious prospects were seen for the emergence of communist-controlled regimes or of "new Cubas" on the continent. The significance of the emergence of the Popular Unity regime in Chile in 1970 lay in the fact that it represented the success of a Leftist coalition coming to power by parliamentary means. This appeared to represent a potential model applicable not only to some other democratic countries in Latin America, but also to Western Europe. It is in this respect that at this time the "lessons of Chile" are deemed to be of great significance for communist strategy and tactics on the continent and elsewhere. However, applications of the Chilean model in Latin America bore no fruit. With the fall of the Allende regime, the "revolutionary process" in Latin America remained exemplified by the so-called revolutionary military juntas of Peru, Panama and Ecuador, which Moscow viewed, despite its public expressions of approval, with a considerable degree of suspicion and caution.

⁴A. F. Shul'govskii, "Urgent Problems of Latin American Studies," Vestnik Akademii Nauk, No. 8, August 1971, p. 108.

⁵V. Tikhmenev, "Leninism and the Revolutionary Process in Latin America," Kommunist, No. 3, February 1971, p. 118. M. F. Kudachkin, "Communist Parties of Latin America in the Vanguard of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle," Novaia i Noveishaia Istorii, No. 5, May 1971.

Although Latin America is no longer at the forefront of the revolutionary wave, its importance in Soviet eyes as an arena of the "anti-imperialist" struggle remains undiminished. Latin America is still seen as the "strategic rear" of the United States, an area where the U.S. claims to have a particular and unique interest and relationship. As the U.S. "backyard," developments in that region are perceived by Moscow as significantly bearing not only on U.S. economic and political interests, but as affecting U.S. prestige and global power position, or in Soviet terms, developments in Latin America can have a major influence on the U.S.-Soviet "correlation of forces."⁶ Indeed, in recent years Soviet analysts see Latin America as having gained still greater importance for the U.S., thus making the erosion in U.S. influence and position there still more significant. According to a Soviet analysis, "under present conditions Latin America still retains its importance as a sphere without equal with respect to economic exploitation on the part of the American monopolies," which is said to be evident from the fact that the U.S. has in excess of \$18.5 billion in investments in that region as against some \$14.7 billion in investments in other Third World areas.⁷ Furthermore, the analysis notes, the economic importance of the region for the U.S. is likely to increase as a result of the growing U.S. dependence on foreign sources of raw materials, and the increasing "barriers to U.S. [economic] expansion outside the Western Hemisphere," which restrict its access to African and Asian raw materials. From this it follows that the erosion of Western relations with Latin America in

⁶A. I. Sobolev, "The Dialectic of the General and Particular in the Development of the World Revolutionary Process," Voprosy Istorii KPSS, No. 11, November 1975, cited in FBIS Daily Report-USSR, December 11, 1975, pp. A8, A9; G. Vishya, "The USA and Latin America: Interrelations Under Conditions of Detente," Mirovaia Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, No. 8, August 1975, pp. 83-89.

⁷Vishnya, op. cit., p. 85.

general, and of U.S. relations in particular, contribute to the worsening of the "general crisis of capitalism" and to the loss by the U.S. of Latin America as a reliable political base in the conduct of U.S. global foreign policy.⁸

The fundamental thrust of Soviet policy in Latin America, therefore, is "anti-imperialism," i.e., the exacerbation and exploitation of the region's efforts to attain full economic and political independence from U.S. domination. The Declaration issued by the Conference of Twenty-four Latin American Communist Parties, held on June 10-13, 1975, states:

No profound socio-economic changes could be achieved in our countries--not to speak of socialism--without eliminating the oppression of each of our countries by American imperialism, or putting an end to the rule of international corporations in our countries.⁹

Along with U.S. imperialism, the "enemy" includes its so-called "allies": the oligarchies, latifundists, the high bourgeoisie, and the reactionary, or "fascist," regimes.

Indeed, Moscow has found it most profitable to base its policy toward Latin America, and for that matter, toward the Third World as a whole, primarily on "anti-U.S. imperialism," as the common denominator and the simplest method for identifying potential political tools or allies among the governments and political parties in the region. "American imperialism," states the above-mentioned Declaration of the Twenty-four Latin American Communist Parties "is our main and common enemy," and the struggle against it is said to be the main element of communist strategy and tactics in the region. Such an approach makes

⁸ Colonel N. Volkov, "For Political Training Group Leaders: Imperialism--Enemy People and Social Progress, The Source of Military Danger," Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil, No. 13, July 1975, pp. 68-76.

⁹ "Latin America in the Struggle Against Imperialism and for National Independence, Democracy, People's Prosperity, Peace and Socialism," Kommunist, No. 10, July 1975, pp. 88-108.

it easy for the Soviet Union to deal with diverse regimes, to take advantage of Latin America's intense nationalism, as well as to promote the formation of broad united fronts in the various countries which can encompass all "anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, democratic and revolutionary forces," not only on the Left, but also including the bourgeois center parties, thereby embracing the widest possible range of those countries' social strata.

Despite the setbacks in Chile and Uruguay, Soviet analysts claim to see at the present time various factors which allow them to be optimistic about the general trend of developments in Latin America. Outstanding among these are the final integration of Cuba into the Soviet bloc and the lifting of the OAS sanctions against the island; the continuing process of expropriation or control over U.S. investments in the region; the growing efforts of Latin American countries to achieve some degree of common economic and political front vis-a-vis the U.S., such as the creation of the Latin American Economic System (SELA); the increasing independence of the foreign policies of these countries and their expanding relations with the Soviet Union and its bloc, including Cuba; the deepening of the "contradictions" between U.S. and Latin American economic interests and policies; the failure of the various U.S. efforts to develop an effective and stable policy with the region; the continued existence of "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" regimes in Peru, Panama and Ecuador and so on. The Soviet Union has also been encouraged by the success of its campaign for international condemnation and isolation of the Pinochet regime in Chile; by what it claims to be the "collapse" of the Brazilian economic "miracle, making it a less attractive model for other countries in the Southern Hemisphere; by the increasing tendency of many Latin American countries to cooperate with the non-aligned nations and to support the positions of Arab and other Third World countries; as well as by the prospect of increasing Cuban

participation in Latin American organizations. Thus, in the words of a Soviet analyst, "The objective prerequisites favor an extension of the liberation struggle" in Latin America.¹⁰ As Moscow sees it, the setbacks in Chile and Uruguay have not significantly slowed down the "anti-imperialist" trends in Latin America nor moderated the growing frictions between that region and the U.S.¹¹

Soviet-Latin American Political Relations

Publicly, the Soviet Union condemns the present regimes in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Uruguay, and proclaims its support for the "patriotic" and "democratic" forces struggling to overthrow them.¹² In practice, however, Moscow has found it more practical to maintain diplomatic and economic relations with a number of these countries. Thus, despite its condemnation of the Banzer Government in Bolivia, the Soviet Union did not break relations with Bolivia when it came to power nor terminate its economic assistance program. The same is true for Brazil and Uruguay. For example, an article in Pravda of April 3, 1975 asserted that "the Soviet Union consistently and invariably advocates the development of comprehensive cooperation with Brazil."¹³ In general, the Soviet Union has found it preferable to establish relations with the greatest possible number of countries in Latin America, regardless of their type of government. In this manner, the Soviet Union not only maintains its image as a global power, but also gains greater access to these

¹⁰ S. Mishin, "Latin America: Current Trends of Development," International Affairs, No. 5, May 1975, p. 59. See also Arismendi, op. cit., pp. 90-101.

¹¹ L. L. Klochkovskii, "Imperialism and Latin America: A New Stage of Economic Contradictions," Latinskaia Amerika, No. 5, September-October 1975, pp. 5-23.

¹² For example, see I. Devin, "A Course of Solidarity and Cooperation," Krasnaia Zvezda, January 7, 1975.

¹³ I. Fedorov, "In Mutual Interests," Pravda, April 3, 1975.

countries and opportunities to influence their policies. Furthermore, as practice has shown, even the more reactionary regimes demonstrate tendencies to seek greater economic and political independence from the U.S., as for example, in the case of Brazil, and thereby contribute to the overall "anti-imperialist" movement in Latin America.

On the diplomatic front, the Soviet Union has succeeded in establishing relations with most Latin American states, and with the exception of Chile, has maintained these relations even when their regimes have sharply swung to the Right. At present, on the Southern Continent only Chile and Paraguay have no diplomatic relations with Moscow. In November 1975, the Soviet Union recognized and established diplomatic relations at embassy level with Surinam. In Central America, Moscow has relations with Costa Rica, Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua, and in the Caribbean, with Barbados, Cuba, Trinidad-Tobago and, as of 1975, with Jamaica. Although as yet Panama has not established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, it has relations with most of the other Soviet bloc countries, including Cuba, and has Moscow's political support on the Canal issue. According to Brezhnev, "friendship with the Soviet Union facilitates the Latin American countries' successful struggle against imperialism and for genuine independence."¹⁴

Of course, the willingness of most Latin American governments to have relations with the Soviet Union is not motivated by a sense of "friendship" for it or any sympathy for communism. Rather, these governments have been influenced by a variety of factors, such as their economic interest in finding new markets and sources of credits and technology, their desire to expand their foreign political relations, and to a certain extent, their willingness to look to the Soviet Union as a counterweight to the U.S. in their disputes with Washington. There is no doubt also that the detente and Moscow's continuing emphasis on the united

¹⁴Pravda, December 22, 1972.

front strategy of the communist parties, and on the struggle for "popular democratic" regimes, preferably by "peaceful" means,¹⁵ has lent a certain respectability to the Soviet Union and endowed the communist parties with an image of relative moderation, especially as contrasted with the radical Left movements.

Within the context of the Soviet interpretation of the rules of "peaceful coexistence," which allow the Soviet Union to continue its active support of the "national liberation struggle" in the less-developed countries, Moscow has found it easy to maintain a position of consistent support for the Latin American states in their disputes with Washington and to fully endorse all their policies for gaining control over their natural resources and over foreign investments, as well as for taking independent positions on various international issues. Although, as the case of the fall of the Allende regime demonstrated, the Soviet Union is not able or willing to directly intervene to protect its friends and clients in Latin America, it nevertheless provides a potential source of support which can assist the countries in resisting U.S. political or economic sanctions. Undoubtedly, various Latin American countries are also pleased to have Soviet support for their efforts to raise the prices of their raw materials, to organize raw materials producer cartels, and to institute a new economic system of relations with the industrial powers.

Outside of Cuba, the Soviet Union does not exercise any direct or significant political influence on the policies of the Latin American states. There is, however, as noted, a good deal of coincidence between Soviet short-term

¹⁵Sobolev, *op. cit.*, pp. A1-A16; V. V. Vol'skii, "The Path of Transition to Socialism," *Latinskaia Amerika*, No. 2, March-April 1975, pp. 66-71; *Kommunist*, No. 10, July 1975, pp. 88-108.

objectives and the objectives of many Latin American states insofar as they relate to a reduction of U.S. presence and influence in the Southern Hemisphere, and in the matter of the region's independence in foreign policy. Moscow claims to see a significant challenge to U.S. controls over Latin America resulting from the lifting of the OAS sanctions against Cuba, the inability of Washington to prevent the establishment of Soviet diplomatic and economic relations with the countries in the region, and their efforts to organize united political, and especially economic, fronts against the U.S. Moscow also perceives significant gains from positions taken by various Latin American states on current international issues which favored the Soviet line, and their defection from the U.S.-controlled voting bloc in international organizations.

Of major significance for the Soviet Union has been the successful transformation of Cuba into a reasonably safe Soviet satellite and the island's integration into the Soviet political and economic bloc. Moscow's satisfaction with this process was reflected in Brezhnev's visit to Havana in January 1974, and with the further increases in Soviet economic assistance to the island, which it now seeks to transform into a showcase of communism in the Western Hemisphere. The utility of Cuba for the global "anti-imperialist national liberation" struggle is also evident in the Soviet Union's ability to send Cuban troops to various areas of this struggle, such as Angola. Furthermore, Cuba will now serve as a Soviet proxy in the various Latin American associations and organizations, thereby increasing Moscow's ability to influence the policies of the region. In effect, the Soviet investment in Cuba is beginning to pay off.

Soviet Economic Relations with Latin America¹⁶

The 1970's have seen a marked upsurge in Soviet economic relations with Latin America, reflecting both a greater Soviet willingness to make significant investments in the region and the increased receptivity by the region to Soviet economic aid and trade.

Between 1969 and 1975, Soviet economic credits to Latin American countries, exclusive of Cuba, rose from \$267 million to over \$1 billion. The main recipient is Argentina with \$645 million, the others being Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. Prior to the overthrow of the Allende regime, Chile had received \$259 million in credits. In addition, the East European countries have granted a number of Latin American countries some \$950 million in credits, while China has issued some \$133 million in credits. All-in-all, credits from communist countries to the region now amount to some \$2 billion as against a total of \$474 in 1969.

At the present time, the two largest Soviet credit commitments are to Argentina and Peru. In the case of the former, Soviet credits prior to 1974 amounted to only \$45 million, but in that year the Soviet bloc made a major credit offer: \$600 million from the USSR, and some \$350 million from Eastern Europe. The Soviet credit provided for repayment in ten years at 4.5 percent interest to help develop and equip oil fields, and in particular, to build hydroelectric power stations, as well as metallurgical plants.¹⁷ In the case of Peru, the Soviet Union, until 1974, had only provided some \$42 million in credits, mainly to be used for the construction of a fishing port, but Moscow

¹⁶See L. Gouré and M. Rothenberg, Soviet Penetration of Latin America, Monographs in International Affairs, Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1975, pp. 151-162.

¹⁷Rubes Iscaro, "Some Problems of the Revolutionary Movement," World Marxist Review, No. 5, May 1975, p. 104; Devin, op. cit.

is now committed to assist in the development of the Olmos hydroelectric, irrigation and industrial systems, which may eventually cost in excess of half a billion dollars.¹⁸

Of course, the main Soviet economic client in Latin America is Cuba, which now has a cumulative debt to the Soviet Union on the order of \$5 billion. Nevertheless, Soviet deliveries to Cuba in recent years have continued to grow, with the volume of trade in 1975 being said to have reached in excess of 2 billion rubles (a 35 percent increase over 1974). It should be noted, however, that Cuba's economic position has generally improved as a result of higher world sugar prices and the grant by Argentina, Canada, France, Spain, England, Mexico and Japan of credits totalling some \$3.5 billion. Furthermore, in 1974-75, Mexico has supplied Cuba with part of the crude oil which originally had been contracted for delivery by the Soviet Union,¹⁹ while in its turn, the latter has re-exported gasoline refined in Cuban refineries to Western clients. The planned organization of a "Triangular Trading Company," between the USSR, Venezuela and Mexico may serve to further reduce Cuba's need for Soviet oil.

Soviet trade with Latin America, exclusive of Cuba, has also been on the rise. The turnover, which was 160 million rubles in 1972, increased to 325 million rubles in 1973, and to some 500 million rubles in 1974. Increases have been especially large in the case of Argentina, whose volume of trade with the Soviet Union rose from 29.9 million rubles in 1970 to \$137 million rubles in 1974; and with Brazil, where the volume of trade rose from 23.2 million rubles in 1970 to 202 million rubles in 1974.²⁰ Thus, the volume of Soviet trade with

¹⁸ Izvestia, July 28, 1974; V. N. Gaidukov, "Soviet-Peruvian Economic and Technical Cooperation," Latinskaia Amerika, No. 4, July-August 1975, pp. 103-107; Devin, op. cit.

¹⁹ Latin American Report, Vol. III, No. 9, April 1975, p. 6.

²⁰ "Foreign Trade of the USSR in 1974," Ekonomicheskaja Gazeta, No. 15, April 1975, p. 21; Goure and Rothenberg, op. cit.; N. E. Pitovranova, "Development of Soviet-Argentinian Economic Relations," Latinskaia Amerika, No. 5, September-October 1975, pp. 108-118.

Latin America as a whole, including Cuba, appears to have reached nearly \$3 billion in 1974.

What is especially noteworthy, however, about Soviet economic relations with Latin America is that it serves primarily political purposes rather than Soviet economic needs. The credits have been generally granted to countries with regimes or policies which Moscow approved. Furthermore, by charging relatively low interest, and providing for repayments in goods rather than in hard currency, Soviet credits are not only made relatively attractive but allow Moscow to underscore the exploitative nature of Western credits to these countries. In the case of trade, its balance, with the exception of Cuba, Mexico and Chile, has been consistently unfavorable to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Soviet imports have generally consisted of goods and produce of only marginal significance for the Soviet economy. There are some exceptions, such as Soviet import of Bolivian tin, and of Brazilian sugar during the years of declining Soviet sugar beet production and inadequate shipments of sugarcane from Cuba. At the same time, Soviet purchases of surplus coffee or bananas have been used to gain diplomatic relations with some states, as for example, Costa Rica. The political objectives of Soviet economic relations with Latin America, as with other Third World areas, has been repeatedly affirmed by Soviet spokesmen, who emphasize that their primary purpose is to undermine the position of the Western monopolies and to contribute to the strengthening of the economic and political independence of the less-developed countries.

While the Soviet Union appears willing to make considerable economic investments where it sees a political payoff, it has learned caution since its involvement not only with Cuba, but with other less developed states. For example, Moscow did not become engaged in an all out economic rescue of the Allende Government, like it had done a decade earlier with Castro. Although Soviet economic credits to Chile rose from some \$55 million in 1970 to \$259 million

in 1973, most of these credits were for industrial development, while little was done to supply Chile with the urgently needed food and consumer goods, which led to the "march of the empty pots" and to a disastrous drain on Chile's hard currency reserves. Again, while publicly praising the revolutionary military leadership of Peru, Moscow remained reluctant for a long time to provide it with substantial development aid. Only after Allende's fall, when Peru became the principal revolutionary state on the continent, did the Soviet Union agree to become involved in large and costly development projects. In the case of Argentina, the generous grant of Soviet and East European credits in 1974 appeared to reflect a Soviet decision to buttress that country's democratic system and its "progressive" policies against the threat of a military coup. It is also noteworthy that the Soviet Union has shown a long-standing interest in becoming involved in various hydroelectric power projects in the Plat River basin, apparently as a means of gaining influence in the surrounding states.

Along with the credit and trade agreements, the Soviet Union and other East European countries have signed a large number of technical, scientific, air, maritime and cultural cooperation agreements with the states in the region. Several countries have also discussed the establishment of cooperation with CEMA rather than with individual Soviet bloc states. The most recent such agreement was signed by Mexico in August 1975, providing for "many-sided cooperation" in economics, science, transportation, industrial technology and agriculture, and for the establishment of a CEMA-Mexican Joint Commission to study and organize this cooperation.²¹

For a long time, Moscow has argued that the Latin American armed forces should become independent of U.S. influence and armaments, this being one prerequisite for the eventual "democratization" or "radicalization" of the military. The Soviet Union has offered itself as a source of weapons and equipment and an

²¹Pravda, August 14, 1975.

increasing number of Latin American military delegations have visited Cuba or traveled to the Soviet Union to inspect Soviet weapons and equipment. To date, outside of Cuba, the Soviet Union has succeeded in selling only a limited amount of armaments to Peru, thereby raising fears throughout the hemisphere of a possible Peruvian attack on Chile. There are indications that a Soviet offer of arms to the Allende regime was turned down by Chile's military. One cannot discount the possibility, however, that in the future other countries in the region will ask Moscow for military assistance.

Although the Soviet Union failed to establish a submarine support base at Cienfuegos in Cuba, it continues to maintain a military presence in the Caribbean by means of periodic naval visits to the area and flights of long-range naval reconnaissance aircraft to Cuba. With the possible Soviet acquisition of base rights on the Western coast of Africa, and in view of the ongoing expansion of the Soviet Navy, the presence of Soviet warships along the South American coast may also increase. There is no evidence to date, however, that the activities of the Soviet Navy in the region have caused any particular concern to Latin American governments or that they have significantly enhanced Soviet influence in the region. It remains to be seen whether the Soviet-Cuban military intervention in Angola will come to be perceived by these countries as indicating the existence of a new Soviet capability and willingness to intervene militarily in Latin America in support of some revolutionary regime.

Soviet Prospects in Latin America

In the Soviet view, the current "general crisis of capitalism" in the industrially developed countries inevitably leads to a further aggravation of the "contradictions" between them and the less-developed states. Consequently, Moscow appears to expect greater instability as well as an upsurge of the "anti-imperialist national liberation" struggle in the Third World. While there

appears to be a debate in the Soviet Union over the strategy and tactics to be employed by Moscow and the local communist parties in Western Europe to exploit the opportunities generated by the economic crisis, there appears to be more unanimity on the significance and utility of the national liberation struggle and the desirability of active Soviet support of it. Being well aware of the economic and political significance of the Third World for the advanced industrial countries and the vulnerability of their economies to adverse changes in their relations with the Third World, the Soviet Union perceives the latter as the primary arena for bringing about a favorable shift in the "correlation of world forces."

Although Latin America differs from the rest of the Third World in the degree of its industrial and economic development, its capitalist system is perceived as being "dependent" on the U.S. and the large multinational corporations. Consequently, the "liberation struggle" there can encompass a broad spectrum of the societies, including elements of the "dependent" bourgeois strata which have an interest in freeing themselves from foreign domination and competition. Thus, Moscow's objective being the erosion of U.S. economic and political power, Latin America's economic and political nationalism becomes a convenient and effective vehicle for attaining this objective.

Although the coming to power of a number of reactionary regimes in Latin America, notably in Chile and Uruguay, and the threat of a military takeover in Argentina, are said by Soviet analysts to represent important setbacks to the national liberation process in the region, the general tone of Soviet commentaries on the prospects for Latin America remain optimistic. According to the Soviet analysis, the general "anti-U.S." trends in the Southern Hemisphere will persist and even strengthen, all the more so because Moscow appears to believe that the U.S. will remain unsuccessful in its efforts to find a new formula for stabilizing and improving its relations with the countries in the region.

Furthermore, the Soviets appear to expect a further aggravation of relations as a consequence of the effects of the current economic recession in the West, and of the growing recognition by the countries of their potential for using their resources for economic and political leverage on the U.S.

The Soviet Union and the Latin American communist parties have taken the lessons of Chile to heart. It is agreed that given the "objective reality on the continent," there are little prospects for establishing socialist regimes, and that the present objectives must be to organize the broadest possible united front movements on the basis of a program of struggle for democracy and against fascism and U.S. imperialism.²² The critical need for gaining and preserving support from the middle classes and for "radicalizing" the armed forces so as to preclude reactionary coups is one of the basic lessons learned from the Chilean experience. At the same time, Soviet analysts insist that the events in Chile do not invalidate the strategy of a "peaceful road" to the establishment of "progressive" regimes based on these united fronts, although there is considerable debate over the policies to be pursued thereafter to consolidate these regimes and how they should progress on the road to socialism.

The Soviet Union, despite its condemnation of the "reactionary" or "fascist" regimes, has generally continued to maintain relations with them. Chile, however, has become the symbol of the "anti-fascist" struggle and the Soviet Union has mounted a major international campaign to isolate the Pinochet regime, and is openly supporting the struggle for its overthrow. This campaign has been facilitated by the disclosures in the U.S. of CIA involvement in the fall of the Allende regime, since a major Soviet and communist propaganda theme is to identify the reactionary regimes as tools of U.S. "imperialism." The current line on the issue of the overthrow of the Pinochet regime appears to emphasize

²² Arismendi, op. cit.

political action rather than resort to violence, and specifically, the organization of a united front which will include, along with Popular Unity, all elements opposed to the regime, especially the Christian Democratic Party.²³

A particular thrust of Soviet political propaganda in Latin America consists in urging the formation of a united front of the countries against their "common enemy" -- the U.S., and the creation of inter-American economic and political organizations which specifically exclude the U.S., and which will come to replace the OAS. Moscow argues that only such unity among the Latin American countries will prove effective in confrontations with Washington and ensure progress toward the region's "true" independence. Although the Soviet Union has praised the organization of SELA and of producer cartels as significant steps in the region's struggle against Western imperialism,²⁴ Moscow remains cautious about the real effectiveness of this organization in view of the great diversities of interests and political attitudes of its member nations.

Soviet policy in Latin America has been opportunistic insofar as it has sought to exploit developments there in order to expand its relations with and influence in the countries in the region and to exacerbate their anti-U.S. tendencies and policies. In line with this, Moscow has lent its political, and when necessary, economic, support to regimes pursuing "anti-imperialist" policies, regardless of their political character. This Soviet policy has not been constrained by the detente in U.S.-Soviet relations any more in Latin America than elsewhere in the Third World. So far, Moscow has had only mixed

²³For example, see "Chile: Fascism Will Be Overthrown; Interview with Leaders of Popular Unity Parties," World Marxist Review, No. 10, October 1975, pp. 44-52; V. Teitelboim, "For the Complete Independence of Our America," World Marxist Review, No. 9, September 1975, pp. 30-43.

²⁴For example, see N. Artemov, "United Action," Sotsialisticheskaia Industriia, October 28, 1975.

successes in this policy and has had difficulties in overcoming Latin America's general suspicion of communism and of Soviet intentions, all the more so because the region's nationalism makes the countries fear Soviet domination, as they observe in the case of Cuba. Although active Soviet involvement in Latin America is relatively recent, and except for Cuba, not very spectacular in its achievements, it would be an error to underestimate the magnitude of the Soviet effort to penetrate the region and influence its developments. For example, Soviet economic aid to the region, including Cuba, since 1960, exceeds the total amount of such aid to the Middle East since 1954.

Especially significant is the fact that Cuba has become politically and economically integrated into the Soviet bloc, and that the process of institutionalizing the revolution there on the Soviet model is proceeding, thus providing the Soviet Union with a secure base and what appears to be a reasonably loyal ally in the Western Hemisphere. With the lifting of the OAS sanctions, the value of Cuba as a Soviet proxy in Latin America undoubtedly will increase. Along with this, the expansion of Soviet relations with other Caribbean countries, notably Jamaica and Trinidad-Tobago, may result in a significant strengthening of Soviet presence and influence in that area.

The key factor in Latin America remains the U.S. and the character of its relations with it. The Soviet Union is not so much able to influence the direction of developments in Latin America as it is able to exploit to its advantage errors in U.S. policy and actions. So long as the U.S. fails to stabilize its relations with the region, Moscow will persist in its efforts to take advantage of opportunities to further the erosion of U.S. interests and influence in Latin America.