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Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the Power Projection Mission

Francis Fukuyama

April 1987

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PREFACE

Under the Project AIR FORCE study effort "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and Prospects for Policy Change," within the National Security Strategies Program, RAND is making a multi-faceted investigation of the long-term development of the Soviet threat. The present study is one outgrowth of this investigation. It attempts to trace the evolution of military attitudes toward Third World intervention, compares this view with that of the civilian leadership, and analyzes the degree to which policy toward the Third World has been an issue in civil-military relations in the USSR.

SUMMARY

This study attempts to answer the question, **In what ways has policy toward the Third World been a factor in Soviet civil-military relations?**

The military participates in the internal Soviet decisionmaking process for the Third World primarily as an implementor of policy; the Central Committee's International Department and the Foreign Ministry have primary responsibility for policy advice. Nonetheless, the military can exert considerable influence over policy through its analysis and presentation of military options, particularly in view of the heavy military component of Soviet policy in many parts of the Third World.

Military views on policy are articulated through the statements and writings of senior commanders, as well as the large body of writings under the rubric of "local wars." Unlike the civilian literature on the Third World, which tends to downplay Moscow's military role, military writings on this subject contain extended discussions of operational questions that arise in local conflicts, reflecting a functional division of labor.

The Soviet military as an institution is frequently said to have been an advocate of military support for Third World clients, by developing a doctrine of intervention and capabilities for projecting power to non-contiguous theaters. In fact, the Soviet command's interest in the power projection mission has been rather episodic, reaching a peak during the tenure of Marshal Andrey Grechko as Defense Minister and tapering off thereafter.

The service branch initially responsible for stimulating military interest in the Third World was the Soviet navy. In the early 1960s it developed new requirements for overseas basing to counter U.S. carrier battle groups operating in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, and to perform both offensive and defensive strategic anti-submarine warfare (ASW) missions. Following the loss of its base in Vlona, Albania, in 1961, the navy began pressing for facilities and basing rights in Egypt, Algeria, and Syria around the Mediterranean littoral.

Defense Minister Grechko appears to have played a major role in advocating intervention by Soviet air defense forces on behalf of Egypt during the 1969-1970 War of Attrition and was generally an advocate of strong Soviet military support for Third World allies. The early 1970s saw the publication of the series *Navies in War and Peace* by Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, father of the

modern Soviet navy. Gorshkov's writings, while emphasizing the central strategic ASW mission, made a major argument for a peacetime power projection role for the navy and for the importance of navies more generally as a symbol of the power of a state. Grechko was a longtime associate of Gorshkov and appears to have been the conduit through which the latter's navalist theories found greater acceptance in the General Staff.

The Soviet military began to formulate an "interventionist" policy or strategy in the early 1970s with the publication of statements by authoritative military figures (including Grechko, Gorshkov, and General Yepishev, chief of the Main Political Administration) advocating a "liberating mission" for the Soviet armed forces in support of national liberation movements and "progressive" regimes. This theoretical development was followed by the actual use of Soviet forces in support of revolutionary groups in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, and a dramatic increase in the level of Soviet military assistance to Third World clients. However, it was never clear whether this strategy really envisioned the use of Soviet forces in combat in local Third World contingencies, rather than the more mundane mission of providing arms assistance and training. The writings of both Gorshkov and Grechko suggest that they may have been more interested in the projection of presence rather than of Soviet military power per se.

References to the "liberating mission" became much more infrequent after Grechko's death and replacement by Dmitriy Ustinov in 1976, and Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov's appointment as Chief of the General Staff shortly thereafter, indicating that **the new top leadership of the military did not share Grechko's enthusiasm for deployments in peripheral theaters. Ogarkov, in particular, concentrated on the development of modern forces, particularly conventional ones, in the main European and Far Eastern theaters and probably regarded the Third World as a substantially lower priority.** This lack of enthusiasm was all the more pronounced in view of the halving of the growth rate of the Soviet defense budget after 1975 and freezing of the procurement budget. These developments came at a time when the costs of the Soviet "empire"—in the form of military assistance in many cases—were growing dramatically. Ogarkov may have considered power projection a diversion from the primary tasks of the Soviet armed forces and a competitor for increasingly scarce resources.

The absence of high-level references to the "liberating mission" from the mid-1970s on indicates that **power projection was never firmly established as a major mission of the Soviet armed forces; the party leadership may have mandated this as part of the general toning**

down of Soviet rhetoric on several issues (such as nuclear warfighting) after General Secretary Brezhnev's Tula speech in January 1977.

After Grechko's death there was also a downgrading of the role of the navy. On a theoretical level, Gorshkov and other naval writers were forced to admit that there was no naval science or doctrine independent of the general teachings of Marxism-Leninism on war and the army. On an operational level, **use of the navy as an instrument of coercive diplomacy in the Third World declined with Moscow's failure to surge ships into the Mediterranean in response to the 1982 Lebanon War.** In addition, certain shipbuilding programs related to power projection (such as the *Berezina* class underway replenishment ship and the *Ivan Rogov* class heavy lift vessel) were either curtailed or canceled. The Soviets have continued with production of a class of large-deck aircraft carriers, but the design has been scaled back from original plans for use of catapults and high-performance aircraft to older VSTOL models. The primary mission of these carriers in any event may be less power projection than sea control and ASW.

Nonetheless, the deemphasis on the power projection mission was not universally accepted or enforced throughout the military; well into the 1980s it was possible to find military writers continuing to talk about the "liberating mission" of the Soviet armed forces.

The unresolved war in Afghanistan has decreased the military's inclination to intervene in Third World crisis situations, while increasing its resistance to a withdrawal from Afghanistan itself in conditions short of outright "victory" over the mujahedeen. The decision to invade Afghanistan in December 1979 was made by the Politburo on essentially political grounds. As a result of his visit to Afghanistan earlier that year, General Pavlovskiy probably reassured the political leadership that an intervention by Soviet troops would be sufficient to stabilize the internal situation. It is not clear, however, that this recommendation was universally accepted in the military; Chief of Staff Ogarkov, for one, may have had reservations about the manpower consequences of an intervention.

Subsequent events proved that Pavlovskiy was overoptimistic in his initial assessment. The Afghan army proved to be much less reliable than expected. More important, the war revealed serious weaknesses among Soviet enlisted men, in the officer corps, and in the senior command. For the first five years of the war, the Soviet command did not prove adept at modifying its doctrine for mountain and desert warfare to the conditions of the counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan. Open discussion of counterinsurgency doctrine or operations is still proscribed, and the Soviets do not appear to have emphasized formation of

specially trained counterinsurgency units. This situation may be changing, however, with the introduction of more aggressive tactics in 1986.

The prolongation of the Afghan war has probably caused recriminations by both the political and military authorities. The military may have been blamed for its overoptimism in its assessment of the effectiveness of an intervention. The military leadership, for its part, may blame the political leadership for the original decision to intervene and for not permitting a major escalation in operations against Pakistan. **There was a remarkable and steady increase in the frankness of reporting on Soviet casualties in Afghanistan between 1980 and 1984 in the Soviet press, indicating that the military has been unhappy in not receiving sufficient recognition of its role in the war.** Advocates of power projection within the military were on safer ground in the interventions in Angola and the Horn of Africa when the bulk of the fighting could be carried out by Soviet allies; in Afghanistan they may have gotten more than they bargained for.

The pattern of Soviet military interest in the Third World power projection mission—which grew through the 1960s, peaked under Marshal Grechko in the mid-1970s, and declined thereafter—paralleled the evolution in the thinking of the political leadership and civilian specialists on the Third World. The leadership's confidence in the strength of its overall foreign policy position peaked at around the time of the 25th party congress in 1976, when Soviet spokesmen asserted that the changing correlation of forces in favor of socialism permitted the Soviet Union to pursue detente and support the world revolutionary process simultaneously. Following the period of activism in the late 1970s, the Soviet leadership displayed a growing disillusionment with its recent gains in view of their cost, effects on U.S.-Soviet relations, and the poor performance of many Soviet clients. Both military and civilian authorities displayed a much lower level of enthusiasm for an interventionist policy in the Third World in the early 1980s.

Policy toward the Third World has thus not been a divisive issue in Soviet civil-military relations. Party leaders and the military command have had distinct and independent reasons for favoring a particular policy line (whether favorable or unfavorable to intervention), but these motivations have by and large complemented each other. Under the military's current leadership, this situation is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Neither Defense Minister Sokolov nor Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev have displayed special interest in the Third World since being appointed to their present positions and would not have the institutional influence to take a strong stand on what for them is not a central issue.

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I. OVERVIEW

This study examines the question: In what ways has policy toward the Third World been a factor in Soviet civil-military relations?

Understanding the Soviet military's role in decisionmaking is particularly important because of the heavy military component in Soviet Third World policy. Although the Soviets use economic assistance and political support to allies in the developing world, military power—whether in the form of arms transfers and training, or the actual deployment of Soviet combat forces—has probably been the most important instrument underpinning Soviet influence among them. Soviet capabilities and, apparently, willingness to project power around the globe have been growing steadily since World War II. From the standpoint of American policy, the most troubling aspect of Moscow's behavior has been the possibility of military intervention in Third World conflicts, either indirectly through use of Cuban and other proxies, or directly as in the December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. Afghanistan raised the disturbing precedent that Soviet military power might be used in other regions where the United States was more deeply involved, with the attendant danger of direct U.S.-Soviet confrontation. The Soviet military obviously plays a role in all decisions involving the use of military force, and it is both interesting and important to know what that role has been and whether the military has had interests and views different from the civilian-political leadership.

We can approach the latter question by posing a couple of preliminary ones. First, is there a distinct military voice or point of view on Third World issues?

The answer to this is clearly yes. This voice can be heard in the behavior and statements of senior military leaders on Third World issues, which, as will be seen below, has been distinguishable from that of the political leadership. It is also evident in the voluminous literature in the Soviet military press on Third World conflicts, which generally fall under the category of "local wars" (*lokal'nie voiny*); Soviet authors define a local war as any war that is not a large general war between the two "opposing social systems."

A second question is whether this voice reflects a distinct *political* point of view regarding the purposes and the desirability of using force, rather than mere functional differences between the military and civilian leaderships in the USSR. For example, military writers spend a

great deal of time describing and analyzing the operational aspects of actual conflicts in the Third World, which civilian writers do not. This seems less a reflection of the military's greater propensity to use force than the simple fact that military officers are paid to think about precisely those issues and civilians are not.

The prevailing view in the Western literature on this subject is that the Soviet military does have a political view on the use of force in the developing world, and that in the early 1970s it began to develop a full-blown strategy or doctrine¹ of military intervention in support of revolutionary movements in the Third World. According to Carl Jacobsen,

It has been established that the early 1970s saw the emergence and evolution of what can only be called a Soviet "doctrine of intervention." By the mid-1970s it was becoming clear that distant power projection capabilities, the wherewithal to implement doctrine, had developed apace; in Angola and Ethiopia the world had witnessed the first concrete expressions of the import and implications of emergent trends. The Soviet Union had acquired and was exercising the will and means to make its presence felt in areas where Western dominance previously had not been challenged.²

Jacobsen further suggests that this "doctrine" was justified on the "secular" (nonideological) grounds of power politics. Similarly, in an introduction to their anthology of Soviet writings on military doctrine the Scotts state, "In 1974 Marshal Grechko announced another major policy shift. The Soviet Armed Forces would no longer be restricted to defending the Soviet Union and its socialist allies." They go on to assert that this change became "particularly pronounced" after 1975.³ Mark Katz's study of Soviet military writings on the Third World is more cautious in asserting the development of an "interventionary doctrine" but notes changes taking place in Soviet thinking during this period "more favourable to greater Soviet involvement in the Third World."⁴

These authors do not maintain that Soviet military views on intervention were in any way opposed by the civilian political leadership; indeed, they maintain that Brezhnev and his Politburo colleagues backed the new doctrine enthusiastically. What is important in this interpretation from the standpoint of civil-military relations is the suggestion that the Soviet military played a distinct political role in

¹"Doctrine" here is understood in a very broad sense of a standing policy or mission, and not in the narrower sense of a fundamental principle of military art or science.

²Jacobsen, 1979, p. 26.

³Scott and Scott, 1982, p. 13.

⁴Katz, 1982, p. 89. See also Haselkorn, 1986, p. 3.

promoting the Third World interventions of the mid- to late-1970s, first by preparing the capabilities and strategy for power projection, and then by advocating the deployment of forces when the opportunity arose.⁵

This study will piece together what we know about evolving Soviet military views on the Third World, and test the hypothesis that the military as an institution was in some way an advocate of intervention after the early 1970s. The story that emerges is a complex one. Although the Soviet military did begin to assert the existence of a new mission of support for national liberation forces in the early 1970s, it is far from clear that this amounted to a true "interventionary" strategy. In the first place, the meaning of the power projection mission was ambiguous; from the written evidence alone, it could entail nothing more than arms transfers and training, or the much more risky deployment and use of Soviet combat forces in regional conflicts. Nor was it clear what the status of this mission was in Soviet military planning, because almost all high-level references to it disappeared after the mid-1970s. The Soviet military has never spoken with one consistent voice on this subject; it is possible to identify several distinct voices *within* the military that have their counterparts among civilian writers. Support for the Third World power projection mission is not uniform throughout the armed forces, but cuts across service rivalries, competition for resources between theater and strategic missions, etc.

Indeed, on closer inspection, although Defense Minister Andrey Grechko was an advocate of something like a power projection mission, the man who succeeded him in 1976, Dmitriy Ustinov, as well as the new Chief of Staff who also was appointed that year, Nikolay Ogarkov, had different priorities and were much more focused on modernizing forces in the European and Far Eastern theaters. In the context of the general cutback in the rate of growth of the Soviet defense budget and the freezing of the procurement budget being imposed on the military in the late 1970s, it seems plausible that these men regarded power projection as something of a diversion from the central missions of the Soviet armed forces.

The Soviet military is clearly capable of intervening in many parts of the Third World and is ready to do so when asked by the political leadership. In the 1970 War of Attrition and later in the first half of the 1970s it may have taken the lead in promoting a more "forward" policy in support of less-developed allies, but it is hard to make a simi-

⁵Menon (1986, pp. 73-83) argues against the line taken by Jacobsen and the Scotts, dismissing the sources they cite as representing nothing new. This issue will be taken up in greater detail in Sec. III.

lar case for the interventions of the late 1970s.⁶ In the Horn of Africa, support for Vietnam, and the invasion of Afghanistan, the initiative for intervention is likely to have come from the civilian leadership, with the military following along. That trend is likely to persist into the foreseeable future.

Section II will provide a brief overview of the mechanics of Soviet decisionmaking on the Third World and how the military fits into the picture. Section III will trace the ascending curve of military interest in the Third World, beginning with the Soviet navy's pursuit of bases in the 1960s and the development by the early 1970s of the concept of a "liberating mission" for the Soviet armed forces as a whole. Section IV will discuss the subsequent downplaying of the "liberating mission" under the military leadership that took over in 1976 and the reassertion of ground forces dominance within the General Staff after the death of Defense Minister Grechko. Section V will analyze the effect of the largest and most flagrant intervention of the 1970s, the invasion of Afghanistan, on the military's view of intervention in general and on civil-military relations. Finally, Sec. VI will provide an overview of the evolution in military thinking about the Third World and present some concluding observations.

⁶This observation applies to the military as an institution; it is entirely possible that individual officers with favorable Third World experiences like General Petrov might have a higher proclivity toward intervention, as seems to be the case with General Pavlovskiy in Afghanistan (see Sec. V).

II. THE MILITARY AND THE THIRD WORLD DECISIONMAKING PROCESS

MECHANICS

Major decisions on the Third World, such as whether to invade Afghanistan, are obviously taken at the level of the Politburo. But most Western observers agree that responsibility for formulating the Politburo's agenda and options is divided between the Foreign Ministry and the international departments of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, the most important being the International Department, headed for many years by Boris Ponomarev, and now led by the former ambassador to the United States, Anatoliy Dobrynin.¹ The Foreign Ministry was originally set up to deal with established governments. The International Department, as the bureaucratic successor to the Comintern, handled relations with the so-called world revolutionary process—the nonruling Communist and workers parties, national liberation movements, peace fronts, and the like. As many of these movements came to power, the International Department continued to handle their portfolios, and it is now the primary locus for policy toward the Third World in general.²

The Third World has not traditionally been high on the military's list of concerns, nor has it been noted as a major source of friction between military and civilian authorities. Supreme authority for defense decisionmaking is vested in the Defense Council,³ which, by the end of Brezhnev's rule, included the General Secretary, defense minister, and a subset of the Politburo including the premier, foreign minister, and a couple of senior party secretaries. Responsibility for routine military policy is of course vested in the Soviet General Staff, which presumably plays a major role in setting the agenda and formulating issues for the political leadership. The high policy issues that have been of primary concern to the Defense Council and General Staff include such questions as resource allocations between the civilian and military sectors of the economy and the related issue of the size of the armed forces, investment in the defense technology base, strategic doctrine, and the military's status and privileges. Each of

¹See Gelman, 1984, pp. 59–63; Schapiro, 1976–77; and Kitrinis, 1984.

²For a fuller discussion, see Fukuyama, 1986b, pp. 5–12.

³Under Khrushchev and for the first years of the Brezhnev administration this was known as the Supreme Military Council. Gelman, 1984, pp. 63–70.

these issues evidently became a matter of controversy between military and civilian authorities between 1976 and 1986.⁴ Whatever role the Third World has played in Soviet civil-military relations in recent years, it is doubtful that it could have been a central point of controversy because the Third World as a whole is of considerably lesser importance to the military than these other issues.

The military's primary role in the Third World decisionmaking process lies in the implementation rather than the formulation of policy—that is, by providing options for military assistance to clients or, in more extreme cases, direct deployment of Soviet forces. This can be an extremely important source of influence, however, since the provision of security plays such an important part in Moscow's relations with its allies in the Third World, and in some cases constitutes the universe of options available to Soviet leaders. Before the October 1973 Middle East war, for example, the quantity and quality of weapons was the chief issue in Soviet-Egyptian relations. The political leadership relied heavily on Marshal Grechko's advice as defense minister, and used him as their primary liaison to Anwar Sadat between 1970 and 1973. Although the military is probably not asked for its views on nonmilitary issues, it can influence the outcome of decisions (as in other political systems) in the way that it formulates options or renders judgments on the operational feasibility of various alternatives.

Once the decision has been made to use Soviet forces or weapons in the Third World, the military's policymaking latitude probably increases substantially. The GRU (Soviet military intelligence) is said to operate semi-autonomously from the KGB and Foreign Ministry in many parts of the world, and in certain cases has acted at cross-purposes to the KGB.⁵ Although the political leadership continues to set the overall policy line during an intervention, we can assume that operational commanders (such as General Petrov in Ethiopia in 1977–78) are given a reasonable amount of flexibility in carrying out their missions.

In addition to its role as a policy implementor, the military from time to time acts as the formulator of policy where its own interests are directly affected. For example, the Soviet navy developed a requirement for overseas bases and facilities in the early 1960s and pressed the political leadership to make access an issue in Moscow's relationship with certain key countries. There may also have been cases where the political leadership wanted to provide a client with a

⁴Soviet civil-military relations during this period are the subject of a forthcoming analysis by Jeremy Azrael.

⁵One example of this apparently occurred in Afghanistan. See Arnold, 1983, pp. 55–56.

particular advanced weapon system and was opposed by the military, which feared that the system would be compromised or fall into the hands of the United States. The military's ability to make its case was probably enhanced when the defense minister was put on the Politburo in 1973 although his influence may have been counterbalanced somewhat by the simultaneous elevation of the foreign minister and head of the KGB. The military's overall influence appears to have been diminished three years later with the appointment of a civilian party official (albeit one with considerable military background), Dmitriy Ustinov, as defense minister. One may assume that the downgrading of the defense minister to candidate member of the Politburo after Ustinov's death in late 1984 further reduced the institutional clout of the armed forces, including its influence on Third World-related issues.

The primary mechanism by which military views are regularly consulted on Third World issues is, presumably, the Defense Council, a group that in the late Brezhnev era consisted of the General Secretary, the two senior party secretaries below him, the defense minister, foreign minister, and premier.⁶ Below this level there are probably other mechanisms for coordinating military positions with those of the other foreign policy bureaucracies, but there is little information on their structure or responsibilities. On a working level, however, it is likely that Foreign Ministry and International Department officials play the key policymaking role, with the military in a secondary role. The personal views and political standing of the defense minister (and to some extent the Chief of Staff) appear to be important in determining the military's overall input into the policy process.

THE EVOLVING VIEWS OF THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The military's views on Third World policy must be placed in the context of the evolving attitudes of the political leadership, particularly on the question of the role of force. The guidelines for policy are set forth in such documents as the General Secretary's accountability reports at the party congresses every five years, the party programs, speeches and statements by the senior political leadership, and the writings of officials in the International Department who are directly responsible for Third World policy. Ultimately, these guidelines are reflected to a greater or lesser extent in actual behavior, and it is Soviet external behavior that constitutes the final measure of policy.

⁶Gelman, 1984, pp. 67-68.

It would take too long to present a full account of this evolution here; instead, we will describe the highlights of Soviet thinking from the late 1960s to the present.⁷

Soviet self-confidence in the strength of its foreign policy position followed an ascending curve and reached a rather high point at around the time of Brezhnev's address to the 25th CPSU party congress in 1976. Already at the 24th congress in 1971, Andrei Gromyko made his famous statement that "There is not a single question of any importance that could at present be solved without the Soviet Union or against its will."⁸ The United States was in the process of withdrawing from Southeast Asia and preoccupied with the Watergate scandal at home. Although the Soviet Union was moving toward detente with the United States, Soviet spokesmen were careful to emphasize that arms control and regularized relations on the central front did not mean a slackening of Soviet support for the world revolutionary process; indeed, detente reduced the risk of war and therefore improved Moscow's ability to aid its friends in the Third World. As Gromyko stated in 1975, "An extremely important sector of our foreign policy work . . . involves supporting national liberation forces and comprehensively cooperating with developing states. . . . The detente process taking place in the world is opening up new opportunities and prospects for strengthening our cooperation with developing countries."⁹ Brezhnev's report to the 25th congress was full of optimism about the prospects for revolutionary change and self-congratulation for the support rendered by the Soviet Union to Vietnam, Cuba, Angola, and the Arab states fighting Israel in 1973.¹⁰

Soviet confidence that detente and America's post-Vietnam mood would permit greater activism on Moscow's part then set the stage for the period of interventionism in the mid- to late-1970s, beginning with

⁷For a fuller account of these debates, see Fukuyama, 1986b.

⁸*Pravda*, April 4, 1971.

⁹"The Peace Program in Action," *Kommunist*, No. 14, 1975.

¹⁰Soviet political leaders and writers outside of the military never speak of a special role for the Soviet armed forces in the developing world and tend to emphasize the economic and political aspects of their support for clients over the military component. They never admit that Soviet military power is being used to bring sympathetic regimes to power and take some pains to deny the Western charge that they are "exporting revolution." A much more typical formulation is the one that Brezhnev used in his 26th party congress address, when he said "We help, together with the other fraternal countries, in strengthening the defense capability of the liberated states, when they turn to us with such requests. This took place, for example, in Angola and Ethiopia. . . . We are against exporting revolution but we cannot agree either with the export of counterrevolution." *Dvadtsat' Pyatyi S'ezd Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuzha, 24 Fevrala-15 Marta 1976 goda. Stenograficheskiy Otchet.*

the Cuban-Soviet operation in support of the MPLA in Angola in 1975, the intervention on behalf of Ethiopia in 1977-78, the backing of Vietnam in its invasion of Kampuchea in 1978, and finally the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. In each of these cases, Soviet military power played a crucial role in bringing to power or sustaining Moscow's friends. The Soviets added to their client base and encouraged a shift in the character of that base toward radical Marxist-Leninist regimes. Moscow encouraged these regimes to set up formal vanguard parties modeled on the Soviet Communist Party, which occurred in Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen, and Ethiopia.¹¹

But even as Moscow was achieving these successes in expanding Soviet influence and using military power in support of friends and clients in the Third World, the groundwork was being laid for a certain reassessment of the activist Brezhnev policy of the second half of the 1970s, a reassessment that was first evident by the early 1980s. Although as a whole the new clients were more susceptible to Soviet influence than earlier bourgeois nationalist allies such as India, Syria, or Egypt, they also tended to be small, weak states with poor institutional structures and leaderships lacking in nationalist legitimacy. Many of them, poorly developed even by Third World standards, faced severe economic problems in the first decade of their existence, and several (including Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Kampuchea) were beset by internal armed resistance movements, supported in some cases by the United States or other pro-Western states.

Perhaps as a result of this uneven record, the tone of Soviet pronouncements on the Third World had grown considerably more somber: In his address to the 26th party congress in 1981, Leonid Brezhnev noted that "as a whole the period after the 25th Congress was not a simple one. There were many difficulties both in the economic development of the country and in the international situation."¹² Brezhnev, however, continued to assert Soviet willingness to support national liberation movements; it was only after his death that a more thoroughgoing reassessment of his foreign policy occurred.

The leading figure in this reassessment was Yuriy Andropov, who presented what amounted to a critique of the activist legacy of his immediate predecessor. Consistently following positions he had taken in the 1970s, Andropov noted the constraints on Soviet resources, expressed skepticism about the genuineness of the socialist transformations purportedly taking place in the new Marxist-Leninist states, and

¹¹The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was organized, however aberrantly, as a vanguard party before its seizing power in April 1978.

¹²*Dvadtsat' Shestoy S'ezd Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuz, 23 Fevrala-3 Marta 1981 goda. Stenograficheskiy Otchet.*

suggested that the arrival in power of a more aggressive Reagan administration restricted the Soviet Union's ability to come to the assistance of national liberation movements by raising the risks of escalation.¹³ Andropov was merely echoing the sentiments of many lower-ranking officials and specialists on the Third World who by the end of the 1970s had become disillusioned with the prospects of transplanting socialism to the Third World and using it as a stable anchor for Soviet influence.¹⁴ There was a general recognition that although the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party was a theoretically sound basis for policy, it was incompletely realized in practice in Angola, Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.

Andropov also evidenced concern over resources. The expansion of the Soviet empire that took place in the 1970s and the growing demands of such established clients as Cuba also added greatly to the resource demands on the Soviet economy. These demands came at the same time that the rate of growth in productivity was experiencing a sharp secular decline, leading to a drop in the rate of growth in Soviet GNP as a whole. The prospect of lower growth had been severe enough to cause the political leadership to cut the growth rate in spending on both defense and investment in the Tenth (1975-80) and Eleventh (1981-86) Five Year Plans.

After the brief Chernenko interlude, reassessment was taken up again by Mikhail Gorbachev, whose speeches extended nothing more than "sympathy" to the liberated countries.¹⁵ The new party program published in October 1985 and endorsed at the 27th party congress codifies the downgrading of the Third World in Soviet priorities by noting that the radical Marxist-Leninist "socialist oriented" countries must develop their economies "mainly through their own efforts," with the USSR helping only "to the extent of its abilities."¹⁶

The reassessment engendered a marked downplaying of the role of military force in meeting Soviet policy objectives among authoritative party spokesmen. This came about in part as a result of the recognition among certain elements of the Soviet elite of the damaging effect that Soviet activism in the Third World had on the central East-West relationship. The Soviets in the early 1970s asserted their right to support national liberation movements at the same time that they pursued

¹³Andropov's most extensive statement on the Third World was contained in his plenum speech on June 15, 1983. See "Rech' General'nogo Sekretariya Ts. K. KPSS tovarishcha Yu. V. Andropova," *Kommunist*, No. 9, June 1983.

¹⁴See Fukuyama, 1986b, pp. 16-46.

¹⁵See "Rech' General'nogo Sekretariya Ts. K. KPSS tovarishcha M. S. Gorbacheva na plenuma Ts. K. KPSS 11 Marta 1985," *Pravda*, March 12, 1985.

¹⁶*Pravda*, October 26, 1985.

detente, but in practice they discovered that the United States would not permit such a divisible concept of detente: The invasion of Afghanistan led directly to the Carter administration's withdrawal of the SALT II treaty from Senate consideration. Not only did their interventionism impede the realization of arms control goals, but it helped to bring to power a more assertive Reagan administration whose military programs and greater willingness to use force made Soviet activism much more dangerous. Although it is still not clear whether the Soviets have actually become more risk-averse and less willing to use force in the early 1980s, they have clearly recognized that *talking* about military support for national liberation movements was counter-productive. The downgrading in the emphasis on military power is evident in the 1985 party program, which makes only one brief allusion to Soviet defense assistance for Third World allies. Brezhnev's reference to Soviet defensive assistance to prevent the export of counterrevolution does not recur in the speeches of the senior leadership after 1981.

The Soviet behavioral record since the invasion of Afghanistan confirms the notion that Moscow was in a period of retrenchment and consolidation. The Soviets made no further efforts to intervene on a large scale in Third World conflicts after December 1979. Although the absence of large interventions was arguably the result of the absence of large opportunities, Soviet behavior in the crises that did come up tended to be rather cautious.¹⁷

The Soviets did pour steadily increasing resources into support of important existing clients such as Cuba, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Angola, Syria, and Libya, and they nurtured the more recent Sandinista client regime in Nicaragua. The reassessment that occurred in the early 1980s did not therefore lead to anything like a decision to withdraw from current positions in the Third World, but rather to concentrate on consolidating Soviet influence where possible while being cautious toward new and possibly expensive commitments.

Thus the political leadership's views on the Third World have undergone a steady evolution since the 1970s. Assertiveness about Soviet ambitions and power peaked in the mid-1970s and continued through the end of the decade, as Moscow embarked on a series of interventions around the world. Although never speaking too explicitly about the role of military power in promoting Soviet interests, Soviet spokesmen projected a sense of satisfaction at the USSR's achievement of strategic parity and America's recognition of their status as a

¹⁷The question of missed opportunities is a very complicated one that cannot be dealt with here. Among candidate instances were a more aggressive exploitation of the Iran-Iraq war to increase Soviet influence in Teheran and sharply stepped-up military pressure against Pakistan as a result of the latter's assistance to the Afghan mujahedeen.

military superpower. As time progressed, the benefits of the positions gained through the use of power appeared more equivocal. By the mid-1980s, there was a clearly expressed desire on the part of the political leadership to reduce or at least limit the costs of the empire, and to begin cultivating larger, geopolitically important states that were frequently capitalist-oriented in place of the small, weak Marxist-Leninist clients of the 1970s.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THIRD WORLD MISSION

INSTITUTIONAL INTERESTS AND REQUIREMENTS

At the conclusion of World War II, the Soviet military was primarily a conventional land army, still very much oriented toward the European theater where it had just defeated Nazi Germany. Parts of the Third World became an important issue for the Soviet military for the first time in the mid-1950s, although in a way that fell short of distant "power projection." The Eisenhower administration, implementing its strategy of massive retaliation, organized the states of the Middle East's so-called "Northern Tier" into an anti-Communist defensive alliance that permitted the United States Air Force's Strategic Air Command to set up bases in Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, along the southern borders of the Soviet Union. Given the limited ranges of strategic weapons in this period (B-47 medium range bombers and Thor and Jupiter MRBMs and IRBMs), these bases on the Soviet periphery were very important to America's overall retaliatory posture. Although we do not have direct evidence, we can presume that the military fully supported Khrushchev's efforts to undermine the U.S. position in the Northern Tier through cultivation of Nasser's anti-Western pan-Arabism.

Apart from U.S. nuclear weapons in the Northern Tier, the Soviet military apparently had very little interest in or ability to project power to other parts of the Third World. Mohamed Haykal, Nasser's confidant, reports Marshal Zhukov demanding of Syrian President Quwatly during the 1956 Suez crisis, "How can we go to the aid of Egypt? Tell me! Are we supposed to send our armies through Turkey, Iran, and then into Syria and Iraq and on into Israel and so eventually attack the British and French forces?"¹

The one countervailing example we have from this period was the Syrian-Turkish crisis of 1957, which was the only time that Soviet forces were deployed in a Third World crisis before the June War of 1967. During the early stages of the Syrian-Turkish affair a Baltic Fleet cruiser and destroyer that happened to be in the Mediterranean were diverted to the Syrian port of Latakia to signal support for Damascus. This order was linked personally to Defense Minister

¹Haykal, 1978, p. 71.

Zhukov; by one interpretation, this act was part of the basis for the charges of "adventurism" that were levelled against him after his dismissal by Khrushchev on October 26, 1957.² Clearly, Khrushchev had many reasons for wanting to remove Zhukov, and the charges of adventurism were misplaced: The Soviet leader himself issued several nuclear-missile threats in the second half of the crisis, appointed Marshal Rokossovskiy commander of the Transcaucasian Military District, and staged military maneuvers across the Turkish border. Dismukes and McConnell have suggested that at this stage of the development of Soviet projection forces, the political leadership believed that the deployment of military forces in local crisis situations was much more risky than larger demonstrations of force on Soviet territory, and therefore the charges against Zhukov had some cogency. If so, it was an isolated event: No further evidence arises of the Soviet military's interest in the Third World until the following decade.

The service branch that had the most direct interest in the Third World and that was responsible for pushing the armed forces as a whole toward greater involvement there was the navy. The Soviet navy was traditionally oriented toward coastal defense and support of land operations. During the 1950s, it undertook responsibility for neutralizing the nuclear systems on board U.S. aircraft carriers deployed in striking range of the Soviet Union (e.g., in the Eastern Mediterranean), a task it could carry out initially with only limited success.³

Three developments occurred in the early 1960s to impel the Soviet navy further afield. In the first place, the ranges of American sea-based nuclear strike aircraft increased, forcing the Soviet navy to deploy further forward in order to tail and neutralize them in the event of war. Second, this period saw the development of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and the shifting of a portion of both superpowers' nuclear arsenals to sea. This technological advance created a new strategic ASW mission for the Soviet navy that pushed it toward deployments in ever more distant oceans as American SLBM ranges increased and required the deployment of Moscow's own missile-carrying submarines and the surface forces to sustain and protect them. The Soviet navy took on the burden of finding Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, in addition to its increasingly difficult anti-carrier mission.⁴ This probably accounts for the Soviet deployment of a squadron in the Mediterranean for the first time in 1964, and the stationing of a permanent force there (the Fifth *Eskadra*) in later years.

²For an account of this affair, see Dismukes and McConnell, 1979, pp. 7-10.

³"Neutralization" here refers to the wartime mission.

⁴MccGwire, 1980, pp. 165-166.

The third development was the Soviets' expulsion from their naval base in Vlona, Albania in May 1961, after Moscow's falling out with Tirana.⁵ The Soviet navy was much more dependent on land bases than its American counterpart because of its lack of carrier-based aviation, weaknesses in nuclear propulsion, and lack of American-style underway replenishment; after losing access to Vlona, it stood in need of facilities somewhere on the Mediterranean littoral to sustain forces there. In addition, basing facilities in the Mediterranean would avoid the need to transit through the Turkish straits, a passage that was constrained by the Montreux convention and presents a substantial military vulnerability in the event of war.

These military requirements constitute the background to Moscow's search for naval access during the 1960s, a search that Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, the father of the modern Soviet navy, personally spearheaded. Gorshkov visited Egypt four times before the June 1967 war, in December 1961 (six months after the expulsion from Vlona), March 1965, May 1966, and January 1967.⁶ It is likely that during these visits Gorshkov raised the question of regular Soviet naval access to such Egyptian ports as Sollum and Alexandria, and if possible actual facilities on Egyptian soil. Gorshkov probably would have been happy to receive permission to construct permanent, large-scale bases of the sort later built in Berbera, Somalia.⁷ Although Soviet ships visited Port Said for the first time in September 1965 and again in March and August 1966, the Egyptians refused Gorshkov's request. Nasser reversed this position only after Egypt's defeat in the June War, when he was driven to seek higher levels of Soviet support to correct the military balance favoring Israel. Hence he told President Podgorny when the latter visited Cairo in late June 1967, "We were afraid [before the June War] that the Western press and media would accuse us of being aligned, but now nothing of the sort concerns us. We are ready to offer facilities to your fleet from Port Said to al-Sallum and then from al'Arish to Gaza."⁸ Nasser also suggested at the time that a Soviet general take charge of Egypt's air defenses.

⁵Dismukes and Weiss, 1984, pp. 3-4.

⁶Dragnich, 1975. In addition, Khrushchev visited Egypt in May 1964 just before his ouster; and the head of the Egyptian navy, Admiral Izzat, visited Moscow twice at Gorshkov's invitation.

⁷Dragnich, 1975, pp. 256-257. According to Mohamed Haykal, Admiral Gorshkov pushed for facilities housing families of Soviet naval personnel and guarded by Soviet marines at Mersa Matruh and Bernis on the Red Sea in 1972. Haykal, 1975, pp. 165, 168.

⁸Quoted in Farid, 1978, p. 5.

Admiral Gorshkov's lobbying for naval access obviously had to have the approval of the Soviet political leadership as a whole (on his third visit to Cairo, he was part of a larger delegation led by Premier Kosygin). Nonetheless, his service had very clear interests in Egypt, and he probably played an important role persuading the Politburo to put the question of access on the bilateral agenda and increase Soviet military assistance to Egypt to make cooperation more likely. The navy played a role in encouraging close relations with other Third World countries as well; by the early 1970s it had received access to facilities at Latakia and Tartus, Syria, and Berbera, Somalia.

There is evidence suggesting that Marshal Andrey Grechko, the Soviet defense minister from 1966 to 1976, as well as Gorshkov was (or became) a personal advocate of strong support for Soviet Third World clients, particularly Egypt during the 1970 War of Attrition. The case rests largely on the evidence of his speeches, in which he argues quite explicitly that the Soviet armed forces have a mission in support of national liberation movements and revolutionary groups in the Third World that is above and beyond defense of the Soviet homeland and the socialist countries. This view of Grechko is also supported by content analysis of the military newspaper *Red Star* during Grechko's tenure, which was much more belligerent in its support of Arab allies than either *Pravda* or *Izvestiya*, and correspondingly less interested in negotiated or political settlements of the Arab-Israeli conflict, or in the effect of military support for the Arabs on U.S.-Soviet detente.⁹

Arab sources suggest that Grechko was a supporter of a more interventionist line in the Middle East. Haykal reports that on the eve of the June 1967 war, Grechko told Egyptian defense minister Badran to "stand firm. Whatever you have to face, you will find us with you. Don't let yourself be blackmailed by the Americans or anyone else."¹⁰ This advice was apparently not meant to be taken seriously, because Grechko later told the Egyptian ambassador to Moscow that he "just wanted to give [Badran] one for the road"; nonetheless, the Egyptians interpreted Grechko's words as a signal of Soviet support for confrontation with Israel.¹¹ Ra'anan has suggested that shortly after the commencement of Israeli deep-penetration bombing, Grechko, Chief of Staff Zakharov, the head of PVO Strany, and other members of the military leadership confronted Brezhnev and the Politburo with the fact that Egypt was in dire straits as a result and was likely to suffer

⁹Spechler, 1978, pp. 32-41.

¹⁰Haykal, 1978, pp. 179-180.

¹¹Indeed, Haykal quotes Grechko as warning Badran not to be provoked by the Israelis. Haykal, 1978, p. 179.

another defeat unless the Soviet military was introduced into Egypt directly to man surface-to-air missile sites and interceptors over the Suez Canal.¹² He further suggests that the military viewpoint informed a debate within the Politburo between proponents and opponents of intervention, with Brezhnev and Shelest arguing in favor and Suslov dissenting. The resolution of the debate in favor of the former prepared the way for Brezhnev's positive response to Nasser's request for Soviet intervention during his visit to Moscow in January 1970.

Grechko's advocacy of greater support for Egypt did not prevent him from acting as the bearer of bad tidings to Sadat from Moscow in the period between the August 1970 ceasefire and the expulsion of the Soviet advisors from Egypt in July 1972; nor did it decrease his skepticism about the combat capabilities of Egyptian forces. Haykal recounts Grechko lecturing Sadat that his country needed to go on a war footing and lacked the "will to fight."¹³ Grechko also resisted Sadat's suggestions that the air defense batteries manned by Russian crews be turned over to the Egyptians, evidently out of a belief that the latter were incompetent.¹⁴ One motive for Grechko's advocacy of direct intervention by Soviet forces may have been the simple desire to see Soviet equipment do well against American equipment in the hands of the Israelis.¹⁵

THE POWER PROJECTION MISSION OF THE EARLY 1970s

Shortly after Soviet combat forces were deployed in Egypt in early 1970—the first such deployment in a noncontiguous area since World War II—senior Soviet military leaders made statements suggesting that the Soviets were beginning to formulate something like a new mission for the armed forces in support of national liberation movements. Statements from this period have been most frequently quoted by

¹²Ra'anan, in McGwire et al., 1975, pp. 192 ff. Ra'anan bases this interpretation on "content analysis," without giving actual sources.

¹³Haykal, 1975, p. 170.

¹⁴Haykal, 1975, p. 163.

¹⁵Dina Spechler argues that the Soviet decision to supply Sadat with "offensive" weapons in the wake of his expulsion order in July 1972 was the result of the ascendancy of Grechko and others like him in the Soviet policymaking elite who held a view of the United States as an "unalterable antagonist." This is not really an explanation of Soviet behavior in terms of domestic politics, because what caused the Soviet shift was not an autonomous change in the internal Soviet political lineup, but rather their reaction to *external* events. The existence of internal factions was a given throughout the entire period in question, and was not the proximate cause of the Soviet turnaround. Spechler, 1986.

Western observers who have tried to make the case for the existence of an "interventionary" strategy or doctrine.

The "Liberating" Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces

The most common formulation was to speak of the existence of a historical "liberating" mission performed by the Soviet armed forces, beginning in the Great Patriotic War. One of the earliest and most clearcut examples of this line of argument was contained in a 1973 book by Army General Yepishev, head of the Main Political Administration and the chief political officer of the Soviet armed forces. Yepishev stated that the "liberating mission" of the armed forces was manifested during World War II when the USSR defeated German and Japanese fascism and "prevented the export of counterrevolution." This historical role led directly to their present day function:

By its nature and historical design, the army of the Soviet socialist state represents part of the international revolutionary-liberation forces. . . . Today the defense of the socialist fatherlands is closely tied to giving comprehensive assistance to national liberation movements, progressive regimes, and new states who are fighting against imperialist domination. Thus, the function of each socialist army to defend its own fatherland and to defend the socialist community as a whole objectively merges with the liberation struggle of the international working class, the national liberation movement of all progressive humanity.

In our day the Soviet Armed Forces served as a mighty support for revolutionary peoples in their struggle with intervention by world imperialism in the internal affairs of countries which have risen in wars of liberation against foreign domination, colonialism, and social oppression. *This activity of our army, directed to cutting off the export of imperialist counterrevolution under current conditions may with full justification be viewed as one of the most important manifestations of its external function.*¹⁶

Despite his strong statement on Soviet armed forces support for national liberation movements, Yepishev is not necessarily arguing for the projection of *Soviet* combat forces into Third World situations. It is not clear that such support is meant to extend beyond weapon transfers and training; at one point he defines aid to include "military assistance where necessary."

Defense Minister Andrey Grechko took up a similar line of argument the following year. Grechko explained that the Soviet army initially had both an internal and an external mission at the time of the

¹⁶Italics added. A. A. Yepishev, *Mighty Weapon of the Army*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1973.

foundation of the Soviet state, but that the former had fallen away in subsequent years with the consolidation of Soviet power throughout the USSR. The external mission he at first defines to include the defense of the USSR and the other countries of the socialist commonwealth. Then, in a frequently quoted passage, he states:

At the present stage the historic function of the Soviet armed forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending our motherland and the other socialist countries. In its foreign policy activity the Soviet state actively and purposefully opposes the export of counter-revolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggle, and resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may appear. The party and Soviet government rely on the country's economic and defense might in fulfilling these tasks. The working people of the whole world and all progressive mankind see in the economic and defense might of the USSR and the other socialist countries a reliable bulwark in the struggle for freedom and independence, the peoples' security, and social progress.¹⁷

This argument is repeated in another Grechko book, also published in the spring of 1974, where he states,

The USSR actively and purposefully opposes the export of counter-revolution. . . . It supports the national liberation of people. . . . The combat power of the Armed Forces of the fraternal socialist states restrains the reactionary circles of imperialism from unleashing a new world war and new, local military conflicts.¹⁸

One prominent analyst of the Soviet navy has suggested that Grechko was not a particular proponent of the Third World mission *until* 1974, and before that he was at odds with Admiral Gorshkov over naval roles and missions—i.e., that he opposed Gorshkov's advocacy of a larger surface navy with its power projection capabilities.¹⁹ The evidence cited for this is the restriction of the missions of the Soviet armed forces to the defense of the socialist homeland in Grechko's writings before 1974, and the difficulties encountered by Gorshkov in

¹⁷Marshal Andrey Grechko, "The Leading Role of the CPSU in Building the Army of a Developed Socialist Society," *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, April 1974.

¹⁸A. A. Grechko, *The Armed Forces of the Soviet State*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1974. Menon (1986, pp. 78–80) dismisses this and other Grechko statements as going no further than previous official Soviet statements asserting support for national liberation movements. But Grechko was not simply asserting that the USSR would support Third World allies; he was saying it was the mission of the Soviet armed forces to do so. A careful reading of Grechko's earlier speeches, or those of other Soviet military officials, will indicate just how unprecedented this was. Menon is right in stating that Grechko is very unspecific about the role the armed forces would actually play.

¹⁹McCWire, 1981, pp. 136–137. See also McCWire, 1987, Appendix C, "The Debate over Naval Roles and Missions," pp. 448ff.

his publication of the series "Navies in War and Peace" in 1972 (advocating a peacetime Third World role for the Soviet navy). Presumably this series was published over the objections of at least part of the General Staff.

Although some conflict probably occurred within the General Staff over the Navy's share of the total defense budget in this period, it is doubtful that the issue was Third World power projection. In the first place, there is direct evidence from Arab sources of Grechko's advocacy of firm support for Egypt during the War of Attrition, if not earlier. Moreover, the defense minister's writings before 1974, while not delineating an explicit Third World mission for the armed forces, nonetheless convey a strong internationalist flavor.²⁰ In an article published in 1971, Grechko relegates the Navy to more or less traditional combat missions but then outlines a peacetime role that foreshadows that of Gorshkov in his 1972 series: "The Soviet Navy is a symbol of the fraternity of peaceloving peoples. In recent years, our warships have made scores of official visits to countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, and America."²¹

Indeed, it seems likely that Grechko and Gorshkov were allies in promoting the power projection mission, and that the defense minister played an important role in seeing that Gorshkov's navalist theories found broader acceptance within the General Staff. The two men were longtime associates, Gorshkov having been Grechko's deputy for naval affairs while the latter was commander in the Caucasus in 1942.²² This collaboration is supported by the downgrading of the navy's status after Grechko's death in 1976, chronicled below.

Grechko is no more precise than Yepishev in defining what he means by the support for national liberation movements to be rendered by the Soviet armed forces, or how the latter hinder the "export of counterrevolution." Neither Grechko nor Yepishev argues for the deployment of Soviet forces, much less a direct combat role for them, and both may be suggesting a mission no broader than training and military assistance. The only Soviet source to advocate deployment

²⁰For example, in an article published in *Pravda* in April 1971, he suggests a primary mission for the armed forces of punishing aggressors who "dare to violate our motherland's borders," but then goes on to note, "The Soviet armed forces honorably fulfill their international tasks," with specific reference to the military assistance given to Vietnam, the Arab countries, and other "armies of young Asian and African developing countries." *Pravda*, April 3, 1971.

²¹A. A. Grechko, "The Fleet of Our Homeland," *Morskoy Sbornik*, No. 7, July 1971.

²²In an interview published shortly before his removal or retirement in 1985, Gorshkov referred to this collaboration as an example of the successful centralization of naval-ground command and control. Interview in *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*, No. 7, July 1985.

was the collective volume published by the Institute of World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO), edited by a retired colonel. The chapter by Dudin and Listvinov argues that the broad growth of Soviet military power has succeeded in shifting the balance of power in favor of socialism, thereby imposing peaceful coexistence on the West. The chapter continues:

By way of actively opposing the aggressive aspirations of imperialism on a worldwide scale, greater importance is being attached to *Soviet military presence in various regions throughout the world*, reinforced by an adequate level of strategic mobility for our armed forces. In any case it can be stated that, neither during the period of the United States strategy of "massive retaliation" nor during the initial years of the strategy of "flexible response" have the Soviet Armed Forces been called upon to perform such a function.

The Kulish authors argue that the primary restraints on imperialism are the Soviet Union's strategic weapons. But although the nuclear arsenal is sufficient to deter an "all-out" war, they are insufficient to prevent the outbreak of local wars. Consequently,

In connection with the task of preventing local wars and also in those cases wherein military support must be furnished to those nations fighting for their freedom and independence against the forces of internal reaction and imperialist intervention, the Soviet Union may require mobile and well-trained and well-equipped armed forces. In some situations the very knowledge of a Soviet military presence in an area in which a conflict situation is developing may serve to restrain the imperialists and local reaction, prevent them from dealing out violence to the local populace and eliminate the threat to overall peace and international security. It is precisely this type of role that ships of the Soviet Navy are playing in the Mediterranean Sea.²³

Facts are facts—the Soviet Union is truly a great naval and air power.

The Kulish authors stop just short of advocating outright military intervention on behalf of sympathetic national liberation movements, suggesting that "presence" in itself will have a deterrent effect.

The Kulish volume makes a highly explicit case for intervention, and as a consequence it has been cited repeatedly in the Western literature as evidence of a new Soviet "interventionary" strategy in the early 1970s. In retrospect, the book's significance was considerably smaller. Despite the military background of some of the authors, the volume did not in any way authoritatively represent the views of the

²³V. M. Kulish (ed.), *Military Force and International Relations*, Izdatel'stvo "Mezhdunarodnaya Otnosheniya," Moscow, 1972.

military, but only those of a small group of civilian academics with no policymaking role. Kulish himself lost his position at IMEMO, and the views expressed in the 1972 edition were not repeated subsequently in the Soviet literature.²⁴

The Question of Escalation

Another innovation in Soviet military writings on the Third World that had occurred by the early 1970s concerned the question of escalation. Soviet pronouncements from the 1950s and early 1960s were uniform in asserting that local conflicts were dangerous because they were likely to escalate into global war between the superpowers.²⁵

Beginning in the late 1960s, however, Soviet military authors began modifying this line by allowing for the possibility that local wars might not escalate. In 1965, Colonel General Lomov stated, "It is obvious that the probability of escalation of a limited war into a world nuclear war is quite high if the nuclear powers are drawn into a local conflict, and in certain circumstances it can become inevitable."²⁶ Although Lomov did not state what these circumstances were, he left open the possibility that conflicts might not escalate. By the early 1970s, expression of uncertainty over the likelihood of escalation had given way to more clearcut assertions that escalation would *not* occur. The argument was made with increasing frequency that the shift in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism had forced a greater realism on the West, which made its resort to nuclear weapons less probable. Some authors argued that local wars would become more common as a result, but they would have much less severe consequences. According to an article by a Colonel Malinovskiy in 1974,

However with the change in the correlation of forces in the international arena in favor of socialism, another possibility grows larger all the time—not to permit the transformation of local wars into great clashes on a world scale.

The characteristics are governed by basic traits of the present stage

²⁴Katz, 1983. Katz also points out that Kulish was *not* making a non-Marxist argument for the primacy of power politics in international relations.

²⁵Katz, 1982, pp. 18–21, 38–39. Typical of this line of argument was a 1969 article by Major General V. Matsulenok: "The imperialists do not for a day cease preparing for the world thermonuclear war which occupies the central position in their military doctrine and in the practice of their armed force buildup. A local war may be a prelude to a world war—one means of unleashing it." V. Matsulenok, "Local War of Imperialism (1946–1968)," *Voenna-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*, September 1968. See also the discussion of escalation in Galia Golan's forthcoming book, *The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World*, chap. 5.

²⁶Quoted in Dismukes and McConnell, 1979, p. 24.

of the struggle between the two social systems—socialism and capitalism—by further changes in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism and progress, and also the scientific-technical revolution taking place in the world.²⁷

The 1972 Kulish volume similarly expressed the view that local wars were not likely to escalate.²⁸

The reason for this change in Soviet views is probably related to the overall shift in strategic doctrine that was occurring simultaneously. In the 1950s and throughout most of the 1960s, Soviet military doctrine asserted that any future conflict between the two opposing social systems was likely to escalate into global nuclear war. Soviet military authors rejected American theories of limited nuclear war and escalation control of the early 1960s, maintaining that any future clash would not remain restricted with respect to either geographical locale or means. It was only in the late 1960s that Soviet military writers began to admit the possibility of a conventional phase at the beginning of a future European war, a position that saw further evolution in the following decade into Brezhnev's 1977 pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons. In this context it is only natural that escalation of a regional conflict should seem much less likely; the Soviets in any case had the precedents of Korea and Vietnam.

The explanation for this shift, on both the narrow issue of local wars and the larger question of escalation of which it is a part, had to do with improvements in Soviet military posture that had occurred by the early 1970s. In the two previous decades the Soviets held an advantage over the West in conventional forces but were heavily outnumbered in strategic nuclear weapons. The Soviets responded to nuclear escalation threats by the United States and its NATO partners with a threat of their own, to the effect that any crossing of the nuclear threshold would lead to the uncontrolled use of strategic weapons. With the growth in the numbers and capabilities of Soviet central strategic systems in the late 1960s, the Soviets were able to neutralize the Western ability to dominate the escalation ladder; with Western threats less credible, the Soviets felt a correspondingly less acute need to maintain that escalation was inevitable.

²⁷Col. G. Malinovskiy, "Local Wars in the Zone of the National Liberation Movement," *Voенно-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 5, May 1974. Cited in Katz, 1982, p. 68.

²⁸These views were not universally accepted and, as noted below, were flatly contradicted by Chief of Staff Ogarkov in 1979. A year after Malinovskiy's article was published, General Shavrov, the classifier of local wars, wrote that "the probability of the outbreak of local wars and military conflicts caused by imperialist policy remains a real one. And the threat of their developing into a world war cannot be excluded." Gen. I. Shavrov, "Local Wars and Their Place in the Global Strategy of Imperialism," *Voенно-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 4, April 1975.

The shift on the question of escalation may also have had something to do with Soviet projection forces. In the 1950s, Moscow had few means of militarily influencing the outcome of Third World crises, as Marshal Zhukov's statement (quoted above) indicated. Khrushchev's solution to these inadequacies in conventional forces was to threaten nuclear escalation in response to regional events, as he did during the Suez crisis in 1956, the Syrian-Turkish crisis of 1957, and the 1958 Lebanon crisis. Given the state of Soviet strategic forces relative to those of the United States at the time, these threats were clearly bluffs. By the early 1970s, Moscow had other instruments at its disposal, including a bluewater navy and air defense forces like those sent to Egypt. The need to suggest that every local crisis could lead to world war was correspondingly reduced.

GORSHKOV AND SOVIET NAVALISM

In addition to statements by such senior military leaders as Yepi-shev and Grechko, the other major advocate of a Third World mission for the Soviet armed forces in the early 1970s was the Soviet navy, in the form of Admiral Sergey Gorshkov's voluminous writings on naval theory. February 1972 saw the beginning of the publication of an eleven-part series of articles entitled "Navies in War and Peace" in the navy's journal *Morskoy Sbornik*. Much of this material was incorporated into Gorshkov's much longer 1976 book, *The Sea Power of the State*, which came out in a second edition in 1979.

Michael MccGwire and others have argued convincingly that "Navies in War and Peace" and the two editions of the book were not pronouncements of established naval doctrine so much as naval advocacy in what are presumed to be the ongoing battles over naval roles, missions, and budget shares in the early to mid-1970s.²⁹ Circumstantial evidence for this interpretation is particularly strong in the case of the *Morskoy Sbornik* series, which saw numerous publication delays and irregularities (presumably occasioned by the Glavlit censor) and led to an unusual number of changes in the naval journal's editorial board.

Seen in this light, the substance of Gorshkov's writings concerns not so much the contemporary navy as the kinds of missions Gorshkov would like to see the navy perform in the future, and the forces needed to carry them out. Gorshkov's book is justly famous in the West for the attention he pays to the mission of peacetime power projection and the use of navies to support allies in the Third World. The chapter

²⁹MccGwire, 1987, Appendix C, pp. 448ff.

entitled "Problems of Naval Art" contains subsections on "The Fleets in the Local Wars of Imperialism," in which Gorshkov discusses at great length British and particularly American use of naval power in Third World contingencies, and on "The Fleets in Peacetime," which makes a case for the navy's peacetime political utility. Gorshkov is commonly credited not only with being the father of the modern Soviet bluewater navy, but with defining that navy's role in terms of global power projection and with formulating a kind of Soviet navalist doctrine to support Third World intervention. In this context his theoretical writings of the 1970s are a natural outgrowth of his diplomatic activities in search of naval access during the 1960s.

Nonetheless, Gorshkov's writings and the modern Soviet navy itself have been subject to a certain degree of misinterpretation. Although the Third World power projection mission is undeniably part of Gorshkov's vision, it has always been of secondary importance to the navy's primary strategic missions, both in practice and in theory. Moreover, in writing about the peacetime role of the navy Gorshkov stops just short of developing an actual strategy of intervention; instead he argues in favor of the navy's positive demonstration value in situations short of actual combat. In other words, he elaborates what might be called a strategy for the projection of presence rather than the projection of power.

While making a general pitch for a greater emphasis on sea power, in both the "Navies in War and Peace" series and *The Sea Power of the State* Gorshkov specifically advocated the building of a larger surface navy. The primary role for surface combatants, however, is not Third World power projection but strategic anti-submarine warfare. The principal strike weapons of the Soviet navy remain aircraft and submarines delivering nuclear weapons, particularly SSBNs capable of launching missiles at intercontinental ranges.³⁰ The sections "Fleet Against Fleet" and "Problems of Balancing Fleets" both strongly suggest an agenda of building a larger, more versatile, and more survivable surface navy to protect the Delta-class SSBNs, which were starting to be deployed in the early 1970s in the Barents Sea and Sea of Okhotsk

³⁰See for example Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, where he says, "The experience of combat operations in the sea and oceanic theaters showed that the main, most universal and effective kinds of forces of the fleet have become submarines and aircraft" (p. 184). Later, he states, "Surface ships remain the basic and often sole combat means of ensuring deployment of the main strike forces of the fleet—submarines. The First and Second World Wars showed the fallacy of the view that the submarine by virtue of its concealment after emerging from its base can itself ensure its own invulnerability" (p. 196).

bastions.³¹ In one of the historical monographs in the 1972 series, Gorshkov makes the telling argument that the fatal weakness of the German U-boat campaign in World War II was the German command's failure to protect their submarines in the Atlantic with surface ships.

This theoretical argument is consistent with the actual Soviet ship-building program through this period. The major new classes of large Soviet surface combatants designed and launched during the 1970s, such as the *Kiev*-class VTOL carrier, the *Udaloy* and *Sovremenny*-class destroyers, or the *Kirov*-class cruiser, although frequently portrayed as power projection ships, were in fact designed primarily to work together in surface action groups tasked with SSBN bastion defense.³² The argument has been made that these ships were "intended to provide a force able to engage a carrier battle group far from the Soviet Union, and so of shielding an insurgency from Western intervention."³³ That the Soviets were contemplating such a mission is highly implausible. Moscow has demonstrated that its stake in most Third World clients, much less out-of-power national liberation movements, is sufficiently low as to be not worth the risk of direct conflict with the United States. The idea that the Soviet navy might initiate combat operations against a U.S. carrier battle group to protect a Third World client is, on the face of it, absurd. The Soviets might hope that their presence in local waters during a crisis might have some deterrent effect, or that the navy could be used to assist the client directly, but it is highly doubtful that such considerations seriously influenced the design of contemporary Soviet anti-surface warfare systems. Obviously, combatants such as the *Kiev* and the *Kirov* can be used for Third World power projection, but their weapon load and deployment indicate a rather different primary mission.³⁴

Strategic ASW, then, is the context in which Gorshkov's discussion of the peacetime role of the navy is embedded: The latter, he argues in effect, is a kind of additional benefit derived from procuring a large surface fleet for the central strategic mission, but not a justification in itself. And what is the peacetime mission? Gorshkov argues that the

³¹See MccGwire, 1981, p. 228.

³²Development of large anti-submarine ships to protect SSBNs started considerably earlier, with the *Kashin* and *Kresta I* classes. See Robert G. Weinland, "The Evolution of Soviet Requirements for Naval Forces: Solving the Problems of the Early 1960s," *Survival*, Vol. 26, No. 1, January-February 1984, p. 23.

³³Friedman, 1983, p. 163.

³⁴Nor is there reason to assume that the 60,000-ton large-deck carrier launched in 1986 is primarily intended for power projection; it may be intended to provide air cover in the bastions as well.

primary restraint on imperialism is the vulnerability of the American continent to nuclear strikes, but that the fleet by its very presence can play an important role as well. A country's level of economic and technical development is reflected in the quality of naval technology it is able to produce, which in itself impresses friends and enemies. Moreover,

The navy, as a constituent part of the armed forces of the state, has a further distinctive feature, namely the ability to demonstrate graphically the real fighting power of one's state in the international arena. . . . As is known, in the last few years it has become common to hold displays of missile weapons, combat aviation and various military equipment on an international scale, pursuing as well as a commercial, another aim: to surprise potential enemies with the perfection of this equipment, exert on them a demoralizing influence by the power of one's weapons even in peacetime, instill in them in advance the idea that efforts to combat aggression are futile.³⁵

Gorshkov concludes that "the fleet has always been an instrument of the policy of states, an important aid to diplomacy in peacetime." He then makes the case, foreshadowed by Grechko in 1971, that Soviet officers and seamen play a beneficial role as representatives of the Soviet state during port calls.

Gorshkov never states explicitly that he expects the Soviet navy to be used in combat in local wars or other Third World situations. He intimates as much, however, in his lengthy discussion of "The Fleets in the Local Wars of Imperialism," where he details the utility of the U.S. and other Western navies in influencing the outcomes of battles in Korea, Vietnam, and other conflicts. While ostensibly disapproving intervention, he notes, "Without wide, active use of the fleet, the interventionists could hardly have escaped military defeat in Korea."³⁶ At the conclusion of this section he observes,

Experience of these local wars confirmed that the aggressive actions of the imperialists led to success only in the absence of due counteraction. In the presence of well-organized resistance by the freedom-loving peoples, supported by the powerful socialist community and other progressive forces at the time, the imperialists were unable to achieve their military-political goals in a local war.³⁷

This and other passages suggest that what Gorshkov has in mind is not that the Soviet navy should try to replicate Western power projection missions in the Third World, but rather that through its simple

³⁵Gorshkov, 1976, pp. 246-247.

³⁶Gorshkov, 1976, p. 240.

³⁷Gorshkov, 1976, p. 245.

presence and the *threat* of counteraction, it can neutralize Western ability to intervene on behalf of Third World allies against national liberation movements, or at least send politically useful signals of support.

This type of political-military function for the Soviet navy, stopping just short of intervention and combat, in fact came to characterize Soviet operations. Dismukes and McConnell document Moscow's naval diplomacy and the growing confidence with which naval forces were used, beginning with surge deployments into the Mediterranean during the June 1967 Middle East war, continuing through the 1970 Jordan crisis, the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war, and the October 1973 war.³⁸ In all of these cases the Soviets sent anti-carrier task forces into the crisis areas and assigned "tattletales" to shadow U.S. ships. The Soviet navy was used to signal diplomatic interest to the other superpower, to demonstrate political support for the local client, and, in the case of Soviet combatants docking in Alexandria harbor during the War of Attrition, performed a quasi-military deterrent function. There was never any indication that Soviet forces had a serious intention of engaging U.S. forces, or even of providing direct military assistance (other than through protection of arms supply lines) to local allies.

Gorshkov's advocacy affected not only how the navy was used as an instrument of diplomacy, but also budget shares as well. Following publication of the "Navies in War and Peace" series, allocations of nuclear reactors for warship programs for delivery by 1983 increased by perhaps as much as 50 percent.³⁹

THE PERSPECTIVE FROM THE MID-1970s

In the early 1970s, the Soviet military was clearly moving toward the formulation of something like a strategy of intervention, which foresaw a regular role for the armed forces in support of Third World clients and allies. Military writers routinely discussed the "liberating mission," which was sanctioned by the Soviet command's top leadership.

Admiral Gorshkov and the navy played a crucial role in this evolution, first by pushing for access to facilities in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, and then by formulating a highly sophisticated justification of large peacetime surface fleets. Defense Minister Grechko was also a strong proponent of the Third World mission, pressing the rest of the leadership for intervention in Egypt in 1970 and acting as the transmission belt by which Gorshkov's naval theories received a wider hearing within the General Staff.

³⁸See Dismukes and McConnell, 1979, particularly Ch. 5.

³⁹MccGwire, 1986.

This theoretical development paved the way for the period of intense activism in the second half of the decade. Up to this point the Soviets had employed their forces with incrementally increasing freedom of action, deploying a permanent squadron in the Mediterranean for the first time in 1964, surging ships during the June 1967 war, sending Soviet pilots into combat in South Yemen in 1969, deploying air defense forces in Egypt in 1970, and surging ships again in September 1970, August 1971, and October 1973. But a qualitatively new period in Soviet foreign policy began with the 1975 Cuban-Soviet intervention in Angola, continuing through the airlift of Cuban forces to Ethiopia in 1977-78, support of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in December 1978, and culminating in the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Soviet military played a critical role in providing logistics support and overall coordination for a series of complicated joint interventions by the different members of the bloc. It is not surprising that Western observers writing from the perspective of the late 1970s should have perceived a monotonic increase in Soviet interest in and capabilities for power projection, and the formalization in Soviet strategy of a new interventionary mission.

In addition, more traditional forms of military support, such as arms transfers, also increased dramatically in this period. The average annual value of both deliveries and agreements in the 1970-1984 period rose to approximately 15 times the level in the period from 1955 to 1970, with the annual value of agreements growing past the \$10 billion mark by the early 1980s.⁴⁰ Although this period is remembered for more visible activities, such as logistics support for Cuban troop intervention, the greater part of the Soviet military's involvement in the Third World during this period was concerned with provision of military assistance and training.

The trendline of ever-heightening involvement proved to be much less monotonic than expected, however. Even as the Soviet armed forces were apparently fulfilling their "liberating mission" in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, the strategy itself was changing; and the primary focus of the new leadership that assumed command of the military in 1977 was shifting from power projection to other, more traditional concerns.

⁴⁰Becker, 1986, p. 5.

IV. THE EVOLUTION OF THE LATE 1970s

The concept of a Third World mission for the Soviet armed forces, which had been developed on a theoretical level in the early 1970s, was put into practice in the intense five year period of Soviet activism from 1975 to 1979. In the case of Moscow's collaboration with the Cubans to aid the MPLA in Angola and in the Horn of Africa, the role of Soviet forces was limited to training, arms supply, and logistical assistance. But in Afghanistan Soviet troops intervened directly for the first time and engaged in large-scale combat.

But while Moscow was embarking on this series of Third World adventures, the party leadership was taking a series of decisions that adversely affected the military and undermined key elements of the "consensus" that had been reached in the mid-1960s after the ouster of Khrushchev.¹ The most important of these was that the rate of increase of military spending was halved from the 4-5 percent rate that had prevailed in the previous decade to 2-3 percent in the Tenth Five-Year Plan, with the rate of growth in weapons procurement falling even further. The growth rate for investment in defense-related heavy industry was cut as well. In 1976 Marshal Grechko died and was not replaced by another professional soldier, as the military had been led to expect, but by Dmitriy Ustinov, a civilian with long experience in the defense industry. A few months later, Viktor Kulikov, the chief of the General Staff, was replaced by Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov. Finally, in January 1977 Brezhnev announced a major doctrinal revision of Soviet strategy, declaring that the Soviet Union's military doctrine was purely defensive and that it sought, on a strategic nuclear level, no more than to deter attacks on the USSR.²

What is interesting and ironic about the period of the late 1970s is that just at the time when the Soviet military became heavily involved in the Third World, high-level interest in it was suddenly muted, and references to the "liberating" mission of the Soviet armed forces all but disappeared. It is still possible to find references to the Third World mission among lower-ranking writers in this period, but the two senior spokesmen of the military, Ustinov and Orgarkov,³ seldom if ever

¹These issues are treated in Jeremy Azrael's forthcoming study on the high politics of Soviet civil-military relations.

²On Brezhnev's Tula speech, see Holloway, 1983, p. 48.

³Ogarkov out of conviction, and Ustinov by his formal position, though he was in fact speaking for the party.

referred to it and on several occasions explicitly restricted the military's responsibilities to the "socialist states" (the Warsaw Pact, Cuba, and Vietnam). This suggests that, contrary to the beliefs of Western observers cited in Sec. I, the power projection mission was never established in Soviet military doctrine and probably continues to occupy a somewhat controversial status to this day.

THE NEW SENIOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP

Defense Minister Ustinov

Ustinov was not a professional soldier and until the end of his life he represented more the interests of the party apparatus than the armed forces. Nonetheless, he was by virtue of his background and position as defense minister the *de facto* spokesman for military views on many issues. A survey of Ustinov's speeches, articles and statements throughout his tenure as defense minister from 1975 to 1984 indicate a very limited interest in the Third World; indeed, it is difficult to find any mention of the Third World whatsoever in most of his speeches, particularly during the late 1970s. Where he does broach this subject, he explicitly contradicts Grechko's definition of a special role for the armed forces in support of the liberated countries.

In a May 1980 article in *Pravda*, for example, Ustinov spoke of the historical "liberating mission" of the Soviet armed forces in terms similar to Grechko's or other writers from the early 1970s:

The Soviet people and their armed forces . . . true to their international duty honorably fulfilled a great liberation mission: They drove the [fascist] invaders from many European countries, delivered the German people from the fascist yoke and liberated China's northeastern provinces and northern Korea. . . . Our victory created favorable conditions for a new upsurge of revolutionary struggle and gave unprecedented scope to the national liberation movement.⁴

But then, instead of going on as Grechko did to define a present-day mission for the armed forces in liberating the countries of the former colonial world, Ustinov simply refers to the dangers posed by American imperialism and ends the discussion. He notes that the United States seeks to export "counterrevolution" to the Third World, but he does not state that the Soviet Union or its armed forces would work to prevent its export.

⁴Dmitriy Ustinov, "Hero-People, Stalwart-People," *Pravda*, May 9, 1980.

After the Reagan administration came to power in 1981, Ustinov began to refer more frequently to the growing aggressiveness of the United States in the Third World and the risk this posed of escalation into open conflict between the superpowers. For example, in July 1981 he stated, "Washington has launched a broad offensive against the national-liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and particularly in Latin America, is giving every sort of support to antipopular regimes and is putting arms, equipment, military advisors and money at their disposal."⁵ The following year he asserted,

The United States is drawing other countries in different regions of the world within the orbit of its military preparations and is trying to set up new military blocs. . . . The imperial actions of the USA constitute a real threat to all states of the world, especially the developing countries, which are rich in raw materials or occupy an important strategic position.⁶

But in neither case did he take the logical next step of assuring those Third World states threatened by the United States that Moscow would support them. In the 1981 speech the only solution offered for strengthening "international security" was a proposal to "counterbalance" U.S. interference in the Middle East with an international conference on the Middle East.

The most striking example of Ustinov's apparent desire actually to exclude support for Third World clients from the roster of military missions came in an article written specially for a Vietnamese journal in November 1982, on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the October Revolution. Ustinov reassured the Vietnamese that the Soviet Union would "continually support and assist" young independent nations, "including the strengthening of national defense," but was explicit in excluding this as a role for the Soviet armed forces. According to Ustinov,

⁵Dmitriy Ustinov, "Against the Arms Race and the Threat of War," *Pravda*, July 25, 1981.

⁶Dmitriy Ustinov, "For Averting the Threat of Nuclear War," *Pravda*, July 12, 1982. See also the speech given in 1984 in India, where he stated that "The United States and its allies in military blocs are also resorting to subversion, to economic and political pressure and finally to brute force in order to impose their imperialist domination on the developing countries. Many of these countries—like Grenada, Lebanon, Nicaragua and Afghanistan—have already felt this imperialist policy upon themselves. . . . The present trend toward greater international tension and war danger is meeting with increased opposition among people of different races and nationalities and of different political and religious views." Dmitriy Ustinov, *Moscow World Service*, after visit to India, March 10, 1984.

The Constitution of the Soviet Union states clearly that the defense of the socialist homeland is the most important function of the state and an undertaking of all the people, that *the Soviet armed forces were formed to defend the accomplishments of socialism, the peaceful labor of the Soviet people, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Soviet Union.*⁷

The fact that Ustinov should see fit to deliver to the Vietnamese a short dissertation on Soviet constitutional law suggests a desire on his part to indicate that support for Vietnam was not part of the Soviet military's "external function."

Indeed, as part of the rhetoric emphasizing the dangers of nuclear war associated with the anti-INF campaign, Ustinov reverted to the formula from the 1950s and 1960s on the dangers of local conflicts escalating into global ones. In a May 1984 article in *Pravda*, Ustinov portrayed an expansionist United States seeking to deploy its forces "many thousands of kilometers from its own territory" and thereby aggravating local conflicts. Again offering no concrete support to Soviet allies under attack by the United States, he concluded, "The reckless, adventurist actions of imperialist reaction pose a threat to all mankind. They carry within them the danger that world war and nuclear catastrophe will be unleashed."⁸ The way to ease this danger was not through the Soviet armed forces' prevention of the "export of counterrevolution," but, according to Ustinov, through the Soviet Union's "specific and realistic proposals to end the arms race."

Chief of Staff Ogarkov

One of the documents captured during the U.S. invasion of Grenada describes Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Ogarkov as saying that "over two decades ago, there was only Cuba in Latin America, today there are Nicaragua, Grenada and a serious battle is going on in El Salvador." Ogarkov goes on to say that "United States imperialism would try to prevent progress but that there were no prospects for imperialism to turn back history."⁹ Aside from reflecting considerable confidence in Soviet fortunes in Latin America, some observers interpret this statement to indicate that Ogarkov was an advocate of strong military assistance to Third World allies. This view is not supported, how-

⁷Italics added. Dmitriy Ustinov, "Strengthening the National Defense Capability of the Soviet Union," *Tap chi quan doi nhan dan* (Hanoi), November 1982.

⁸Dmitriy Ustinov, "A Victory which Dispelled the Myths and Illusions," *Pravda*, May 9, 1984.

⁹U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, 1984.

ever, by other types of Kremlinological evidence.¹⁰ Although Ogarkov has been somewhat less explicit in excluding the power projection mission from the purview of the armed forces than Ustinov, he has never demonstrated a Grechko-like interest in the Third World. Ogarkov's apparent lack of interest in this is reflected in the little occasion he found to talk about it, even when such discussion would be appropriate.

Ogarkov has made statements suggestive of a "liberating mission," as in a 1979 article when he stated, "Our party and state are doing everything necessary . . . to support the people's liberation struggle,"¹¹ or one written in the immediate aftermath of the invasion of Afghanistan, which stated: "The valorous Soviet armed forces serve as an indestructible bulwark of universal peace and social progress, a reliable support for freedom-loving peoples in their national liberation struggle."¹² The latter reference to a Third World mission may be explained, however, by the exigencies of defending the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which occasioned a great deal of talk about the "internationalist duty" of the Soviet armed forces on the part of the entire Soviet leadership.

On other occasions, however, Ogarkov was if anything more explicit than Ustinov in limiting the mission of the Soviet armed forces to the defense of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries only. One example of this line was a 1982 article in the Latvian paper, *Sovetskaya Litva*. Ogarkov began as Grechko often did, speaking of the Soviet army during the second world war, which liberated many "countries of Europe and Asia," and paved the way for "the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America." But instead of going on to identify a present-day counterpart to this historical liberating mission, Ogarkov instead asserts that "Soviet soldiers stand vigilantly on guard over the sacred borders of their homeland and the entire socialist community," without any mention of a role in the Third World.¹³ Similarly, Ogarkov's 1982 Victory Day article discusses the

¹⁰The significance of the quoted statement is not clear, because it is the sort of opening statement one would expect the Soviet Chief of Staff to make when addressing the "defense minister" of Grenada. Later on, Ogarkov is quoted as saying that "since Grenada was located close to U.S. imperialism and was not developed militarily the Grenada Revolution would have to be specifically vigilant at all times," which might be a veiled suggestion that the Grenadans would be on their own in the event of an American military action.

¹¹Marshal Ogarkov, "Guarding the Soviet Motherland's Interests," *Partinaya Zhizn'*, No. 4, February 1979.

¹²Marshal Ogarkov, "True to Lenin's Behests," *Izvestia*, February 24, 1980.

¹³Marshal Ogarkov, "In a Single, Fraternal Family: Always Defending the Homeland," *Sovetskaya Litva*, February 23, 1982.

accelerating U.S. attacks on the national liberation movement, but says nothing about Soviet responses.¹⁴

Ogarkov's views on escalation were similar to Ustinov's as well, and contradicted the trend of the late 1960s and early 1970s exemplified by the Malinovskiy article minimizing the dangers of local wars growing into superpower conflicts. In an article on Soviet military strategy Ogarkov stated

Soviet military strategy also takes into consideration the possibility of the outbreak of local wars, the political nature of which is determined by class positions and the Leninist position with respect to just and unjust wars. While supporting wars of national liberation, the Soviet Union decisively opposes the local wars unleashed by the imperialists, considering not only their reactionary essence, but also *the great danger posed by the possibility of their escalating into a world war.*¹⁵

Ogarkov's article is an authoritative indication that there was no firmly established doctrinal shift in the early 1970s toward discounting the likelihood that local wars would escalate into global ones (though not necessarily global nuclear ones). His views on escalation are consistent with his continual warnings about the likelihood of war, a theme that grew much more prominent after the arrival of the Reagan administration in 1981 and the stepping up of the campaign against American deployment of intermediate range missiles in Europe. Ogarkov, in contrast to Ustinov, stressed the imminence of war with the United States and the similarity between present times and the 1930s. Given this view of the tenuousness of peace, it is only natural that he should argue for the possibility (if not the likelihood) of local conflicts escalating into large conventional theater conflicts.

Other Military Writers

Was the absence of talk about the "liberating mission" of the armed forces in the statements of Ustinov and Ogarkov the result of a "line" that had been imposed on the military leadership from above, or was it rather a reflection of their own personal inclinations? A survey of other military writers from the mid-1970s on indicates that the general view of the Third World evolved in a similar direction, with assertions about the changed correlation of forces and the liberating mission of

¹⁴Marshal Ogarkov, "For the Sake of Peace and Progress," *Izvestia*, May 9, 1982.

¹⁵Marshal Ogarkov, *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*, 1979 ed., September 1979.

the armed forces dropping from view toward the end of this period.¹⁶ The timing of this shift in rhetoric is difficult to date precisely, but it is clearly evident after 1977, by which time both Ustinov and Ogarkov were in place, and Brezhnev had delivered his Tula speech on the defensive character of Soviet strategy.

Even after this date the toning down of Soviet rhetoric was not followed consistently at levels below that of the senior military leadership, and indeed it is possible to find rather bald assertions about the power projection role well into the early 1980s. This suggests that although there may have been some effort to suppress the more belligerent statements, disagreement continued within the military about the liberating mission.

The best evidence that the Ustinov-Ogarkov line was not simply a matter of personal preference is the writing of Gen. Yepishev. Yepishev was one of the first military leaders to write in an extended fashion about the liberating mission of the Soviet armed forces in his 1973 book, *Mighty Weapon of the Army*. Yepishev does not return to this subject in any significant way in any of his subsequent speeches and articles. Like both Ustinov and Ogarkov, he occasionally mentions the mission of the Soviet armed forces in liberating Europe and Asia during the war as a historical fact, but he avoids any further reference to a contemporary military mission in the Third World.

A similar sort of evolution could be seen in the writings of Colonel Dolgoplov, who by the early 1980s had risen to the rank of Major General. In the early 1970s, Dolgoplov made several fairly explicit assertions about the Soviet military's role in providing arms and training to Third World countries. In a 1973 article in *Communist of the Armed Forces*, he stated

The military union with the peoples who must wage the armed struggle against the colonizers represents an important element of Soviet policy in foreign affairs. . . . At the request of a number of national states, the Soviet Union is actively helping them to strengthen their own defense capability and to set up and train their own armed forces.¹⁷

Two years later, he asserted

¹⁶Galia Golan, in her forthcoming book *The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World*, provides a very detailed survey of the shifting and inconsistent attitudes of the Soviet military toward the question of military intervention in the Third World, particularly in Chs. 5 and 6.

¹⁷Col. Ye. Dolgoplov, "Developing Countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America," *Kommunist Vooruzhenikh Sil*, No. 16, August 1973.

Under present conditions, the developed nations can count on the support of the Soviet Union and other nations of the powerful socialist comity in their efforts to create and strengthen their national armies. Fulfilling its international duty, the USSR is rendering all-around military assistance (deliveries of weapons and combat equipment, training of national military cadres and so forth) to friendly liberated nations.¹⁸

These statements differed markedly from the line he came to espouse by 1980, when he asserted that Communists eschew wars and conflict as a means of promoting revolution and concluded that "Socialist countries exert an influence on the development of the world revolutionary process primarily through their successes in building a new social system, which in a natural way comes to replace capitalism."¹⁹ The latter line was one used increasingly in the early 1980s by certain members of the political leadership and other civilian authors to indicate a desire to restrict Soviet economic and military assistance to Third World clients, by arguing that Soviet influence comes about less through direct aid than through the model posed by the Soviet Union as a developed socialist society.²⁰

In addition to toning down assertions about the military's role in supporting national liberation movements, by the early 1980s there was a noticeable increase in the pessimism expressed by Soviet military writers over the prospects of Soviet socialist-oriented clients, a pessimism mirroring that of civilian writers at the time. For example, the same Col. Malinovskiy, who in 1974 had confidently predicted that the changing correlation of forces in favor of socialism made escalation to nuclear war less likely, devoted a 1983 article to the counteroffensive by imperialism against recently acquired Soviet positions, noting, "At present the reactionary circles of imperialism are initiating a campaign against the national liberation movements behind the screen of combating international terrorism."²¹ Colonels Zaytev and Kondrashov, writing a 1980 article in *Communist of the Armed Forces* intended to

¹⁸Col. Ye. Dolgoplov, "Armies of Developing Nations and Politics," *Kommunist Vooruzhenikh Sil*, No. 6, March 1975.

¹⁹Col. Ye. Dolgoplov, "Exposing Bourgeois and Maoist Falsifiers of the History of Local Wars," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 6, June 1980.

²⁰Dolgoplov seems to have reverted to his former line again by 1984, however, when he stated, "The internationalist character of Soviet foreign policy manifested itself most graphically with respect to Afghanistan. . . . At the request of a number of developing countries, the Soviet Union is giving them aid in the formation and organization of young national armies, whose mission is to defend the gains attained and the social and political line chosen against encroachments by the imperialists and internal reactionaries." *Soviet Military Review*, No. 1, January 1984.

²¹Col. Malinovskiy, "The Neocolonial Wars of Imperialism," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 5, May 1983.

serve as guidance for political officers, presented a fairly sophisticated (in Soviet terms) picture of the problems of contemporary socialist-oriented countries. Noting that the national liberation phase had been largely completed, they asserted that the present task for progressive Third World countries had shifted to social liberation. In spite of recent gains,

there exists another extremely important and complicated problem—how to move toward socialism. Because of their backwardness, the liberated countries do not have the necessary prerequisites for the construction of socialism. [Countries] which are maintaining a socialist orientation are encountering numerous difficulties both domestic and foreign. . . . Experience shows that a socialist orientation still does not foreordain the victory of socialism—it is necessary to fight for it.”²²

No mention was made of a Soviet military role in support of countries threatened by counterrevolution. Civilian authors used the references to “complications” and “difficulties” quite frequently to express skepticism about the socialist transformations taking place in such radical Marxist-Leninist countries as Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

But although there was a general softening of the Soviet military’s line on the Third World after 1977, this trend was not universal. In 1977 Major General Yasyukov spoke of the liberating mission of the Soviet armed forces, noting, “The change in the correlation of forces in the international arena to the advantage of socialism informed the development of revolutionary and national liberation processes,” abetted by the “economic and defense assistance of the Soviet Union.”²³ Admiral Stalbo, generally thought to be a close associate of Gorshkov, wrote in 1980 of the Soviet navy exercising a “stabilizing influence” by its presence in crisis situations and of the “international mission of the Soviet Union to render aid to the developing countries and to the victims of aggression.”²⁴ That same year, Col. Vorob’yev published *The Armed Forces of a Developed Socialist Society* in which he repeated the Yepishev-Grechko line from the early 1970s almost verbatim:

The Armed Forces of the USSR . . . serve as a powerful obstacle to the interference of world imperialism in the affairs of the people of one country or another which has lifted itself into a liberation

²²Col. Avn. A. Zaytev and Col. C. Kondrashov, “The Downfall of Imperialism’s Colonial System,” *Kommunist Vooruzhenikh Sil*, No. 5, March 1980.

²³Major General Yasyukov, “Mirovaya sistema sotsializma—istoricheskoe zavoevanie mezhdunarodnogo rabocheho klassa,” *Kommunist Vooruzhenikh Sil*, No. 24, December 1977.

²⁴Adm. K. Stalbo, “Defense of the Interests of the USSR in the Oceans and the U.S. Naval Presence,” *Morskoy Sbornik*, No. 1, January 1980.

struggle against foreign dominance and colonial and social oppression. This activity of socialist armies, primarily of our Armed Forces, in present-day circumstances with full justification might be classified as one of the most important sides of their external function, directed at suppression of the export of imperialist counterrevolution.²⁵

Vorob'yev goes much further than other writers of this period by referring explicitly to the Soviet military's role in preventing the export of counterrevolution.

In the early 1980s a substantial number of articles were published in Soviet military journals on the subject of "local wars," for the most part historical analyses of the experiences of imperialist countries in Third World conflicts. Most of these articles were largely descriptive, with little overt political content. Obviously, the Soviet military was trying to come to terms with the new types of conflicts in which it found itself defending Marxist-Leninist clients against internal guerilla insurgencies; unable to write openly about Soviet experience in Afghanistan, Angola, and Southeast Asia, Soviet military authors were compelled to use foreign examples. Most of these articles contain highly technical discussions of military operations, suggesting the seriousness with which Third World conflicts were being taken.²⁶

CAUSES OF THE SHIFT IN SOVIET VIEWS

The lack of interest in a Third World military mission evident in Ustinov's and Ogarkov's speeches apparently reflected something more than the personal proclivities of these two leaders, because the downgrading of references to the Third World or Soviet support therein is visible in the writings of Yepishev, Dolgopолоv, and various other

²⁵Quoted in Scott and Scott, 1982, p. 255.

²⁶Examples of this genre include: V. Matsulenko, "On Some Aspects of Troop Control in Local Wars," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 3, 1980; L. Mikryukov and V. Vaytushko, "From the Experience of the Combat Employment of Helicopters in Local Wars," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 11, Nov. 1983; G. Dol'nikov, "The Development of Air Tactics in Local Wars," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 12, December 1983; S. Berkutov, "The Influence of the Experience of Local Wars on the Organizational Development of the U.S. Armed Forces," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 1, January 1984; A. Kozhevnikov and T. Mikitenko, "On Certain Trends in the Development of Air Defense in Local Wars," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 2, February 1984; V. Larionov, "Certain Questions of Military Art from the Experience of Local Wars," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 4, April 1984; R. Loskutov and V. Morozov, "Certain Tactical Questions of the Armed Conflict in Lebanon in 1982," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 7, July 1984; P. Navoytsev, "Naval Operations Off a Coast," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 8, August 1984; M. Fesenko, "Fire Damage to Ground Air Defense Weapons," *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 5, May 1984.

military authors. The timing of this shift suggests that it may have been associated with Brezhnev's Tula speech. If so, it might reflect concern on the part of the Soviet leadership that earlier statements (like those of Grechko) had had a damaging political effect on Soviet relations with the West, because they were being read by Western audiences and quoted back to Moscow as evidence of Soviet bad faith.

One does not, however, get the impression that this line had to be "imposed" by the party leadership on the military, or that it was particularly unpopular among senior commanders. Ogarkov, for one, did not hesitate to speak out (in the esoteric manner of Soviet communications) in this period against positions taken by the party leadership that he believed adversely affected the interests of the military;²⁷ and there is no reason to think he would not have done so here had he and the rest of the senior military leadership been strong advocates of a Third World mission.

In fact, it seems likely that just the opposite was the case. As indicated earlier, the Soviet military as a whole has had a strong orientation toward ground forces and the European theater, with growing emphasis on the Asian border with China in the 1960s and 1970s. This orientation was particularly pronounced in the case of Marshal Ogarkov, whose tenure as Chief of Staff was primarily concerned with modernizing Soviet capabilities, and above all conventional capabilities, in Europe and the Far East. All of the major innovations that occurred in the late 1970s to early 1980s—such as the setting up of a Far Eastern High Command, reorganization of theater command arrangements, reassignment of PVO Strany assets, the formation of the operational maneuver group, the introduction of a new generation of battlefield nuclear weapons, and the advocacy of high-technology conventional weapons, as well as efforts to block Western theater modernization programs—were directed toward this end.

In the Soviet system as a whole, the primary advocates of a Third World mission were the civilian ideologues in the International Department of the Central Committee, and within the military, the navy. There is little reason to think that the General Staff, oriented toward ground forces, should have absorbed these proclivities as a bureaucracy or an institution. Apart from the navy, the other services did not depend on facilities in the Third World to perform their primary mission. Given Marshal Ogarkov's central concerns, he is unlikely to have given the navy a particularly sympathetic hearing, or to maintain the

²⁷For example, Ogarkov lobbied against the political leadership's cultivation of the consumer in favor of higher defense spending before the adoption of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and continued to promote the idea of the imminence of war thereafter. See Jeremy Azrael's forthcoming study.

same kind of close relationship with Ustinov that he had with Grechko. The navy did play a crucial strategic role, but the building of a large surface fleet must have seemed like a rather dubious allocation of resources.

If we assume that the *natural* tendency of the Soviet General Staff is to focus on large-scale conventional war in the major theaters, the real analytical question is not why this focus reasserted itself in the late 1970s, but why the military showed the interest it did in power projection during the earlier period. Marshal Grechko did have a personal stake in support for Third World clients and was a channel by which Gorshkov's navalist view found wider currency and budgetary support. Apart from arguments based on personalities, other factors may have been at work. During the early 1970s, the Soviet military was still receiving generous funding from the party, in line with the tacit agreement that had been worked out between the armed forces and Khrushchev's successors following the latter's ouster. Resources became increasingly constrained by the time the Tenth Five-Year plan was formulated in the mid-1970s, and in light of the subsequent decline in the defense budget growth rate and the freezing of the procurement budget, the development of capabilities to project power into distant regions of the world must have seemed like a diversion of resources from more central tasks. Although construction of a whole class of large-deck carriers may have been pleasant for the political leadership to contemplate while still a paper plan, such projects must have seemed outrageously expensive when the time came to lay aside resources for them.

The armed forces may have seen military assistance to Third World clients as a competitor for resources. As noted earlier, annual agreements on weapon transfers began to top the \$10 billion mark by the early 1980s; many of these represented hard currency sales, but overall the Soviet overseas "empire" was clearly becoming an increasing burden on national economic resources. By one estimate, the total costs of the Soviet empire rose from between \$13.6 and \$21.8 billion in 1971 to between \$35.9 billion and \$46.5 billion in 1980, in constant 1981 dollars.²⁸ There is no evidence suggesting that the military was overtly critical of the costs of supporting Third World clients as there would be for civilian party leaders such as Andropov and Gorbachev during the reassessment of the early 1980s;²⁹ these costs probably did not make the military particularly enthusiastic for further interventions.

²⁸These figures include Eastern Europe as well as the Third World. Wolf et al., 1983.

²⁹See Fukuyama, 1986b, pp. 16-23.

Moreover, the military could not have been happy about the way that the prestige of Soviet weapons was tarnished when Moscow's Arab clients were trounced in their various wars with Israel,³⁰ or with the compromise of technology when advanced weapons were captured. Such compromises must have been particularly galling for the SA-6 surface-to-air missile or the SS-21 surface-to-surface missile, which were given to Arab clients in some cases before they were made available to certain units in the Soviet armed forces themselves. The Soviet advisory mission in Egypt, promoted by Grechko, had been expelled in 1972, and Cairo by the mid-1970s was moving into the American camp. This development did not augur well for future high-visibility military missions in support of Third World clients. The December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan probably deepened this tendency. Although it gave the military a direct stake in the outcome of a Third World conflict, the frustrating nature of the war probably did not incline the military leadership to further involvements of that type.

If the more restrained post-1977 line was imposed from above and suited the proclivities of the senior military leadership, it was not maintained with any great consistency. The deemphasis on the Third World mission was not universally accepted and some military leaders continued to advocate power projection into the 1980s. Certainly one source for such advocacy was the navy, but the navy itself was losing bureaucratic battles, which undercut its ability to have its way on this issue.

THE FATE OF THE SOVIET NAVY

There is evidence that Admiral Gorshkov's lobbying on behalf of the navy and its power projection role reached a peak at around the time of Grechko's death in the mid-1970s and succeeded in pushing the General Staff toward greater support for the navy; but during the tenure of Ustinov and Ogarkov the ground forces reasserted their traditional dominance and reversed some of these gains.

The textual evidence suggesting a downgrading of the role of the navy is substantial. Beginning in the late 1970s, several writings appeared whose overall theme was that independent navalism, naval science, or doctrine of the sea power of the state did not exist outside

³⁰Following the shootdown of Soviet-piloted MiGs in the War of Attrition and the destruction of Syrian SAM-6s during the 1982 Lebanon War, senior Soviet military commanders were dispatched to Egypt and Syria to assess the causes of the debacle. These could not have been pleasant post-mortems: In the 1982 case Arab sources report that the Arabs blamed the quality of Soviet weapons, and the Soviets blamed the incompetence of Arab soldiers.

of the overall teachings of Marxism-Leninism on war and the army—i.e., a direct attack on the central thesis of Gorshkov's articles and book from earlier in the decade. The first instance of this was the second edition of *The Sea Power of the State* itself, which appeared in 1979. The principal change between the editions was the addition of a new section that affirmed only one overarching military strategy, which could not be divided into separate naval and land components.³¹ According to the second edition, "Today there is not and cannot be a sphere of warfare in which any one branch of the Armed Forces is absolute sovereign," and "It is therefore right, in our view, to examine under today's conditions not a great number of strategies, even within the framework of the unified strategy, but rather the strategic employment of the branches of the Armed Forces brought about by their specific features . . . within the framework of the unified military strategy."³² In addition, all references to "naval science" contained in the first edition were deleted from the second and replaced by the term "naval art," a downgrading of the status of the theory being discussed.³³

Although Gorshkov was formally the author of these revisions, the inner logic of his earlier argument suggests that they were added only under duress. The striking feature of the "Navies in War and Peace" series and *The Sea Power of the State* was a rather unadorned thesis about the historical significance of naval power, independent of the ideological or class basis of the state that wields it. Gorshkov criticizes the Tsarist rulers of Russia for underestimating the importance of naval power, but his critique could apply equally well to the postwar Soviet Communist Party leadership, which decided in the mid-1950s to cut back the size of the fleet substantially. For Gorshkov to admit that there can be no naval science independent of general Soviet military strategy and, ultimately, the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, is to undercut the chief point of his earlier writings. This is presumably something he did not do willingly.

A similar theme is present in the so-called "Stalbo Debate" that took place in the pages of *Morskoy Sbornik* between April 1981 and July 1983. The debate was initiated in a two-part article by Vice Admiral Stalbo, a man long associated with Gorshkov. Stalbo set forth a "theory" of the navy³⁴ and called for others to express their views,

³¹See MccGwire, *Soviet Military Objectives*, Appendix C.

³²Quoted in Watson, 1982, p. 228.

³³Peterson, 1984, pp. 3-4; and also MccGwire, 1987, Appendix C, pp. 448ff.

³⁴As opposed to a naval "science," a term the navy was presumably no longer permitted to use.

provoking a vigorous discussion in subsequent articles by several naval writers, including Gorshkov himself in the concluding piece.

The discussion dealt with operational issues, such as the principle of concentration of forces and command and control arrangements, as well as a somewhat Germanic debate over the proper taxonomy of the different constituent branches of naval theory. A central point that was raised by all of the participants, however, was an admission that there was only one unified military science, and no independent science or doctrine of the navy. As Rear Admiral Kostev, head of the naval faculty of the Lenin Political-Military Academy and author of the lead response put it, "It is impossible to examine merely 'one's own' subject of research under present-day conditions. An integrated approach is necessary to the study of armed conflict within the framework of military science."³⁵ Admiral Chernavin, the man who would eventually succeed Gorshkov as head of the Soviet navy, wrote, "Victory is achieved by coordinated efforts, and this gives rise to the necessity of integrating all knowledge about warfare within the framework and limits of a single, unified military science."³⁶ The most pointed comment was that of Rear Admiral Gulin and Captain First Rank Borisov, who contested the proposition that "unlike military science, naval theory has its own subject of investigation," and asserted the primacy of the "Marxist-Leninist doctrine of war and the army."³⁷

The Stalbo debate confirmed the downgrading in the navy's status that was first evident in the second Gorshkov edition, and indicated that by the early 1980s the navy had come to accept this situation; the purpose of the debate seemed to be an attempt to define the structure and limits of naval "theory" as opposed to naval "science." All of this suggests that advocacy of a strong navy, with its associated power projection mission, had in some way come under attack in the late 1970s, or had at least lost some of the support it had during the publication of "Navies in War and Peace" and the first edition of *The Sea Power of the State*. Indeed, one might speculate that Gorshkov's views had received strong endorsement from Defense Minister Grechko, but that with his death in 1975 the General Staff reasserted its dominance and

³⁵Rear Adm. G. Kostev, "On the Fundamentals of the Theory of the Navy," *Morskoy Sbornik*, No. 11, 1981.

³⁶Adm. V. Chernavin, "Naval Theory," *Morskoy Sbornik*, No. 1, 1982.

³⁷Rear Admiral V. Gulin and Capt. First Rank Yu. Borisov, "Methodological Problems of the Theory of Building a Navy and Employing it in Battle," *Morskoy Sbornik*, No. 7, 1982.

forced the navy to drop its pretensions to having its own "science" and a special role in supporting the interests of the Soviet state.³⁸

This view is supported—or at least not contradicted—by operational and shipbuilding developments as well, some of which suggest a certain downgrading in the Soviet navy's role as an instrument of "coercive diplomacy."³⁹ The argument is not that the Soviets cut back naval operations—naval activity was in fact curtailed in some areas, while increasing in others—but rather that they did not undertake the kinds of major shipbuilding and other force modernization programs in the interim that would have indicated an intention of creating a serious power projection capability. In this respect, and in terms of their out of area operations, they fell off the trendline of rapidly increasing deployments and capabilities that was established in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Overall, Soviet naval operations in distant theaters continued to expand in the decade between 1975 and 1985, as Table 1 indicates. Much of this increase came in the Pacific, where the Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979 and the growth of Danang and Cam Ranh Bay as major Soviet support facilities contributed to a substantial increase in ship days in the South China Sea.

The area where the shift in deployment patterns was most noticeable was in the Mediterranean, the traditional theater for Soviet naval activity in support of Moscow's Arab clients. Soviet deployments in the Mediterranean peaked in 1973 with the October War in the Middle East. After that point, the number of ship days spent on forward

Table 1

SOVIET NAVY, SHIP DAYS OUT OF AREA^a

Area	1965	1969	1972	1976	1979	1983
Caribbean	—	300	1900	1000	1050	1100
Indian Ocean	—	4200	8800	7300	7600	8800
Pacific	1000	5800	5900	5200	8400	15100
Atlantic	1100	9200	14100	12400	13500	18000
Mediterranean	4200	15800	18100	18600	16500	17500
Totals	6300	35300	48800	44500	47050	60500

^a*Understanding Soviet Naval Developments*, Washington, D.C., 1985, p. 21.

³⁸The first edition of *The Sea Power of the State* was signed to press in November 1975 and therefore had Grechko's approval.

³⁹The term is that of Dismukes and McConnell, 1979.

deployment declined by about a fifth by 1977 and leveled off subsequently. After 1980 the number of amphibious and mine warfare forces kept on station declined, and no effort was made to station strike aircraft abroad in places like Syria or Libya.⁴⁰ Most important, the Soviets did not surge ships into the eastern Mediterranean in response to the Lebanon crisis of 1982. During the Lebanon War when the United States had concentrated four aircraft carriers within striking distance of the Soviet Union, Moscow failed to augment the Fifth Eskadra to anything approaching the level of October 1973. The Soviets had surged their fleet during crises in 1967, 1970, 1971, and 1973; the contrast to Lebanon is striking and indicates a reduced interest in using the navy as an instrument of crisis diplomacy.⁴¹

In general, Soviet forward deployments have followed political developments, increasing when a particular area attracted attention (as in the case of Vietnam in the late 1970s) and declining in the wake of Soviet reversals (such as the Soviet expulsions from Egypt in 1972 and Somalia in 1977). The early 1980s did not, however, witness any startling new innovations in the Soviet use of naval forces as a coercive tool.

The downgrading of the navy in the late 1970s was also apparent in building programs. In the *Berezina* class underway replenishment ships, only the lead ship was constructed; and only two *Ivan Rogov* class high-speed long-range lift ships were built at a five year interval. The Soviets did deploy a total of six *Boris Chilikin* replenishment ships since 1971, though not at a rate that suggested particular urgency in developing a fleet-wide capability.⁴² In addition, the 50 percent increase in allocations for naval nuclear reactors achieved in the early 1970s was apparently rescinded.⁴³ The Soviet navy has never been strong on underway replenishment; had the General Staff been serious about developing a distant power projection capability, they would have invested much more heavily in logistics and supply ships, as well as amphibious and heavy lift vessels that would permit projection of forces ashore. Although much was made of the *Ivan Rogov* in the West, two ships do not constitute a credible armed landing capability.⁴⁴

Other types of Soviet power projection capabilities have increased gradually over this period. For example, the total carrying capacity of

⁴⁰This trend did not occur across the board, because Soviet naval aircraft (including Badger bombers) were being introduced into Vietnam during this period.

⁴¹Dismukes and Weiss, 1984, pp. 2-8. It cannot be argued that the Lebanon crisis was less important than either the Jordan crisis of 1970 or the Indo-Pakistani crisis of 1971, particularly in light of the U.S. show of force off the coasts of Lebanon.

⁴²Menon, 1986, p. 114.

⁴³MccGwire, forthcoming, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁴See Polmar, 1986, p. 128.

Soviet Military Transport Aviation (VTA) has increased with the addition of the widebody Il-76 transport aircraft. The Soviet merchant marine, whose sealift capacity could be tapped for Third World intervention, also grew, and improved in quality with the addition of modern container and ro-ro (roll-on, roll-off) ships.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Soviet surface fleet was augmented by some 17 cruisers and destroyers since 1980, displacing some 180,000 tons.⁴⁶

The Soviets remained positioned to carry out logistical support operations of the kind used in Angola and the Horn of Africa, but their overall acquisition programs and deployment patterns did not suggest a high-priority political intent to build more serious power projection capabilities. For example, the Soviets never had much of a capability to land combat forces against armed opposition, even of the limited sort that would come into play in most Third World crises. Soviet naval infantry to this day remains a very marginal force of some 16,000 men divided among the four fleets, and that would not be readily usable in any kind of serious combat in distant theaters.⁴⁷

The launching of the first of two 65-75,000 ton large-deck carriers in 1986 has been taken by some as an indication of continuing strong Soviet interest to move in the direction of American-style power projection. There is no question that such ships can be used in Third World contingencies, and that Gorshkov's writings have hinted at this type of application.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, it is not clear that the aircraft carrier's primary role in Soviet eyes is power projection rather than the more traditional one of bastion defense and sea control. Just like the *Kiev* or the *Kirov*, the large-deck carrier can serve as the command and control ship of a modern surface action group whose primary mission is strategic ASW, particularly in remote polar regions where U.S. and Soviet submarines increasingly operate.⁴⁹

The very building of a class of large-deck carriers was evidently controversial. In May 1978 Brezhnev went out of his way to criticize aircraft carriers when he announced that the construction of such ships

⁴⁵*Understanding Soviet Naval Developments*, 1985, pp. 73-81.

⁴⁶Polmar, 1986, p. 128.

⁴⁷*Understanding Soviet Naval Developments*, 1985, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁸For example, see Gorshkov's article "U.S. Aircraft Carriers—An Instrument of Expansion," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 1983.

⁴⁹It is not clear whether the new carriers will be capable of launching high-performance fixed-wing aircraft. According to the 1986-87 edition of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, "The aircraft embarked may be Flanker, Frogfoot, or Fulcrum fixed-wing, the successor to the Forger VTOL in a V/STOL configuration. . . . The flight deck has arrester gear, two ski-jumps and barricades, and a catapult is under construction."

was inconsistent with Moscow's defensive military doctrine.⁵⁰ The General Secretary's attack on a particular class of ship was highly unusual. It suggests that Gorshkov's original plans may have called for the building of a substantial number of vessels, which were then scaled back in the overall process of cutting the navy budget at that time. The ship launched in the mid-1980s may therefore be, like the *Ivan Rogov*, the sole survivor of a much more grandiose scheme.

We do not know whether the impetus for the downgrading of the navy's independence and power projection mission came from the senior military leadership and general staff, or directly from the political leadership itself. Accepting a less assertive Third World role in the early 1980s is certainly consistent with everything else we know about the general inclinations of the Soviet leadership at this time, so it seems likely that primary impulse came from this quarter. But there do not seem to have been very great differences between the party and senior military leadership on this score, the latter probably acted as willing transmission belts—in the case of Ogarkov, perhaps adding a certain General Staff bias against operations in peripheral areas.

THE PERSPECTIVE FROM THE MID-1980s

The absence of high-level references to the "liberating mission" of the armed forces, the downgrading of Gorshkov's naval theories, the reduced emphasis on the navy as an instrument of coercive diplomacy, and the cancellation of certain construction programs related to power projection all suggest that the latter mission was not particularly well established in Soviet doctrine. It might seem inconsistent to attribute these shifts to Ustinov and Ogarkov, because they oversaw two of the most visible Soviet applications of military force in the Third World, the joint Soviet-Cuban intervention in Ethiopia and the invasion of Afghanistan, as well as a host of such lesser initiatives as the establishment of bases in Vietnam and the provision of arms to Nicaragua.

Resolution of this inconsistency may depend on the fact that primary responsibility for the Ethiopian and Afghan interventions lay with the civilian rather than the military leadership. The chief benefit that the Soviet Union derived from support of Ethiopia was, after all, political rather than strategic. In return for the consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist regime in a large and influential African state, Moscow put at risk and ultimately lost access to the naval facility in Berbera, Somalia. The military undoubtedly acquiesced in this trade but

⁵⁰FBIS, May 3, 1984, p E4.

was not altogether happy with having to give up a concrete military asset for the much vaguer promise of future influence in Addis Ababa.⁵¹ Similarly, as the following section will indicate, the decision to invade Afghanistan was made for predominantly political reasons, despite the gains in strategic position that accrued from it. This does not imply that the military opposed these operations. But the Soviet command did not have a direct interest in Ethiopia or Afghanistan the way it did in Egypt or Syria in the 1960s; and in contrast to the War of Attrition, there is no evidence that it took the initiative in pressing for intervention in either case.⁵²

The decreased emphasis on power projection was more accurately reflected in Soviet behavior after the invasion of Afghanistan. Soviet military forces made no new large-scale interventions in the Third World during the first half of the 1980s and set no new qualitative or quantitative precedents in the use of force. Indeed, in terms of ship days in the Mediterranean and surge crisis deployments, the Soviets used their forces more conservatively than in the early 1970s. The Soviet military was employed in offensives of increasing intensity in both Afghanistan and Angola, and several thousand combat troops were sent to Syria in the wake of the 1982 Lebanon war to man SA-5 missile sites, but these did not represent sharp breaks with past practice so much as evolutionary increases in earlier levels of commitment to existing clients.⁵³

The Soviet military's interest in Third World power projection thus peaked sometime in the mid-1970s, but this shift in emphasis was not immediately reflected in behavior because the political leadership remained committed to a highly activist course through the end of the decade. By the mid-1980s, however, both military and civilians seemed to be back in phase.

⁵¹The military did of course acquire new facilities at Dahlak off the Eritrean coast to compensate for Berbera, although it probably did not know in 1977 if and when this would happen and what quality of facility it would gain.

⁵²The same is not true in the case of Vietnam, where the military had a direct interest in base facilities at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay.

⁵³The volume of Soviet arms transfers to the Third World kept rising fairly consistently throughout this period, with Syria, Iraq, Libya, India, Cuba, and Vietnam receiving steadily increasing amounts through the early 1980s. Many of these arms transfers were cash transactions, however, whose level tracked the international price of oil and were concentrated in a small number of countries. See Becker, 1986, pp. 9-11.

V. AFGHANISTAN AND ITS AFTEREFFECTS

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the last days of December 1979 marks an important point in the evolution of the military's attitudes toward Third World intervention. Afghanistan differed from Soviet military deployments abroad earlier in the decade because it was the first to rely primarily on Soviet manpower. The Red Army had not fought a war since the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45; for the first time since then the military's prestige was heavily engaged in a local conflict by virtue of the large scale of forces involved, and the casualties and equipment losses sustained. Although the Soviet command could write off the expulsion of Soviet troops from Egypt in 1972 as being due to political factors beyond its control, it could not so readily explain its inability to subdue the poorly armed and trained Afghan mujahedeen. Afghanistan was bound to have a significant effect on the military in many ways: It was the only living laboratory available in which to test the actual performance of Soviet forces, as well as new weapons and tactics, and the only place where officers could get genuine combat experience—an important ticket to promotion in any army.

Unfortunately, we have very little evidence—direct, Kremlinological, or otherwise—concerning Afghanistan's effect on Soviet civil-military relations. The dearth of information is particularly acute with regard to the military's role in the original decision to intervene; but it is also a problem in evaluating the war's subsequent influence on military attitudes toward continuation and conduct of the war and on Third World intervention in general. The interpretations that follow are therefore more in the nature of plausible hypotheses concerning events and attitudes rather than strict interpretations of data.

THE DECISION TO INTERVENE

The Soviet military obviously played a major role in the decision to intervene. Before the April 1978 coup d'état that brought the Khalq wing of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to power, over 3,700 Afghan officers and NCOs had received training in the Soviet Union under the auspices of the Soviet armed forces. By one account, Soviet military intelligence (the GRU) used this as an opportunity to recruit several officers, and to channel those it did not

recruit to the Khalq faction of the PDPA.¹ Soviet military advisors were sent to Afghanistan soon after April 1978, numbering in the hundreds during the first year of the revolution and rising to some 3,500–4,000 on the eve of the intervention.² As this advisory presence proved inadequate and the insurgency deepened during the course of 1979, two high-ranking Soviet military delegations visited Afghanistan. The first included half a dozen generals and was headed by General A. A. Yepishev, chief of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet armed forces. The second was led by General Ivan Pavlovskiy, a Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander in Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces, who arrived in Afghanistan in late August and stayed until early October.³ In his role as ground forces chief, Pavlovskiy had been responsible for planning and carrying out the highly efficient Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Yepishev's visit was reportedly for the purposes of "political education"—that is, investigating the morale and political reliability of the Afghan army.⁴ The Pavlovskiy visit, lasting nearly two months, was probably meant to provide the Soviet leadership with a more pointed assessment of whether direct intervention by Soviet forces was necessary, what the long-term implications of occupation were, and what forces were necessary.

There is circumstantial evidence indicating that the decision to intervene was taken about a month after Pavlovskiy's return from Kabul, at a Politburo meeting on November 26, 1979. In the course of that year, Afghan President Nur Mohammed Taraki's second in command, Prime Minister Hafizollah Amin, emerged as the Khalq's strong man.⁵ Taraki visited Moscow in September 1979 while Pavlovskiy was still in Afghanistan and received Brezhnev's personal backing, but was gunned down shortly after his return to Kabul by Amin's supporters. In October and November, the Soviet leadership grew increasingly dis-

¹Arnold, 1983, p. 48. Arnold suggests that the KGB was more inclined to support the Parcham faction, and that there was a certain rivalry between it and the GRU over this issue. See pp. 55–56.

²"Soviet Military Involvement in Afghanistan," 1979. In addition, there were some 1,500 civilian advisors in the country by late 1979.

³Valenta, 1980a, pp. 210–215; and 1980b, pp. 121–127.

⁴See "Moscow Discusses Army Political Work in Anniversary Comment," *FBIS Trends*, May 2, 1979, p. 9, quoting an April 25 article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* by Lt. Gen. V. Balakirev.

⁵According to a KGB defector, Babrak Karmal, leader of the PDPA's Parcham wing, had been the KGB's favorite all along, but the Khalqi leader Nur Mohammed Taraki had become a personal favorite of Leonid Brezhnev and so began receiving Soviet support. Interview with Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Time*, Nov. 22, 1982, pp. 33–34.

trustful of the new president, regarding him as an unreliable leftist.⁶ The late November decision date is supported by the increasing tempo of activities suggesting active plans for an intervention thereafter.⁷ The Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan, Aleksandr Puzanov, who had evidently engendered Amin's hostility, was withdrawn to Moscow for consultations in mid-November and replaced by Fikryat Tabeyev on November 23. Puzanov probably argued the case for taking strong measures against Amin at this time. On November 28 a KGB Lieutenant General and Deputy Interior Minister, Viktor Paputin, was sent to Afghanistan on a secret mission, evidently to undertake preparations for the coup against Amin.⁸ (Paputin was mysteriously killed in Afghanistan on December 28, evidently in connection with the invasion.) U.S. intelligence sources began to detect mobilization of Soviet forces around Afghanistan's borders in late November and early December, and on December 8 and 9, 1,000 airborne forces were brought into Bagram Airbase.⁹

The consensus of Western opinion is that top levels of the party leadership took the decision to invade for primarily political reasons. Motives included the desire to preserve the "gains of socialism" and to prevent the creation of a pro-Western bridgehead in Central Asia should the PDPA regime be overthrown. The Soviet military leadership was probably aware of the strategic benefits of an occupation of Afghanistan, but these were probably secondary considerations at the time.¹⁰ This view is supported by the *Time* interview with Vladimir Kuzichkin, which quotes a KGB general as saying: "Afghanistan is our Viet Nam. Look at what has happened. We began by simply backing a friendly regime. . . . Now we are bogged down in a war we cannot win and cannot abandon. It's ridiculous. A mess. And but for Brezhnev and company we would never have got into it in the first place."¹¹

Some observers have postulated a split within the Politburo between pro- and anti-interventionists. One popular theory maintained that Brezhnev was actually opposed to intervention because of his desire to

⁶The Soviets apparently conspired with Taraki to remove Amin during the former's September visit to Moscow but were outwitted by Amin. According to Kuzichkin, Brezhnev wanted to support Amin even after he killed Taraki, and became convinced of his unreliability only later. See also Arnold, 1983, pp. 88-93.

⁷The November 26 Politburo meeting date was reported by Madrid Radio (FBIS USSR, January 11, 1980), p. D9.

⁸Valenta, 1980b, p. 131.

⁹Valenta, 1980b, p. 132.

¹⁰See the useful discussion of Soviet stakes in Afghanistan in Khalilzad, 1986, pp. 17-18.

¹¹*Time*, November 22, 1982, p. 33.

preserve detente, but was incapacitated by a cold when the decision was taken.¹² There is Kremlinological evidence indicating certain differences in the attitudes of the senior leadership toward Afghanistan in the election speeches given in February 1980, with Gromyko, Kosygin, and Ustinov taking somewhat stronger positions in favor of the intervention than Andropov, Chernenko, or Brezhnev (see the appendix). The nuances in the election speeches do not necessarily imply that the former group favored intervention over the objections of the latter, and it seems highly unlikely that so major a decision could have been taken against the wishes of the General Secretary, no matter how indisposed. The speeches do suggest, however, that there were some differences in outlook and emphasis within the Politburo, with some individuals demonstrating greater concern than others over the effects of the invasion on U.S.-Soviet relations. From the standpoint of the present study, however, whatever cleavages existed on Afghanistan were present *within* the political leadership and do not seem to have been a bone of contention between the political leadership on the one hand and the military on the other. Ustinov was fairly forceful in his defense of the invasion, but he was no less so than Kosygin (sometimes portrayed as a Kremlin "dove") or Gromyko (who presumably had a stake in the preservation of detente).¹³ No one has suggested that the military took the initiative in pressing for an intervention, or that it had a clearcut opinion on the *political* desirability of conducting one.

The Politburo almost certainly consulted the military on the operational feasibility and consequences of an intervention; this after all was the purpose of the Pavlovskiy visit. One can only speculate about what specific recommendations the latter made and about military attitudes. It seems unlikely that Pavlovskiy was flatly opposed to intervention, given that the Politburo decided to intervene a month after his return to Moscow. Indeed, it seems much more probable that Pavlovskiy argued that an intervention would be effective in stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan.

General Pavlovskiy's background gives us some reason for believing that he personally argued in favor of the feasibility of an intervention to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan. As noted earlier, Pavlovskiy

¹²For example, Wilson, 1980, p. 1.

¹³Given his background as a civilian defense technocrat, Ustinov may not be the best representative of the military. Statements by other military leaders at the time, such as Marshal Ogarkov, do not seem markedly different from those of the political leadership, though Jiri Valenta sees certain shadings in the treatment of Afghanistan by officers in the Central Asian military districts bordering it. See Valenta, 1980b, II, p. 125, particularly footnote 25.

as ground forces Commander in Chief directed the highly successful 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia. That he was something of a pro-interventionist is suggested by the facts surrounding his removal from the ground forces post almost exactly a year after the Afghan invasion. Pavlovskiy was replaced, along with his deputy for political affairs, Gen. S. P. Vasyagin, by Gen. V. I. Petrov (of Ethiopian fame) sometime in December 1980, in connection with the developing crisis in Poland. One observer of Polish events has noted evidence indicating that the Politburo was engaged in a debate at the time over whether to intervene militarily, and has suggested that the senior military command including General Pavlovskiy were in favor of such a move.¹⁴ Brezhnev was said to have been opposed to overt intervention and dismissed Pavlovskiy in order to remove one obstacle to the course that was ultimately followed (the declaration of martial law and the crack-down on Solidarity by the Polish armed forces).

But if Pavlovskiy represented an interventionist tendency within the armed forces, it is likely that his views were not universally shared. The same theater orientation that made Ogarkov unenthusiastic about power projection in general should make him hesitant to commit substantial forces to Afghanistan in particular. In late 1979 Soviet military manpower was being stretched thin by the massive buildup in the Far East, at a time when Ogarkov and other commanders were warning of a growing danger of war in the west. Detente with the Carter administration had already begun to unravel, and to him the occupation of Afghanistan may have seemed like one more diversion of increasingly scarce resources.

One does not need to postulate that controversy within the military over Afghanistan revolved around the question of whether to intervene; it may rather have concerned the scale and character of the intervention. Pavlovskiy, focusing on the requirements for suppressing the insurgency in Afghanistan itself, may have argued for a much larger manpower commitment than the 80,000 or so troops who took part in the original invasion. Ogarkov, looking at the worldwide commitments of the Soviet armed forces, may have hoped that the manpower requirement could be held down and that the Afghan army could be relied upon to do the bulk of the fighting. (Given the slim evidence we have on Soviet decisionmaking in Afghanistan, all such interpretations are hypothetical.)

The hypothesis that Pavlovskiy was a consistent advocate of intervention in Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, and Poland, and that this

¹⁴Anderson, 1982, pp. 24 ff.

advocacy required his removal as ground forces chief, suggests that he may have been something more than a simple technician. Unfortunately, nothing further is known of his personal political views. If he did represent something of an interventionist tendency within the military, the political authorities ultimately succeeded in getting it under control. This suggests that the reduced interest of the Ustinov-Ogarkov military for power projection was, if anything, reinforced in the aftermath of the invasion of Afghanistan.

AFGHANISTAN'S EFFECT ON THE MILITARY

Although General Pavlovskiy and other senior commanders may have supported intervention in Afghanistan in late 1979, the prognosis they offered the Politburo was overly optimistic in many respects.

Problems with the Afghan Army

The military's hopes of relying on the Afghan army to do the bulk of the fighting proved misplaced. The Afghan armed forces dropped from a preinvasion level of just under 100,000 to some 30–40,000 thereafter. To make up for the numerous desertions, defections, and casualties incurred, the PDPA regime had to resort to various expedients, including rewriting the conscription laws several times, extending the term of service and lowering the draft age, and press ganging young men on the streets of Kabul.¹⁵ Even with these measures, the strength of the regular army did not rise above 40–50,000 in over six years since the intervention. The reliability of the Afghan armed forces remained questionable; defections and collaboration with the mujahedeen continued. In one incident, 20 aircraft were destroyed by Afghan military personnel at Shindand Airbase in May 1985.¹⁶ As a result, Soviet troops were forced to take on a greater and greater share of actual combat duties.

¹⁵Khalilzad, 1986, p. 7.

¹⁶Ibid. When asked about the quality of the Afghan army, Samizdat sources quote an Estonian who had served in Afghanistan as saying "Oldsters and half-nitwits as far as I could see them in the course of friendship actions [i.e., joint Soviet-Afghan operations] . . . they were somehow, well, I don't know, idiotic. . . . For example, near the Afghan-Pakistani border along the highway checkpoints there were tsarandoeleans—that is their people's militia—and these were all old men, even geezers, one could say, in their turbans and greyish, ill-kempt beards." *Eesti Paevaleht*, Stockholm, March 29, April 12, 17, 1985 (translated in JPRS-UMA-85-017-L, July 17, 1985).

The Problematic Performance of the Soviet Military

The second area in which the military's initial prognosis fell short concerned the poor performance of the Red Army itself under the first real combat conditions it had experienced since 1945. There have been numerous reports of widespread demoralization, lack of discipline, and simple incompetence among Soviet troops stationed in Afghanistan. Many of the problems encountered—brutality, drug use, corruption (sometimes in the form of bartering weapons to the mujahedeen for drugs)—seemed to signal a larger malaise in Soviet society that went beyond the conscripts' reaction to the unpleasant service conditions in Afghanistan. This malaise had several cross-cutting dimensions, including not only disaffection on the part of young Soviets, but ethnic and racial tensions, and even some sympathy on the part of Central Asian troops for the Afghan mujahedeen.¹⁷

Beyond these problems, which were to some extent beyond the control of the professional military, the occupation force in Afghanistan manifested weaknesses that could be laid more directly at the Soviet command's doorstep: For at least the first five or six years after the invasion, it adapted very slowly to the conditions of counterinsurgency warfare and seemed very far from bringing the insurgency under control.

Before the intervention, the Soviet armed forces had a highly developed doctrine of mountain and desert warfare. The Red Army had direct experience fighting in mountains during the World War II campaigns in the Caucasus, Carpathians, and Greater Khingan range in Manchuria, which formed the basis for a rather extensive theoretical literature. The invasion itself occasioned an upsurge in interest in mountain and desert warfare, which came out in the pages of such military journals as *Voennyi Vestnik* and *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*.

The formal doctrinal literature on mountain and desert warfare remained restricted, however, to discussions of large-scale operations against conventional opponents under special terrain and climactic conditions. For example, Soviet military writers analyzed in great detail lessons of the August 1945 Manchurian campaign, where Soviet armored forces defeated the Japanese Kwantung army in a high-speed maneuver campaign. But they never openly developed a doctrine for the type of counterinsurgency warfare that they were being forced to carry out in Afghanistan. The reasons for this were evidently political: according to the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*, counterinsurgency warfare (*protivopovstancheskie deistviya*) is a foreign term referring to a

¹⁷See the discussion in Wimbush and Alexiev, 1981.

"complex of punitive (political and military) and subversive measures, carried out by reactionary regimes and colonialists with the aim of suppressing revolutionary and national liberation movements," used by such countries as the United States, Britain, France, Portugal, and the "racist" regime of South Africa.¹⁸ The Soviets obviously could not describe themselves as in the process of developing a counterinsurgency doctrine. The closest Soviet military writers could come to dealing with this question was the extensive writing about foreign counterinsurgency wars mentioned in Sec. IV.

The dearth of open theoretical writings on counterinsurgency did not mean that the Soviets were inexperienced in the *practice* of this kind of warfare. The Soviet military and internal security forces (NKVD and later the KGB) have had long experience fighting guerrillas, as in their prolonged campaign against the Basmachi tribesmen in Turkestan during the 1920s, and in suppression of resistance in Lithuania and the other Baltic states after World War II.¹⁹ The broad strategy employed in Afghanistan—i.e., controlling the cities and lines of communication while trying to split the resistance—was, indeed, carried over from these earlier conflicts.

Nonetheless, the Soviet army appeared to have difficulties applying this experience to the conditions in Afghanistan, and there were numerous divergences in its behavior from the operational and tactical principles stipulated in the existing doctrine for mountain and desert warfare. The most glaring discrepancy lay in the area of infantry operations. Soviet mountain warfare doctrine stresses the importance of aggressive, dismounted infantry patrolling; but in the first two or three years of the war, numerous observers noted the unwillingness of Soviet motorized troops to dismount from their armored personnel carriers, or the apparent reluctance of the Soviet command to use airborne forces to seize ridgelines and other high ground as mandated by the theoretical literature.

The doctrine also lays a heavy emphasis on the importance of small unit independence and the devolution of command and control to lower command echelons—i.e., NCOs and lieutenants.²⁰ Such decentralization of command authority poses a special problem for the Red Army,

¹⁸*Sovetskaya Voennaya Entsiklopediya*, 1983, Vol. 6, p. 601. See also L. V. Sosnovskiy, "Kontseptsiya 'Protivopovstancheskih deistviy'," *SShA*, No. 5, 1971.

¹⁹The Lithuanian resistance began after the reoccupation of the Baltic States by the Red Army in 1944 and was not completely suppressed until 1952, at the cost of some 20,000 Soviet casualties. See Alexiev, 1983, pp. 5-6.

²⁰See for example O. Kulishev, "Small Unit Mountain Training—to the Foreground," *Znamenets*, No. 10, October 1980; V. Stulovskiy, "Stationed in Afghanistan," *Voennaya Znaniya*, No. 3, March 1981.

where independence and initiative are traditionally neither stressed nor rewarded. The internal evidence in Soviet military journals is alone sufficient to indicate that the army in Afghanistan has experienced severe problems in this regard; numerous articles have criticized officers and NCOs for displaying insufficient initiative or behaving in a stereotyped way. Past mountain campaigns have necessitated major reorganizations of unit Tables of Organization and Equipment as well, involving the distribution of army, division, and regimental assets to lower echelons to permit greater small unit independence. This has happened very slowly in Afghanistan; the first Soviet motorized rifle divisions that took part in the invasion entered the country with their complete complements of organic air defense, as if they were operating under central European conditions.

Many of the major Soviet tactical innovations in the first two or three years of the war were unimaginative and, for the Afghans, terribly costly: the substitution of enormous quantities of firepower for manpower, indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, and the like. According to Olivier Roy, a French journalist who observed Soviet military operations in Afghanistan first hand, five years after the initial invasion the Soviet army remained overcentralized:

Officers on the ground show no initiative, soldiers are disoriented and fight in retreat, without realizing that one cannot thereby exploit an opportunity which presents itself in an unforeseen manner; calls for aerial or artillery support pass through higher echelons; finally it seems that all important decisions, indeed the conduct of certain offensives, are directly elaborated in Moscow.²¹

More important, the Soviets showed considerable heavyhandedness in their approach to the political dimension of counterinsurgency warfare. Although they have made some efforts to accommodate Afghan political sensibilities through land reform and a professed openness to Islam, they have not displayed the adroitness demonstrated in their pacification of Central Asia in the 1920s.²² They have repeated the painful mistakes of Western armies in similar conflicts, for example by using the Afghan army as cannon fodder when they ought to have been building it up to be self-supporting, failing to support militia outposts in supposedly pacified areas, and committing atrocities in areas that had already been rallied to the side of the government. According to

²¹Roy, 1984, p. 20.

²²For a comparison of Afghanistan with the campaign against the Basmachi, see Ben-nigsen, 1981.

Roy, this represents a curious sort of depoliticization of the Red Army. Although the army maintains its cadre of political officers, their function is purely internal—exclusively concerned with the reliability of Soviet troops. There has been no effort to increase the army's political awareness of the *external* environment, for example by becoming familiar with the nature of Afghan civil society, in a way that would be crucial to the successful conduct of an anti-guerrilla war.

Roy suggests that this depoliticized approach may be the result of conscious choice. His hypothesis is that the Soviet political leadership fears the truly politicized army that would emerge were Soviet officers to reflect deeply on the nature of the war they were fighting: They want no repetition of the OAS phenomenon that occurred during the French war against the FLN in Algeria.²³

The Soviets did demonstrate an ability to learn from their mistakes, however, and by the mid-1980s they had modified their tactics considerably. Unit TO&Es were reorganized somewhat after the first year or two to reflect the conditions actually encountered, although the Soviet command has apparently failed to create specialized mountain or counterinsurgency units of the sort Western armies have. In 1985 the Soviets began to use airborne forces more aggressively, staging night heliborne attacks and deploying dismounted infantry to seize high ground.²⁴ In 1986 there were further reports of substantial Soviet successes in the use of airborne and Spetsnaz forces against the mujahedeen; in one major engagement in April 1986, a large mujahedeen base at Jawar was overrun.²⁵ Most important, the quality of Soviet tactical intelligence seemed to be improving, which in counterinsurgency wars is preeminently a matter of political awareness and acumen. The various Soviet intelligence services, working together with the Afghan *Khad* or secret police, were evidently behind a series of bombings of mujahedeen facilities and assassinations of leaders in Peshawar and other parts of Pakistan in late 1985-early 1986, indicating a much higher level of penetration of insurgent operations.²⁶

²³Roy, 1984, p. 24.

²⁴Khalilzad, 1986, p. 6.

²⁵*New York Times*, April 28, 1986.

²⁶Beginning in late 1985 the Soviet media began to talk about instability in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province extensively. For examples, see Moscow TASS in English, December 3, 14, 17 (in JPRS-UMA-86-008, February 6, 1986); Yu. Lugovskiy, "In the Free Tribe Zone," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, January 8, 1986; A. Prokhanov, "Islamabad Against the Pathans: Who Is Paying for the Genocide," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 14, 1986.

The Question of Casualties

Perhaps the most direct way in which Afghanistan affected the Soviet military was through the casualties suffered and the associated dangers and hardships endured by officers and soldiers alike. There have been numerous anecdotal reports of the war's growing unpopularity throughout Soviet society as a whole as a result of its human costs,²⁷ but there is little evidence concerning the effect of these costs on the attitudes of the military itself. This we must deduce through less direct forms of evidence.

One striking feature of the coverage of events in Afghanistan by the Soviet media, and particularly by the military press, has been the steadily increasing frankness over time in its treatment of casualties, and a growing explicitness in the descriptions of the dangers of service life there. This evolution over the first six years of the war can be traced in several stages, which may reflect internal shifts in the thinking of the Soviet leadership, civilian or military.

The initial accounts of the war that came out between 1980 and early 1983 were filled with anodyne accounts of Soviet soldiers fulfilling their "internationalist duty" in the "limited contingent of Soviet forces in Afghanistan." Not only were casualties not reported, but Soviet soldiers were never depicted in combat. In the uniquely horrible literary style cultivated by Soviet military journalists,²⁸ one was given the impression that Soviet forces spent their time doing nothing but flying medical supplies around the country, distributing textbooks to Afghan schoolchildren, building roads and hospitals, making friends with Afghan peasants, and the like.²⁹ Indeed, the initial accounts were so bland that Soviet newspapers were compelled to respond to requests for information on service conditions from relatives of soldiers

²⁷A Lithuanian Samizdat source recounts the following incident: "In the summer of 1980, a twenty-year-old, Vladas Cereska from Silute, fell in Afghanistan. The news that he was being brought to the railway station reached Vladas' friends. They started waiting. . . . The KGB, noticing the indignation of the young people, got scared and ordered the burial earlier than it had been planned. The soldiers were to carry the coffin, but the local youth did not allow them. . . . The funeral procession stretched along the streets of the town. The friends of Vladas lighted torches even though the wrathful security agents around were ordering that they be put out." Quoted in Radio Liberty Research, July 26, 1982.

²⁸"Thank you, lieutenant, for the gift,' Lieutenant Colonel B. Budnikov said as we headed toward the helicopter again. 'It's like a visit back to Penze, like touching the birch tree with my hands. Oh, Mother-Russia, how I wish I could drive over your expanses, take a drink from your springs.'" Col. A. Khorobrykh, "One Mountain Pass After Another—From the Afghan Notebook," *Aviatsiya i Kosmonautika*, No. 10, October 1980.

²⁹For example, Col. V. Izgarshev, "At the Bidding of Internationalist Duty," *Soviet Military Review*, No. 11, November 1980.

stationed in Afghanistan. Readers were subsequently told that life was uncomfortable, boring, and occasionally dangerous, but only as a byproduct of the fighting that was going on between the Afghan army and the mujahedeen.³⁰ The military press would also cover supposed "training exercises" taking place either in Afghanistan or in some unnamed Central Asian military district, which often sounded highly realistic.³¹

The first major shift in Soviet coverage of the war came in February 1983, that is, shortly after Leonid Brezhnev's death and Yuri Andropov's accession to power. Newspapers began to admit that the "limited contingent" was suffering casualties, primarily from mines planted along the roads. Soviet soldiers were not, as yet, depicted as either suffering or inflicting casualties in combat; instead, extensive coverage was given in 1983 and 1984 to the dangers faced by Soviet drivers in support or logistical operations.³² The frankness of Soviet reporting increased in other ways as well: Descriptions of the mujahedeen resistance became more sophisticated and began to present more complex accounts of their motivations than the usual line about interference from outside,³³ and some mention was even made of the disastrous accident in the Salang Pass Tunnel in late 1983.³⁴

The openness of Soviet war reporting took another upturn in 1984–85. The cumulative shift between 1980 and early 1986 was remarkable: One now got the clear impression that the war in Afghanistan was a very grim and dangerous affair, requiring genuine heroism of Soviet servicemen. Newspapers began to move beyond the "war of the roads" and cover actual combat operations, in which Soviet troops were described as attacking mujahedeen positions and suffering losses in return. Many accounts were quite graphic: There were descriptions of Soviet soldiers losing limbs or suffering other traumatic wounds, Soviet POWs being killed in Pakistan, guerrilla attacks taking place on the Kabul airport, Soviet helicopters being shot down and displayed in

³⁰Col. V. Stulovskiy (1981); V. Verstakov, "Bogdanov's Company," *Pravda*, December 12, 1981.

³¹Capt. V. Belozerov, "Under Mortar Cover," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, August 23, 1981.

³²Kruzhin, 1983; Serge Schmemann, "Russians Are Learning There's an Afghan War," *New York Times*, March 3, 1983. For an example of this type of article, see Lt. Col. V. Skrizhalin, "People of Great Duty—in the Land of Afghanistan," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, August 27, 1983.

³³Col. Yu. Teplov, "Undeclared War," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, October 22, 1983; Lt. Col. V. Skrizhalin, "Thank You, Shuravi," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, October 15, 1983.

³⁴Engineer-Lt. Col. V. Sukhodol'skiy, "Salang—From the Afghan Notebook," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, January 14, 1984. For more on the Salang Pass, see Col. I. Dynin, "Heirs to an Honored Tradition: The Overcoming Course," *Krylya Rodiny*, No. 10, October 1985.

Pakistan, etc.³⁵ A *Pravda* article published in early 1985 admitted that security ended at the outskirts of the cities, and that in Farah province the government controlled no more than 40 percent of the territory.³⁶ By mid-1985, Soviet television was showing footage of burned-out trucks and soldiers fighting the mujahedeen.³⁷ Rising Soviet stakes were also evident in comparisons drawn between service in Afghanistan and service in defense of Russia itself during the second World War.³⁸

One notable feature about Soviet coverage of Afghanistan is the high incidence of Central Asian surnames reported as being killed or wounded, or else performing heroically in combat. A survey of the literature since 1980 suggests that up to as many as half the names of individual Soviet servicemen cited are non-Slavic; they are described in all sorts of roles, from truck drivers to pilots and members of elite combat units.³⁹ One of the first instances in which the Soviet media admitted casualties was an account of the posthumous decoration of a young Turkmen soldier by Turkmen Communist Party First Secretary Mukhamednazar Gapurov in March 1982.⁴⁰

Whatever their exact statistical representation in the literature, it is clear that Central Asians are depicted as fighting and dying in Afghanistan far out of proportion to either their representation in the general Soviet population or in the combat arms of the forces that are currently occupying the country. Central Asian troops were evidently well-represented in the original invasion force in December 1979, but were subsequently withdrawn after indications that many of them were

³⁵For a sample of recent articles, see Maj. A. Oliynik, "Courage," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, March 24, 1984; V. Levin and V. Khachirashvili, "He Wears the Red Star, Discharging International Duty," *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, November 16, 1984; Col. A. Khorunzhiy, "Battles for the Revolution," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 24, December 1984; Col. Ye. Besschetnov, "The Attraction of Altitude," *Aviatsiya i Kosmonavtika*, No. 11, November 1984; Maj. A. Oliynik, "Rescuing a Friend Is the Supreme Honor," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, December 14, 1985.

³⁶V. Baykov, "Trip to Darabad," *Pravda*, January 28, 1985.

³⁷Seth Mydans, "Soviet TV Gives Its Viewers Rare Glimpse of Afghan War," *New York Times*, July 24, 1985; Moscow Television Service in Russian, November 29, 1985 (JPRS-UMA-86-002, January 10, 1986).

³⁸Bohdan Nahaylo, "Afghanistan—No Longer 'Foreign Soil'?" *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 306/85, September 11, 1985.

³⁹Articles in which this occur include: Lt. Col. V. Skrizhalin, "People of Great Duty—in the Land of Afghanistan," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, August 27, 1983; Maj. A. Oliynik (1984); L. Gromadskiy, "Dzholoy Chyntemirov's Red Star," *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya*, March 23, 1984; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, July 11, 1984; Col. Ye. Besschetnov (1984); Yu. Dmitriyev, "Battalion of Four," *Trud*, February 21, 1985; Maj. A. Oliynik, "The Fiery Kilometers," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, May 26, 1985.

⁴⁰Bess Brown, "Turkmen Party First Secretary Praises Young Soldier Killed in Afghanistan," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL-152/82, April 5, 1982.

fraternizing with the mujahedeen. Central Asians in any case are usually kept out of combat units and relegated to construction troops.⁴¹

The usual explanation given for the steadily increasing frankness in Soviet war reporting is that the human costs of the war have had a considerable effect on the consciousness of the Soviet public, and that in order to maintain its credibility the leadership has had to present a more honest accounting of the fighting and dying that everyone knows has been going on in Afghanistan.

There are several problems with this explanation: It is not clear that there is something that can meaningfully be called "public opinion" in the Soviet Union, and if there were, through what mechanisms it would be expressed. The Soviet media have never been known for their veracity and have consistently covered up major accidents and disasters without worrying about "credibility" except when the issue is raised by foreigners. Against hypothetical costs to credibility must be weighed real costs in terms of public demoralization and discontent from frank coverage of the war in Afghanistan after 1983.

An alternative and possibly more plausible explanation is that the military itself pressed the political leadership for more accurate reporting. Professional soldiers who have suffered the risks and hardships of service in Afghanistan could hardly have been happy to see themselves depicted as distributing textbooks to Afghan schoolchildren while the brunt of the fighting was portrayed as being borne by the Afghan army. The military is likely to have told the political leadership, in effect, that if the Soviet armed forces were going to be called upon to take real risks they should receive public credit for them as well.⁴² The military, unlike "public opinion," is a concrete institution with established channels for articulating its interests, and in the case of the war would probably have the leverage to have them accommodated. The political leadership would have to weigh the costs of public demoralization against demoralization within the armed forces.

The high incidence of reporting on casualties among Central Asians points to the persistence of ethnic problems within the Soviet military. The apparent need to extol the bravery and heroism of Central Asians suggests that someone is calling their loyalty into question, following on the instances of fraternization in 1980. Alternatively, this reporting could be directed toward audiences in Central Asia itself, to increase these republics' stake in the war effort and to demonstrate the existence of co-ethnics willing to die for the Soviet Union.

⁴¹Wimbush and Alexiev, 1981.

⁴²In 1985, Soviet military journals began publishing pictures of Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan wearing wound stripes on their uniforms, for the first time since World War II.

The Effect of Afghanistan on Military Interventionism

The frustrations of the continuing war in Afghanistan has probably had a paradoxical effect on the Soviet military, on the one hand increasing its disinclination to get involved in further Third World adventures, but on the other stiffening its resistance to withdrawal from Afghanistan itself.

There was apparently no inherent predisposition on the part of the senior Soviet military leadership (Defense Minister Ustinov and Chief of Staff Ogarkov) toward intervention in late 1979, either as a general mission in the Third World, or specifically in Afghanistan. But when asked by the political leadership to give its assessment of the situation, General Pavlovskiy reported back that a limited intervention would be effective in stabilizing the regime in Kabul. This decision may have been the source of some controversy within the military in view of competing manpower and resource requirements, or have represented a kind of compromise choice. In any event, Pavlovskiy's assessment proved overoptimistic in several respects, and the military found itself drawn into a costly and protracted conflict that manifested numerous weaknesses, both in the rank and file of the Soviet armed forces and in its officer corps and senior leadership as well.⁴³

The political leadership may have blamed the military for overestimating its ability to get things under control, but the military had even stronger grounds for recrimination. The political leadership was probably held responsible for having gotten the USSR involved in Afghanistan in the first place, as the remarks of the KGB general quoted earlier indicate. The military may also have been frustrated in seeking a further escalation of Soviet involvement. The kind of escalation desired may not necessarily have been in terms of total manpower, because the military has been facing severe manpower constraints in recent years and might not welcome so large a drain on its available manpower pool.⁴⁴ Instead the military may have sought permission to strike out at guerrilla bases across the Pakistani border and to take other measures (such as hot pursuit raids) to weaken Islamabad's support for the mujahedeen. Although there are almost daily violations of Pakistani airspace, the Soviets have not engaged in large-scale, deliberate cross-border operations to date, which may have left the Soviet command hampered from following through on the job they were asked

⁴³The Soviet historian Roy Medvedev in an interview with a Spanish newspaper noted that Andropov "could not be satisfied with the situation in Afghanistan" in 1973. *FBIS*, USSR National Affairs, October 25, 1984, p. V1.

⁴⁴Soviet forces in Afghanistan were augmented by about 10,000 soldiers in 1981, 1982, and 1984. See Khalilzad, 1986, p. 2.

to do. The absence of press coverage early in the war, accurately reflecting the risks and costs they were asked to bear, also contributed to their sense of grievance.

There is also evidence that some Soviet veterans of Afghanistan—of whom there were an estimated 400,000 by mid-1986—believe that they have received insufficient attention upon returning to the USSR and are seeking the establishment of an official veterans' organization that would be able to lobby more effectively for their rights.⁴⁵ It would not be surprising if the officer corps had similar grievances. The Soviet regime has made some efforts to give greater recognition to Soviet veterans by emphasizing their superior moral character.⁴⁶

The pattern of promotions that took place following the invasion suggests an interest on the part of the political leadership to reward good performance there. General Pavlovskiy was removed as head of ground forces in December 1980; the first commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Marshal Sergey Sokolov, was eventually made Defense Minister after the death of Dmitriy Ustinov in December 1984 and candidate member of the Politburo in April 1985. The commanders of the military districts bordering on Afghanistan who were presumably heavily involved in planning the invasion also did well: General Yuriy Maksimov, who headed the Turkestan Military District in December 1980,⁴⁷ was promoted to succeed Marshal Tolubko as chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces, and General Petr Lushev, who was commander of the Central Asian Military District, was first promoted to command the Moscow Military District in December 1980, and then to chief of Group of Soviet Forces in Germany in July 1985. In addition, General Vasilii Petrov, who had no direct connection to Afghanistan but who led the intervention on behalf of Ethiopia in 1977–78, was promoted to Marshal of the Soviet Union, commander of ground forces, and first deputy minister of defense.

This does not necessarily mean that the political leadership was appeasing the military over Afghanistan by rewarding them with promotions; many of these officers (like Maksimov) would probably have advanced in any case. Such promotions, however, would increase the military's stake in Afghanistan by making it an all the more important "ticket" to be punched.

⁴⁵See "Soviet Veterans of the War in Afghanistan: A New Social Force?" *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* (RL-241-86), June 24, 1986, pp. 1ff. Many Soviet veterans have reportedly faced serious problems getting readjusted to civilian life, feeling morally superior to many of their fellows.

⁴⁶Kruzhin, 1985, pp. 2–3. Kruzhin quotes from the journalist Aleksandr Prokhanov, who has written a new genre of Soviet "colonial" fiction glorifying Soviet military men and intelligence agents who run the Soviet empire.

⁴⁷Maksimov also probably commanded the Southwestern TVD until 1976.

Only speculation is possible as to the effect that Afghanistan has had on the thinking of the Soviet military toward armed intervention in the Third World as a whole.⁴⁸ Given that the senior military command did not evidence strong enthusiasm for the Third World intervention mission in the first place, it does not seem likely that Afghanistan would in any way have whetted their appetite for further deployments in peripheral theaters. To the contrary, the occupation force in Afghanistan has put one further strain on Moscow's already overextended manpower resources and diverted considerable leadership attention away from more central theaters in Europe and the Far East. The Soviet army remains a European-oriented force that has adapted very slowly to unfamiliar conditions. Afghanistan has permitted the Soviet military to test new weapons and tactics under conditions of real combat, but it has also revealed important weaknesses in doctrine and morale.

Moreover, Afghanistan differed considerably from the earlier interventions of the 1970s in Angola and the Horn of Africa in that it required substantial Soviet manpower and led to a large number of casualties.⁴⁹ The earlier interventions had been easy ones in the sense that the Soviet military could rely on Cubans and other cooperative forces to do the fighting and dying. It was never clear that Gorchikov and Grechko were ever really interested in real combat in Third World theaters, rather than merely the projection of Soviet military presence. Afghanistan may have given this school a bit more than they bargained for.

The very weaknesses revealed in the Afghan conflict suggest that the military would be reluctant to pull out of Afghanistan under some kind of settlement negotiated by the political leadership without first having decisively "defeated" the mujahedeen or in some other way redeemed its professional honor. Afghanistan is, after all, the first war the Red Army has fought since the Great Patriotic War, and it might seem unduly humiliating to be seen retreating under the pressure of primitive and poorly armed guerrillas. The military may in fact be the source of considerable pressure for escalation in Soviet operations to include attacks on Pakistani territory. The fact that the political leadership has had to appease the military through, for example, rapid

⁴⁸For more concrete evidence, Mark Katz quotes a Soviet "Colonel X," interviewed in the British magazine *Detente*, who stated that Afghanistan "does not serve our purposes" and that "instead of paying these hooligans to make war, let us pay them to keep the peace." *Detente's* legitimacy as an independent journal is questionable; still, it is interesting that *someone* in the Soviet Union wants word to get out that there is internal unhappiness over the decision to invade Afghanistan. Mark Katz, "Anti-Soviet Insurgencies: Growing Trend or Passing Phase?" unpublished paper.

⁴⁹Relative, of course, to normal Soviet peacetime operations and previous interventions in Third World crises.

promotions and franker coverage of the war is evidence of existing tensions that may grow more prominent if Moscow moves closer to an actual settlement. It is of course highly unlikely that the political leadership itself would agree to an Afghan solution giving the appearance that the military was withdrawing under pressure, so it is unnecessary to postulate a civil-military split on this subject. The point is rather that the professional military may be one more obstacle, and an institutional one at that, blocking the prospects for a negotiated withdrawal from Afghanistan.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Soviet military's views of the Third World are complicated and do not fit a simple pattern like the "interventionary doctrine" hypothesis noted in Sec. I. The Soviet armed forces did appear to be moving in the direction of developing doctrine and capabilities for power projection in the early to mid-1970s, but this evolution was cut short by the death of Andrey Grechko and thereafter did not receive strong emphasis. The evidence presented above is summarized in the following points:

- The Soviet military has a point of view on Third World issues distinct from that of the political leadership, reflected in the voluminous writings of Soviet military authors on "local wars," and in the positions taken by the senior military leadership.
- Although many of the differences between civilian and military authors are simply functional, certain military leaders and writers developed a more political point of view favoring a "liberating mission" for the Soviet armed forces in the Third World.
- Expressed interest in the Third World mission followed an ascending curve through the 1960s and early 70s, tapering off sharply thereafter. The navy in particular took an early interest in the power projection mission and seems to have played a role in pushing the General Staff as a whole in this direction, perhaps as a result of the personal relationship between Sergey Gorshkov and Andrey Grechko. As defense minister, Grechko was a strong advocate of military support for Third World allies and openly formulated a "liberating mission" for the armed forces.
- Grechko's successor Dmitriy Ustinov and the new Chief of Staff Nikolay Orgarkov, by contrast, were considerably less interested in the Third World mission. The latter, in particular, was heavily focused in improving Soviet capabilities in the two central theaters, Europe and the Far East, and may have regarded Third World power projection as a diversion of resources. The main institutional advocate of power projection, the navy, found a much less sympathetic audience for its views after the mid-1970s.
- Even under Grechko, it was not clear whether the "liberating mission" of the armed forces implied direct intervention by

Soviet combat forces in Third World situations, or simply the provision of arms and training, and the coordination of combat activities by Cuban and other bloc forces.

- After the death of Grechko, military views on the desirability of the power projection mission were not uniform, and individual officers and writers continued to advocate it well into the 1980s.
- Although at least part of the military argued in favor of the operational feasibility of intervention in Afghanistan, it did not take the initiative in pushing for action, but rather acquiesced in a decision taken by the political leadership for political reasons.
- The Soviet military had no pronounced proclivity in favor of intervention prior to Afghanistan, and whatever inclinations they may have had in this direction have probably been dampened as a result of its experience there. However, the military will probably resist efforts to withdraw from Afghanistan before a convincing "defeat" of the Afghan mujahedeen, and may push for an escalation of military operations to include attacks on Pakistani territory.

Afghanistan is thus likely to have reinforced a trend in the military, already somewhat in evidence, toward a less demonstrative application of Soviet armed forces to roles outside the main theaters of operations. Since the mid-1970s, the central preoccupation of the Soviet military has been the modernization of the European and Far Eastern theaters, including reorganization of the command structure and introduction of a new generation of both conventional and nuclear weapons. A concomitant of this effort was the attempt to block the corresponding Western modernization programs, particularly intermediate range nuclear forces (INF). Since the Soviet military was being squeezed in terms of both resource allocations and manpower, one can imagine that the priority of the power projection mission fell even further after the Afghan invasion.

Afghanistan has probably served as the training ground for a new cadre of tough, combat-tested officers,¹ skilled in counterinsurgency tactics, whose services would be of use in other regions. It is not clear whether Soviet authorities (whether political or military) intend to take full advantage of this experience, however, by institutionalizing it in a special branch dedicated to anti-guerrilla operations, or whether counterinsurgency doctrine (under whatever name) will be developed as a separate and legitimate part of military science. In spite of early

¹One of whom, Marshal Sokolov, rose to become defense minister.

problems adapting to this type of warfare, the Soviets have drawn lessons from their earlier mistakes and improved the performance of their forces in Afghanistan.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN VIEWS ON THE THIRD WORLD

The cycle of military interest in the Third World that grew in the 1960s and peaked some time in the mid-1970s roughly parallels the evolution in the views of the political leadership and other civilian writers specializing in this area. The Soviet political leadership's confidence in its overall foreign policy position and interest in the Third World was very strong throughout the 1970s, particularly during the period of activism in the second half of the decade. It was only toward the end of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s that the political leadership began to express second thoughts about the wisdom of this activism, which was quite pronounced in the speeches of both Andropov and Gorbachev. Moscow throughout the early 1980s was absorbed in a series of internal leadership changes in any event, and its policy seemed to focus much more heavily on consolidation of existing positions in the Third World rather than the acquisition of new ones.

The evolution in military views on the Third World thus parallels a similar one occurring within the party leadership; there is no evidence of civil-military disagreement on the larger contours of policy toward the developing countries. The concerns of the Soviet military leadership were different from those of their civilian counterparts: The former discussed roles and missions of the individual service branches, types of conflicts, and operational principles governing the use of force in them, and the latter were more interested in questions of political organization, ideology, tactics of revolutionary transformation, etc. Civilian leaders and writers, in fact, seldom if ever referred to the use of force in Third World policy, sticking to general formulations about Soviet support for overall defense capabilities.² But both military and civilians found a common language in the early 1970s in their agreement that the changed correlation of forces in favor of the Soviet Union offered new opportunities for Soviet support of the world

²A typical formulation is the one that Brezhnev used in his 26th party congress address, when he said "We help, together with the other fraternal countries, in strengthening the defense capability of the liberated states, when they turn to us with such requests. This took place, for example, in Angola and Ethiopia. . . . We are against exporting revolution but we cannot agree either with the export of counterrevolution." *Dvadtsat' Shestoy S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuz, 23 Fevrala-3 Marta 1981 goda. Stenograficheskiy Otchet*, p. 29.

revolutionary process. Both groups expressed optimism that social processes under way in the Third World favored Moscow and would lead to further gains for socialism. This gave way to increasing pessimism among both military and civilian writers in the late 1970s to early 1980s with respect to both the durability of the advances of the late Brezhnev period and the Soviet Union's overall power position with regard to the United States. Arguments about the positive change in the correlation of forces dropped from view, as did those concerning the liberating mission of the Soviet armed forces.

One motive for the deemphasis of the power projection mission was desire of the party leadership to downplay the role of military force in Soviet foreign policy across the board. This grew out of recognition of the damaging effects of certain kinds of public statements on U.S.-Soviet relations, such as discussions of nuclear war fighting and winning by military writers, or assertions about the Soviet "right" to support national liberation movements through military means simultaneously with pursuit of detente. In practice, the Soviets discovered that the United States would not permit such a divisible concept of detente: The continuing Soviet strategic buildup and the invasion of Afghanistan impeded the realization of arms control goals and helped to bring a more assertive Reagan administration to power. In terms of actions on the ground, the Soviets moved into a period of consolidation and retrenchment in the early 1980s, which was coupled with a recognition that *talking* about military support for national liberation movements is counterproductive.³

Nonetheless, the military was probably following its own agenda as well as that of the political leadership in deemphasizing the power projection mission. The principal preoccupation of the senior command to this day continues to be land warfare in the major contiguous Asian and European theaters rather than power projection to distant parts of the globe. To the extent that the military developed power projection capabilities and doctrine, this seems to have been the work of certain strong-minded individuals such as Gorshkov or Grechko, or of the one service branch with an institutional interest in the Third World (the navy). In the absence of forces pushing it in this direction, the military had no "natural" tendency to seek such a role for itself. Indeed, with the decline in the rate of growth of the Soviet defense budget and the freezing of military procurement after 1975, the power projection mission may have seemed like a diversion of resources from the central priorities of the armed forces. With the deployment of over 110,000 men to Afghanistan

³The downgrading in the emphasis on military power is evident in the 1985 party program, which makes only one brief allusion to Soviet defense assistance for Third World allies. Brezhnev's reference to Soviet defensive assistance to prevent the export of counterrevolution does not recur in the speeches of the senior leadership after 1981.

in a seemingly unresolvable war, this diversion must have seemed all the more problematic.

To return to the question with which this study began, it is fairly clear that policy toward the Third World has not been a *divisive* issue in Soviet civil-military relations in the way that nuclear strategy or resource allocations have been. During Grechko's tenure as defense minister, the military seems to have pushed for strong support of Third World clients and may consequently have been at odds with the foreign ministry as a result of the latter's concern with maintaining stable U.S.-Soviet relations. But Grechko and like-minded officers were probably supported in this position by the civilian party apparatchiks in the Central Committee's International Department who, as Arkady Shevchenko informs us, were also at loggerheads with the foreign ministry on this score. The primary split on the question of intervention and its effects on East-West detente therefore did not fall along civil-military lines, but rather was a source of controversy for both military *and* civilians.

Indeed, there was a neat parallelism in the thinking of some civilians and others in the military on Third World issues. The military showed the greatest interest in power projection just at the time that the political leadership, and particularly those within the party apparatus, felt the most confident about the Soviet Union's overall position as a global superpower, and as the ideologues in the International Department were arguing that detente provided opportunities for support of the world revolutionary process. The result was a major expansionist thrust as the Soviets made selective use of force to support friends in Angola, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. By the early 1980s, these same party apparatchiks began to have second thoughts about this activist policy because of economic costs, negative effects on U.S.-Soviet relations, and the poor political and economic performance of Soviet Third World clients. The military, for its part, was in the middle of a long-term effort to modernize its theater capabilities in Europe and the Far East, which had begun in the mid- to late 1970s. Enthusiasts for the Third World within the military were in any case proponents of presence projection rather than power projection, strictly speaking. It was easy and low-cost to support such interventions as those in Angola and the Horn of Africa, because they relied heavily on Cuban and other cooperative forces and required little Soviet manpower. But with Afghanistan the costs in terms of manpower and casualties suddenly began to look quite different.

The shift in attitudes toward the Third World appears to have occurred a bit earlier among the military leaders than within the party: By the account given above, the military's agenda had already changed by the time of the accession of Ustinov and Ogarkov to the senior leadership, so that the latter was somewhat out of step with the political authorities

in the very period when the Soviet armed forces were being used in the late 1970s. One explanation for this apparent anomaly is the growing constraints placed on the Soviet defense budget beginning with the 10th Five-Year plan, which forced the military for the first time since the early 1960s to directly confront the problem of resource stringencies and priorities among military programs, and to question the ultimate value of a large surface navy. The question of resources went on to become a bone of contention in the larger civil-military relationship, but only insofar as it related to the power projection mission because that did not seem to be terribly high on the list of priorities of either side. Then too, personalities seemed to have played something of a role: The fact that Grechko died more than six years before Brezhnev may have slowed the civilian turn to other priorities.

FUTURE CHANGES IN POLICY

At present, the Soviet political leadership can be said to be in a period of consolidation and retrenchment in its Third World policy, shoring up weak positions inherited from the 1970s—Angola, Afghanistan, and Libya—with heavy new infusions of military assistance, but avoiding costly new commitments and reducing to the extent possible the costs of the overseas empire.⁴

Is the Soviet military likely to stake out a tougher position than the party leadership and return to the kind of interest in power projection characteristic of the early 1970s? Such an outcome seems unlikely for several reasons.

In the first place, the kinds of technological requirements that initially drove the Soviet armed forces to search for bases and facilities in the Third World are no longer as pressing as they were in the 1960s and 1970s. With increasing ranges of Soviet SLBMs, the latest Delta II and Typhoon class SSBNs can now strike targets on the American continent from protected bastions in the Barents Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, or from under the Arctic ice cap. They and their surface escorts no longer need to patrol in the open ocean, much less close to the shores of the United States. Increasing ranges of U.S. SLBMs vastly widen the patrol areas for American submarines, even further reducing the feasibility of Soviet strategic ASW and consequently the requirement for distant deployments.

The Soviets have other types of military interests, of course. One is the need to keep open a sea line of communication between the European and Far Eastern parts of the USSR, which will be critical in the event of a war

⁴For a lengthier evaluation of the current Soviet position, see Fukuyama, 1986.

with the People's Republic of China. Some observers have attributed Soviet interest in South Yemen and Vietnam to this motive. It is, moreover, useful to have a far-flung series of facilities for simple intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, satellite tracking, etc. For this reason we can assume that the Soviet navy continues to have an interest in facilities in Libya and India where it has sought them in the past. When an opportunity arises for new access, such as in the wake of the April 1986 confrontation between Washington and Tripoli, the military may well make a case for exploiting the situation.⁵ Nonetheless, the requirement for facilities to support the strategic ASW mission is not as urgent now as it may have seemed two decades ago when Gorshkov was personally pressing the case on Arab leaders.

A survey of the writings of the new senior military leaders who came to power in 1984—Defense Minister Sergey Sokolov and Chief of the General Staff Sergey Akhromeyev—does not suggest that they are any more interested in power projection than were their immediate predecessors. Sokolov, like Ustinov, has spoken about the “billions” being spent by the United States “on the struggle against liberation movement forces” in Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Nicaragua, which has led to “increased danger of war.”⁶ But he makes no mention of possible armed responses or a more general role for the Soviet armed forces in preventing the export of counterrevolution, and indeed has emphasized the “purely defensive” nature of Soviet military doctrine. Sokolov moreover has explicitly limited the “external function” of the Soviet armed forces to “ensuring favorable peaceful conditions for building socialism and communism.”⁷ His speech to the 27th party congress made no mention of the Third World.

Similarly, Chief of Staff Akhromeyev has spoken of the historical mission of the Soviet military in liberating various countries from German fascism during World War II, but his insistence that “The only objective of our military doctrine is to ensure reliable security for the Soviet state and for our friends, the countries of the socialist community” makes it impossible for him to delineate a present day mission for the armed forces in support of national liberation movements or other Third World causes.⁸ Both Sokolov and Akhromeyev, like the Soviet political leadership, have heavily emphasized strategic nuclear issues, arms control, and

⁵Even in this case, the military will understand better than anyone Moscow's restricted capabilities for defending Libya from American attack.

⁶Speech by S. Sokolov at 18 January Komsomol conference of the Turkestan Military District, quoted in FBIS, January 23, 1985, p. V2.

⁷Marshal Sokolov, “Decisive Source of Combat Might,” *Pravda*, February 23, 1986.

⁸Marshal Akhromeyev, “Superiority of Soviet Military Science and Soviet Military Art as One of the Most Important Factors of Victory in the Great Patriotic War,” *Kommunist*, No. 3, February 1985; and “On Guard over Peace and Socialism,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, February 22, 1985.

East-West relations, and say almost nothing about less-developed countries.

Grechko did not begin speaking out forcefully on the liberating mission of the Soviet armed forces until late in his tenure as defense minister, and it is possible that Sokolov's views are not fully reflected in his speeches to date. Sokolov's last combat assignment was, after all, as commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, which no doubt helped his future career. It is impossible to know how this Afghan experience shaped his views on Third World intervention; that he became more or less inclined are both plausible hypotheses.

Moreover, the military's inclination or lack thereof to project power into the Third World can be predicted only within the bounds of the political rivalry that has existed over the past couple of decades. Some opportunity may well arise in the future in which Soviet stakes (including the military's stakes) will be far higher than those of the 1970s, such as the breakup of Iran or a revolution in the Philippines. In these circumstances it will be very difficult to predict the attitudes of the Soviet military; risks will undoubtedly be higher, but so will potential rewards.

Even if the military did currently have a clear agenda for the Third World, it is not clear that it would have the will or institutional clout to influence policy in a serious way. The military as a whole lost considerable standing after Ogarkov's removal as Chief of Staff and Ustinov's death; Defense Minister Sokolov is old and no longer holds full membership on the Politburo. The contentious issues between the military and the party over the past decade have concerned declining rates of growth in the defense budget, long-term investment, particularly in advanced technologies, and the kinds of privileges and honors due them and the party, respectively. It seems likely that the military will expend whatever political capital it has contesting these issues before they turn to issues related to the Third World.

The one Third World issue on which the military is likely to take a stand in the near term is Afghanistan. The Soviet command will continue to press for greater freedom of action with regard to Pakistan than the party authorities would be inclined to permit and might even press for retaliatory operations as a means of intimidating Islamabad. Should the political authorities decide to negotiate a withdrawal from Afghanistan before a convincing military defeat of the mujahedeen, the military can be expected to resist.

Appendix

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON AFGHANISTAN

The senior Soviet political leadership presented justifications for the invasion of Afghanistan in the republican Soviet election speeches given by members of the Politburo in late February 1980. Almost all of the speeches contained similar assertions to the effect that the international "crisis" over Afghanistan was manufactured by the United States; that the United States was seeking to undermine detente; that it was not the Soviet Union but the United States that was interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, etc.¹ There were, however, considerable differences in the stridency with which these assertions were made and the degree to which the speaker stressed the importance of continuing good relations with the United States.

The strongest statements in support of the invasion were made by Kosygin, Gromyko, and Ustinov. The Soviet prime minister detected a "defined political policy" on the part of reactionary American circles with regard to Afghanistan and asserted that the Soviet Union could not help but draw "necessary conclusions from this for our practical activities," namely that "we shall pay unremitting attention to the question of the defense capability of the country."² Foreign Minister Gromyko expressed considerable frustration with the inconsistencies of U.S. policy and American attempts to impose sanctions. He showed no interest in accommodating U.S. concerns, however, and defiantly asserted that "Some people in the U.S. capital still will not collect their shattered nerves. And that is wrong. They would do better to tend them. These words should be applied in particular to those who invariably address the Soviet Union in a cocky manner."³ It was perhaps natural that Defense Minister Ustinov gave the longest defense of the intervention. After blaming the United States for aggravating world tensions over Afghanistan, he spoke of the Soviet armed forces fulfilling a larger mission there:

¹Rand, 1980.

²Address by Aleksei Kosygin to the Frunze constituency in Moscow, February 21, 1980 (FBIS/SOV February 22, 1980), p. R1.

³*Pravda*, February 19, 1980.

Loyal to its international duty, the Soviet Union has always rendered and continues to render fraternal aid and support to the peoples struggling for their independence and sovereignty and for their revolutionary gains. It is precisely with this *noble mission* that limited contingents of our armed forces were sent to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.⁴

As noted earlier, reference to an international mission for the Soviet armed forces was unusual for Ustinov. The Soviet defense minister also referred to "profound changes in the correlation of forces," which restricted American options.

These statements should be contrasted to those made by Brezhnev's two immediate successors, Yuriy Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko. Andropov, a consistent skeptic of the value of Third World commitments, noted that the USSR had intervened only after considerable outside interference and calls for help from the Afghan government, and that the decision was "*not simple for us.*" Emphasizing that the Soviet limited contingent would be withdrawn as soon as conditions permitted, he warned against yielding to "provocations from across the ocean."⁵ Chernenko did not even mention Afghanistan by name, speaking only of the Carter administration as those who would teach "others how to live." Like Andropov, he argued that "In the current complex situation it is important to remain calm and clear headed. The aggressive forces would very much like to provoke 'retaliatory toughness' on our part."⁶ Brezhnev's own speech was fairly conciliatory in tone relative to those of other Soviet leaders; he declared "with utmost definiteness" that the Soviet Union stood ready to withdraw under the appropriate circumstances and, like Andropov and Chernenko, stressed the importance of not yielding to provocation.⁷ Like Andropov, Brezhnev in an earlier speech had referred to the "difficult decision" to send forces to Afghanistan.⁸ It is interesting that Geidar Aliyev, First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, fails to mention Afghanistan at all.⁹

⁴*Pravda*, February 14, 1980.

⁵Italics added. *Pravda*, February 12, 1980.

⁶*Pravda*, February 16, 1980.

⁷*Pravda*, February 22, 1980.

⁸Rand, 1980, p. 3.

⁹*Bakinskiy Rabochiy*, January 29, 1980.

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