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# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

## Soviet Military Policy in the Third World

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NIE 11-10-76  
21 October 1976

Copy No 414

DECLASSIFIED  
PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
May 4, 2006

October 1975, the Soviets initiated an air and seallift from the USSR to help its client and in January 1976 began providing an airlift for Cuban forces between Cuba and Angola.

[Omitted here is text unrelated to Africa.]

94. The Soviets evidently believe that the victory of a Soviet-supported national liberation movement has increased Soviet prestige in the Third World. The Soviets probably hope that Angola—where a substantial Cuban presence will probably remain for some time—may also assist the USSR in providing Soviets an entree to other national liberation movements in southern Africa—such as SWAPO. In October 1976 the Soviets signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation to consolidate their political position. In addition, they may hope to obtain access to port and air facilities as an alternative to those in Guinea.

95. *Mozambique.* Although not as extensive as that of the Chinese, Soviet aid in the form of military equipment, training, and funds assisted the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) to come to power when Mozambique achieved independence in June 1975. FRELIMO will probably continue to receive substantial financial and military aid both from the USSR and the PRC. Mozambique provides training and base areas for guerrilla operations against the white minority government of Rhodesia, an activity to which the Soviets have given both military and political support. President Machel kept the Soviets at arm's length immediately after independence but has been friendlier to them recently. Agreements have been reached to train Mozambique officers in the USSR possibly in preparation for deliveries of military equipment.

**B. Africa**

92. In absolute terms, Soviet military aid to sub-Saharan Africa is quite small. Total Soviet military deliveries to all of the area for the past 20 years amount to about \$700 million—less than the USSR gave Indonesia in Sukarno's heyday. But because military forces in the underdeveloped countries of sub-Saharan Africa are small and poorly equipped, limited amounts of Soviet military assistance can have a significant impact. Soviet military assistance helped bring to power Soviet-supported factions in some of the former Portuguese colonies and has helped to obtain a Soviet military complex in Somalia and the use of facilities in Guinea. Because the military is frequently the most important element in African politics, Soviet military aid has helped the USSR to compete with both the West and China for influence in Africa.

93. *Angola.* Moscow's assistance to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Liberation Front of Angola dates back to the early 1960s. When the MPLA suffered setbacks in

96. *Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands.* Prior to the independence of these territories in July 1975, Moscow gave strong backing to their current ruling party, the African Party for the Independence of Portuguese Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), provided arms and training through Guinea, and stationed a permanent naval presence off Conakry to discourage Portuguese intervention against rebel sanctuaries in Guinea. Cubans collaborated with the Soviets in supporting the PAIGC, and this aid was instrumental in assisting guerrillas to come to power.

97. Currently Moscow is the major source of weapons and military training and has provided some economic aid to these impoverished countries as well.

There have been unconfirmed reports that Moscow has asked for military privileges in Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands, but neither government has granted any and both have said that they do not intend to allow foreign bases on their territories.

98. *Tanzania.* During the past two years Moscow has expanded its ties with Dar es Salaam. New arms agreements—the first since the mid-1960s—have put the total value of Soviet military aid on a par with the Chinese. Soviet interests in Tanzania are more than mere rivalry with the PRC. Tanzania's proximity to Mozambique and Rhodesia offers the Soviets channels to anti-Rhodesian liberation groups that traditionally have been based in Tanzania.

99. Tanzania was also the locus of the most extensive PRC activity in Africa, notably the recently completed TanZam railway project. Prior to 1974 China had been the principal supplier of military assistance and will probably remain the major donor of economic aid. During the past few years some friction has developed between China and Tanzania over China's military assistance. In this atmosphere Moscow has significantly increased its military aid and has established a military advisory mission there.

100. *Somalia.* Beset by economic troubles and engaged in a traditional confrontation with Ethiopia, the Siad government has welcomed Soviet economic and military assistance and has afforded the Soviets a high degree of military and political influence. To support the construction and operation of their facilities and the military aid program in Somalia, the Soviets have tripled the size of their presence there since 1973. There are now an estimated 1,000 Soviet military technicians in the country, and this number probably will increase further.

101. The Soviets will probably encourage Somalia to avoid the risk of war with Ethiopia by confining Somali actions in Eritrea to insurgency and subversion. Moscow has not interfered with Somalia's support of the insurgency in the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, which Mogadiscio wants to annex after the French depart. The Soviets may hope eventually to gain access to the naval base at Djibouti.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For additional discussion, see SNIE 76-1-76 of March 1976, "Prospects for and Implications of Conflict in the Horn of Africa Over the Next Year or So."

102. *Guinea.* Moscow's influence in Conakry has been strong since Guinea's independence in 1958, but the Soviets did not gain access to military facilities there until after the abortive Portuguese attack in 1970. In recent years, the Soviets have maintained a permanent naval presence off Conakry and used the port. In addition they have used the airfield at Conakry for TU-95 Bear deployments. Guinea has received some \$40 million in Soviet arms and equipment over the last ten years as well as military training and economic assistance.

103. Conakry served as the port of entry for Soviet arms to insurgents in Guinea-Bissau before that country won its independence from Portugal, and last year Guinea, along with Algeria, served as a staging area for Soviet airlifts to Angola.

104. In the past, the Guineans asked for Soviet—and even Chinese—assistance to build a naval facility on Tamara Island. For their part, the Soviets reportedly sought control of portions of the base. The Guineans eventually rejected the Soviet terms.

105. *Mali.* Mali's first President, Modibo Keita, welcomed Soviet assistance in order to lessen Mali's dependence on France and to enhance his credentials as a radical socialist African leader. The regime which overthrew him in 1968 improved relations with France and other Western countries, but has continued to seek military assistance from the USSR and the army officers who are now Mali's political leaders are almost totally dependent on the USSR for military equipment and training.

106. About 50 Soviet advisers provide armor, artillery, and parachute training and all Mali's pilots are Soviet-trained. Soviet personnel maintain Mali's civilian as well as military aircraft and all depend entirely on the USSR for spare parts. The Soviets have improved Mali's air force base at Mopti and are now surveying other Malian airfields. Moscow has signed military agreements with Mali totaling \$21 million since 1960. The Soviets occasionally used Malian airfields to stage arms supply flights during the Angola crisis, and Mali would probably grant Moscow transit privileges for the support of other southern African liberation groups.

107. *The Gambia and Senegal.* After responding to a Gambian request for small arms shipments, the Soviets demonstrated some interest in expanding military cooperation. But the Gambia turned down a

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Soviet offer of military advisers. President Senghor of neighboring Senegal deeply distrusts Soviet intentions toward West Africa, and Soviet involvement in Angola has nourished his suspicions.

108. *Equatorial Guinea and Congo.* The Soviets have reportedly sought—but failed to get—use of naval facilities in both countries. Moscow delivered three patrol craft to Equatorial Guinea in 1975 and probably will increase the number of advisers there. Brazzaville is reported to be discontented with the way Soviet aid projects are being implemented and the amount of Soviet assistance given in contrast with that given by the Chinese. Some Congolese students returning home after training in the USSR are disillusioned, and Soviet fishing off the Congo rankles that country. Nonetheless, Brazzaville allowed the Soviets to use Pointe Noire to channel supplies to African liberation groups in Angola and southern Africa.

109. *Sudan.* The Soviet Union began supplying arms in 1960 and concluded a major armaments agreement in 1967 after the Six-Day War. The Numayri government has returned to a more balanced policy in East-West relations following the defeat of the communist coup in 1971. Since then Soviet influence has declined, especially after the abortive coup of July 1976. Nearly 100 advisers are still present, and the Soviets recently delivered some old jet fighters as a gift. Nevertheless, Khartoum has turned once more to the UK and to Egypt for most of its assistance. The PRC, while keeping a low profile, is also furnishing assistance in both military and economic fields.

110. *Uganda.* In 1973 the Soviets began sending advanced military equipment to Uganda, including tanks and a squadron of MIG-21 fighters, and Soviet instructors. Despite Soviet wariness toward President Amin and a temporary break in relations in late 1975, the Soviets apparently still see Uganda as a target of opportunity, and there have been reports that they are negotiating a new military assistance agreement.

111. *Kenya.* Neither the USSR nor the PRC has much current influence in Kenya. The Soviets have offered arms and made approaches in connection with repair of their fishing vessels. Nairobi, however, continues to address its arms requests to the UK and the US and maintains a policy by which the US Navy

has access to Mombasa for replenishment and recreational purposes.

112. *Nigeria.* Soviet relations with Nigeria reached a high point during the Biafran rebellion, but the Nigerians evidently declined to help the USSR stage its airlift to Angola. Nevertheless, the USSR continues to supply some military aid to Nigeria.

[Omitted here is text unrelated to Africa.]

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