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Supporting Allies Under Insurgent Challenge: The Soviet Experience in Africa



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A Research Paper

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Supporting Allies Under Insurgent Challenge: The Soviet Experience in Africa

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [Redacted] Office of Soviet Analysis, and [Redacted] Office of Global Issues, with contributions from analysts in the Office of Global Issues. [Redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Theater Forces Division, Regional Issues Group, SOVA [Redacted]
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**Supporting Allies Under
Insurgent Challenge:
The Soviet Experience
in Africa**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 1 November 1987
was used in this report.*

The USSR's assistance to its key African clients facing major insurgencies—Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique—has failed to eliminate the guerrilla threats but has succeeded in keeping the regimes in power. The Soviets have not sought quick victory. They seem to expect that, in the long run, consolidation of the client state's power and authority, expansion of the domain physically controlled by the state, elimination of alternative political forces, and persistent military pressure on and erosion of outside support for the insurgents will ensure the insurgents' defeat.

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General Secretary Gorbachev, like his predecessors, can be patient in pursuing these objectives because the USSR does not face substantial domestic opposition to its involvement in Africa, and the costs—to date an estimated cumulative \$13 billion in military aid alone—while an object of concern, are tolerable. Moreover, Soviet economic aid has been paltry compared with the needs of the African clients. Indeed, Western economic aid to these states since 1975 has been about three times that of the Soviet Bloc.

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A review of Soviet political, ideological, and military writings indicates the Soviets have not formulated a distinct military doctrine of counterinsurgency warfare. In our judgment, this is probably because the persistence of these insurgencies raises sensitive ideological questions, which Soviet theorists may prefer to avoid, about the Soviet role in suppressing movements with large popular followings. Moreover, the military establishment's focus on NATO and China may make it difficult for advocates of small-unit concepts applicable to Third World counterinsurgency operations to gain a hearing.

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Soviet literature on these African situations indicates that the Soviets extend no legitimacy to the insurgents and their demands and claim that the rebels exist only because of foreign support. A few recent articles, however, suggest there may be a move toward a more realistic picture of the insurgency problem, perhaps reflecting Gorbachev's call for "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy. We did not, however, find parallels to Western theory for counterinsurgency warfare.

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our research revealed common patterns in Moscow's assistance to its African clients facing insurgencies. The Soviets stress:

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- Building up the client state's administrative, security, political, and economic apparatus.




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- Large-scale material and advisory support for the ally's military forces aimed at the creation of large conventional forces to be used to secure the capital, key cities, and vital economic regions and to expand the areas controlled by the state by gradually pushing the insurgents back.
- Consistent support for the client state in the international arena in order to secure broad recognition of it and to delegitimize the claims of the insurgents. 



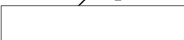
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Although administrative, economic, and political factors play an important role in Moscow's advice to its African clients, the Soviets concentrate the bulk of their assistance on the military. Nonetheless, the USSR does not appear to believe that it must help its clients achieve decisive military defeat of the insurgents in the near term. Contrary to the West's penchant for quick solutions to such problems, the Soviets seem to emphasize gradually helping their clients consolidate power. They expect their clients to assume most of the burden of carrying out the "proper" methods with coaching from Moscow. 

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The Soviet military presence is significant in each country and, by the early 1980s, had grown to about 1,700 advisers in Ethiopia, 1,200 in Angola, and 800 in Mozambique—levels that have since remained steady. The advisers have performed vital functions in organizing, training, and equipping the armed forces. They are attached to staffs, sometimes down to the battalion level, and are deeply involved in planning and monitoring counterinsurgency operations. Soviet logisticians keep close track of supplies, and transport aircraft—piloted by Soviets—ferry supplies throughout the country to support combat operations. 

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 Soviet technicians repair sophisticated equipment such as aircraft and missile launchers, and Soviet instructors teach at military academies. The Soviet political commissar system has been set up in all of the military services to oversee their political reliability. 

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 Soviet advisers are, as a rule, not permitted to participate directly in combat. 

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The Soviets also attempt to maintain a relatively low profile and rely, to the extent possible, on surrogates to minimize negative regional perceptions of Soviet intervention and dampen the impact of Moscow's counterinsurgency efforts on East-West relations. Cuba, in particular, plays an

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important role in furthering Soviet goals. For example, Cuban troops in Angola and Ethiopia free government troops for combat operations, and Cuban advisers play a key role in basic training for new recruits. East German advisers are also key players, particularly in setting up and directing the security and intelligence services. [redacted]

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The Soviets have trained and equipped their allies' forces according to the Soviet model to meet a conventional, not an insurgent, threat. This reflects Moscow's view of the predominant challenge facing each country: in Ethiopia, the quiescent threat of another Somali invasion; in Angola and Mozambique, the danger of South Africa. [redacted]

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Our limited picture of the substance of Soviet military advice to African clients in combating the insurgents indicates that, on a broad scale, it reflects the conservatism of Soviet military concepts. It emphasizes the creation of secure enclaves around vital elements of the client state's political and administrative base; major campaigns aimed at searching out and destroying insurgent groups, disrupting their base areas, and hindering their resupply; and the need for adequate preparation at all levels prior to a major campaign—particularly in the areas of logistics, command and control, reconnaissance, and intelligence on enemy forces. We see few signs that the African commanders have developed distinct operational and tactical approaches of their own. [redacted]

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The Soviets seem to have said little to their African clients about the social and political aspects of counterinsurgency operations. Although Soviet advisers can be found in some cases down to the battalion level and must be aware of the impact of combat on local conditions, there are no indications that they have advised their clients to institute any programs designed to "win the hearts and minds" of the local population. [redacted]

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The Soviets have been most effective in helping their clients build mechanisms of political control. These include a pervasive internal security apparatus, press and propaganda programs, mass organizations, and intensive political indoctrination. In the military arena, the buildup of large, well-equipped conventional armies has helped to secure vital urban and economic areas, but the continued emphasis on military campaigns

[REDACTED]

better suited for engaging enemy forces in setpiece battles on the European plains perpetuates a tactical rigidity that is not well suited to the fluid nature of guerrilla wars. This inflexibility, coupled with the absence of a formal doctrine for dealing with the varied aspects of insurgencies, will continue to hamper counterinsurgency efforts. [REDACTED]

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We believe Moscow's approach to helping its African clients and its position in those countries have a number of vulnerabilities. These include its allies' failures to decisively defeat the insurgents, the African regimes' lack of political legitimacy and poor economic performance, and the relatively weak popular appeal of Marxism-Leninism. Nonetheless, we believe the USSR is fairly satisfied with the results of its policies. They promote what we believe are the Soviets' basic interests and objectives in these countries: increasing their political role in southern Africa and the Horn, establishing a military presence, gaining access to air and naval facilities, and promoting leftist change in key regions. Also, while the Soviets do not control the internal politics of these states, they have amassed significant levels of political influence. [REDACTED]

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We believe that neither the Soviets nor the Cubans are planning to increase their involvement beyond the level necessary to sustain their clients' military position. Nonetheless, Soviet writings and leadership statements under Gorbachev indicate that Moscow is committed to defending its gains of the 1970s against insurgency and "imperialist interference," and, in the face of a clear and present threat to the governments of Angola or Ethiopia, the Soviets probably would respond, in the short term, with increased arms deliveries, and the Cubans with more troops or advisers. The Soviet commitment to supporting Mozambique, however, is less clear. There are growing signs that Moscow is disenchanted with Maputo's weak ideological commitment and with its active search for Western military and economic aid. The Soviets might disengage rather than mount the costly effort needed to reverse a serious turn of events there. [REDACTED]

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In the event of a rapid deterioration in the political and military situation of one of its African clients, we believe Moscow would press the African state to negotiate with the insurgents rather than escalate significantly Soviet involvement. Moscow would probably push, however, for a settlement that excluded any opposition leaders that it viewed as too powerful or popular. [REDACTED]

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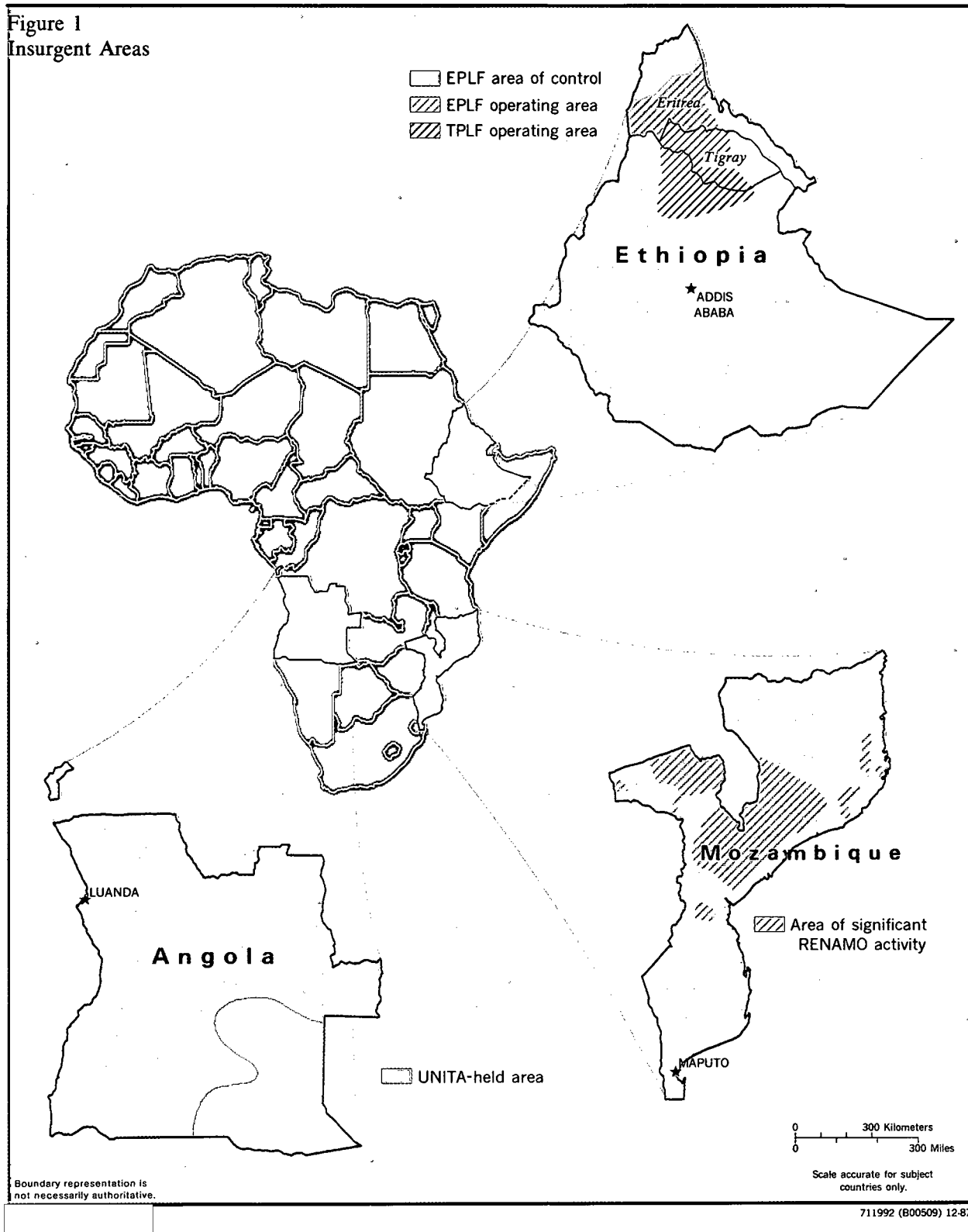
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Figure 1
Insurgent Areas



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**Supporting Allies Under
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Background

During the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union developed a growing sense of optimism about the prospects for promoting favorable change and expanding Soviet influence in the Third World. This optimism paralleled the emergence of a number of new opportunities in Africa, on which the Soviets were quick to capitalize. In Angola, Moscow helped a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regime attain power in a post-colonial civil war and subsequently backed the regime's efforts to consolidate its rule. In Mozambique and Ethiopia, Moscow moved to support radical regimes already in power and assisted their efforts to build Marxist-Leninist societies.

These opportunities, however, also led to an unforeseen deep involvement in combating insurgencies. Since taking power, each of these governments has been faced with armed resistance from groups contesting, for various reasons and to various degrees, their claim to a monopoly of state power (see figure 1). The Soviets have been the primary source of advisory support and military aid for these Marxist-Leninist regimes, but in spite of extensive Soviet backing, none of the three has been able to defeat its insurgency.

Moscow's involvement in counterinsurgency warfare in Africa led us to examine whether such activities are guided by an identifiable political and military doctrine and whether the Soviets have emulated Western approaches to such warfare. We examined their efforts in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique in search of common elements in their approach. We also studied the influence of factors such as the economic situation, regional political strategies, and East/West issues. Finally, we evaluated the effectiveness of Soviet counterinsurgency efforts and the vulnerabilities that may have emerged in Moscow's position in Africa as a result of these commitments.

Counterinsurgency: East and West

A comprehensive search of two and a half decades of Soviet political, ideological, and military writings indicates that the USSR apparently has not yet formulated a distinct doctrine of "socialist" counterinsurgency (see appendix on Soviet writings). There is no discussion of counterinsurgency as a political-military problem demanding a unique Marxist "scientifically determined" response. These writings do reveal that the Soviets extend no legitimacy to the insurgents and their claims and that they blame the persistence of these insurgencies on outside interference. A growing number of military articles since 1980—clearly oriented toward Afghanistan—focus on tactical problems related to fighting guerrillas but do not address the broader problems of counterinsurgency warfare.

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Soviet military advice often includes some of the elements tried in Western counterinsurgency campaigns (see inset outlining Western strategy), but Moscow's overall military and political approach diverges considerably from Western theory and practice. For example, Western counterinsurgency doctrine emphasizes political action in rebel-contested areas as a key to winning "hearts and minds" at the local level. The Soviets, by contrast, apparently have placed little emphasis on the need for political action in the war zone. On the military side, Soviet advisers have consistently advocated large combined-arms sweep operations—reminiscent of battle plans for Europe—instead of the small-unit tactics recommended by Western theory.

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Civic Action in War Zones

An important element of Western views regarding combating insurgencies are efforts designed to win the support of the population. Judging by the paucity of

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Western Counterinsurgency Strategy

In-depth analysis of Western counterinsurgency campaigns reveals that these programs traditionally combine tactics intended to promote social amelioration—such as civic action programs, land reform, and economic development—and offensive military action, including the use of highly mobile forces and local defense units. Recognizing that virtually all factors in a counterinsurgency program ultimately influence popular support for the government, Western strategy strives to blend intense persuasion and precise coercion techniques. For example, government efforts to improve a village's education or sanitation systems may be employed in tandem with highly controlled, specific military operations to weed out guerrillas in the immediate area. On the basis of British, French, American, and other countries' experiences in combating insurgencies, experts generally agree that certain identifiable factors have been prominent in successful Western counterinsurgency strategies. They include:

- *Maintaining a 10-to-1 ratio of government-to-insurgent troops. It is commonly perceived that such a ratio allows for unit patrolling and ensuring rural security, as well as maintaining static defenses.*
- *Employing unconventional tactics and strategies—particularly small-unit tactics that deemphasize the concentration of forces and firepower and emphasize constant patrolling by many small, lightly armed units supported by larger backup forces. This includes the use of air operations in a support role to provide careful and controlled fire support, as well as reconnaissance, supply, transport, and medical evacuation.*
- *Developing professional troop behavior and discipline. In order to ensure the active support of the populace, the military is trained to respect and assist the local population when possible.*
- *Creating a popular militia. The government usually prospers when it establishes a popular militia to assist regular forces in maintaining security and to keep the populace engaged in the counterinsurgency effort.*
- *Promoting the government's efforts through psychological operations. There are usually three main targets of these operations: the public, including the international public; the government's combat forces; and the insurgents.*
- *Exploiting quality intelligence on guerrilla personnel, modus operandi, and locations, in addition to insurgent order of battle. Such an effort requires developing a sophisticated intelligence apparatus and overcoming institutional rivalries that restrict the flow of information.*
- *Developing police operations. The police forces in a country can play an important role in maintaining law and order, reestablishing a government presence in the countryside, and implementing population- and resource-control programs.*
- *Establishing a unified management for counterinsurgency. The government must be capable of coordinating a coherent counterinsurgency campaign, which requires establishing an organizational infrastructure that maintains command and control and blends civilian authority and military goals.*
- *Improving rural administration and environment. This includes government efforts to implement programs and reforms necessary to gain popular acquiescence and maintain its legitimacy.*

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open source discussion [redacted] on the topic, the Soviets apparently have had little to say to their African clients about the social and political aspects of counterinsurgency operations in rebel-controlled territory. [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet pilots have flown transport planes in support of Ethiopia's resettlement program that moved peasants from northern, insurgent-threatened areas to the south of the country. However, the program appears to have been an Ethiopian initiative, and we have no indication that the Soviets are advocating similar efforts elsewhere. [redacted]

The seeming lack of Soviet attention to the political and social side of counterinsurgency warfare in the field probably has several explanations. [redacted]

[redacted] the Soviets may have found it difficult to advise local military commanders on the treatment of insurgents and civilians in the battlefield area, given the probable insistence of the commanders that they are more familiar with the situation and better qualified to deal with the local population. Finally, the Soviet advisers may simply not see the political situation in the war zone as a decisive consideration in fighting the war, emphasizing instead the balance of military forces. [redacted]

The Soviet Approach: Consolidating the Client State

We believe that the Soviets view the consolidation of the client state as the long-term key to defeating the insurgents and that Moscow's military involvement on behalf of its allies must be seen in the context of these broader state-building efforts (see inset). [redacted]

The Theoretical Foundation: The State of Socialist Orientation

The Soviets categorize Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, along with most of their other Third World allies, as "revolutionary democratic states of socialist orientation."^a Although there is considerable debate in the Soviet literature over the attributes that place a country in this category, the agreed features are:

- *Leaders committed to Marxism-Leninism and the transformation of their countries through the instrument of a vanguard Marxist-Leninist political party.*
- *Emerging, though not yet fully formed, "socialist" administrative, political, and economic institutions.*
- *Close foreign policy ties to the USSR and a "progressive" international orientation.* [redacted]

This formulation recognizes that a variety of factors make the transition to a more genuine and reliable socialism a long and difficult process. These factors include the absence of a significant working class, the potential unreliability of military and intellectual leaders, the weakness of the economic base, and the persistence of "traditional" religious, ethnic, and tribal beliefs. Indeed, some Soviet observers have acknowledged that outright reversals are possible if counterrevolutionary forces are strong enough, and the USSR has clearly indicated the limits to its ability to underwrite the economic development of these countries. However, a wide range of Soviet writings suggests that, reservations notwithstanding, the USSR sees the revolutionary democratic states of socialist orientation, in addition to the full-fledged socialist states—Cuba and Vietnam—as most likely, over the long run, to provide firm foundations for Soviet influence in the Third World. [redacted]

^a *Cuba and Vietnam are the only Third World states the USSR recognizes as fully "socialist." The other states in the "revolutionary democratic socialist-oriented" category usually include Laos, Cambodia, Afghanistan, South Yemen, Algeria, Benin, Congo, and, at times, Nicaragua.* [redacted]

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Organs of Defense and Security

The first priority of the USSR in assisting "socialist-oriented" states has been support of their military and security apparatus. The Soviets presumably believe that any other benefits of the leftist transformation of these countries will be transitory unless the countries are protected from outside attack or internal subversion. [redacted]

The Armed Forces. Soviet assistance to and involvement with the armed forces in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique has been extensive, reflecting both the advantage the USSR has in using military aid as opposed to other policy instruments, and the priority the Soviets attach to the functions the armed forces perform on behalf of socialist-oriented regimes (see figure 2). The military defends the country against external threat and protects the new regime against internal challenges and coups. In some cases, it has the capability to act as a base for the development of a national administrative structure where no such structure has previously existed. [redacted]

Several Soviet authors have noted that, while the armed forces perform several functions essential to the survival of the client state, they cannot serve as a solid long-term base for the development of Marxist-Leninist institutions. Consequently, the Soviets have pressured socialist-oriented regimes dominated by the armed forces, such as that of Chairman Haile-Mariam Mengistu in Ethiopia, not to neglect the tasks of creating broader administrative and political mechanisms. [redacted]

The Security Organs. The persistence and scale of the efforts of the USSR and its Cuban and East European allies in aiding and advising the security organs of all three African clients are indications of the importance the Soviets attach to this sector:

- Soviet and East German advisers played a major role in the creation of Angola's police and intelligence forces.
- [redacted] the Soviets, Cubans, and East Germans have trained, equipped, and advised the Mozambican security service since the mid-1970s.

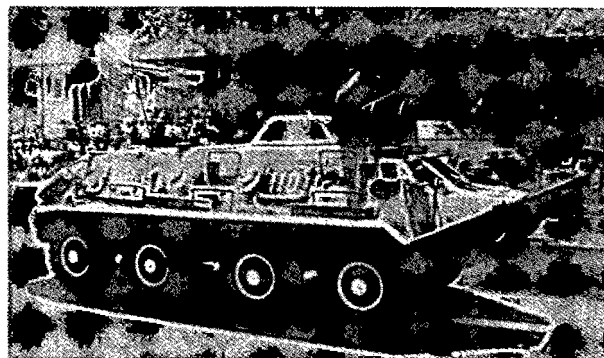


Figure 2. Mozambican military parade. [redacted]

- Through 1984, the Ethiopian Ministry of National and Public Security (MPNS) received training and technical assistance from the USSR, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. The MPNS seems to have guarded its institutional independence carefully and limited substantive cooperation with Eastern Bloc services. [redacted]

Eastern Bloc and Cuban assistance has substantially improved the capabilities of the African services to discover and suppress domestic opposition and monitor the activities of foreigners. Only Angola has faced a serious coup attempt—the 1977 Nito Alves coup—and this was successfully put down. [redacted]

Organs of Political Mobilization and Control

Mass Organizations. On the basis of coverage in the Soviet media and specialized journals, we believe Moscow sees the building of "mass organizations" as a vital part of the process of consolidating "socialist-oriented" states (see figure 3). Soviet literature abounds with favorable references to institutions such as trade unions, local "citizens' committees," and peasant, youth, women's, and various professional organizations. These institutions perform several important functions for the new Marxist-Leninist leadership. They:

- Provide a mechanism for penetration and control of various social and professional sectors.

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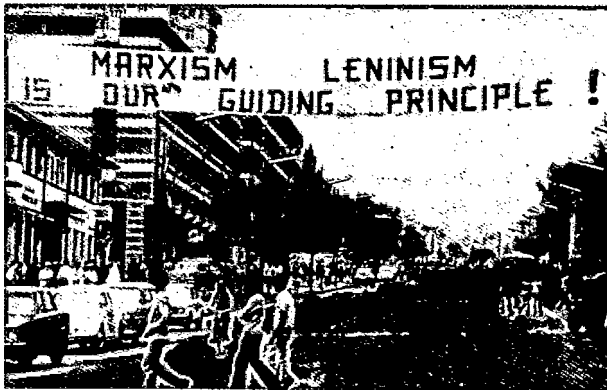


Figure 3. Communist banner in Addis Ababa lauding Marxism-Leninism.

- Co-opt the political activity of various groups, including those that may favor change but not Marxist-Leninist revolution, and direct it into controllable channels.
- Foster national consciousness over tribalism, regionalism, and other forms of local identity.
- Indoctrinate participants in the virtues of the revolution and Marxism-Leninism.
- Identify and recruit cadres.
- Act as a base for the subsequent development of Communist parties.

Levels of direct Soviet and Bloc participation in the creation and operation of these organizations in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique vary. In Angola, the Soviet Bloc directly aided the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola in the creation of its national youth and worker's organizations. Ethiopia, however, appears to have developed its mass institutions on its own during the years before large-scale Soviet involvement, although European-educated Marxist advisers to the ruling Military Council may have helped shape such institutions during the early years of military rule.

the eagerness of the Machel regime in the mid-1970s to move Mozambique toward a Marxist-Leninist society suggests that it was receptive to Bloc assistance in the creation of its mass institutions. Eastern Bloc states have played a major part in

training trade union officials in all three states, and the mass organizations of all three take part in Soviet-sponsored international forums and exchanges.

Press and Educational Institutions. The Soviets have long seen the creation of centrally controlled press and educational institutions as an essential part of the development of any socialist state. Such institutions help promote identification with the regimes and Marxism-Leninism, the "correct" understanding of internal and external events, and the development of the technical and professional skills required by the new state.

In all three of the African countries this longstanding emphasis is reflected in the extensive Soviet Bloc involvement in their press and educational sectors (see figure 4). Soviets, East Europeans, and Cubans train journalists and provide international "news services" for their clients, all of whom have a closed, centrally controlled press. In the educational area, Bloc states run a wide variety of programs providing academic scholarships for extended study in the USSR and Eastern Europe, specialized technical and professional training in a wide variety of fields, education in Cuba for secondary school students, and instructors for positions in local universities.

These efforts have not always had the desired results. For example, Soviet Bloc educational programs have had rather limited success in ideological indoctrination and Soviet technical training is often considered inferior to that available in the West. However, all these regimes have the press and educational system solidly under state control. Whatever their long-term success in promoting genuine belief in Marxism-Leninism, these institutions are not likely to serve as a source of political challenge.

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Figure 4. Soviet political instructors leading ideological training for Angolans.

The Vanguard Workers' Party

During the 1960s, several Soviet attempts to build influence in the Third World by cultivating leaders apparently committed to "socialism" ended in disappointment or outright failure. One conclusion that Soviet theorists drew over the next decade was that reliance on the revolutionary commitment of particular leaders was an inadequate base for the development of a Marxist-Leninist, pro-Soviet version of socialism over the long term. A stronger political-institutional framework was needed to lead the revolution through the difficulties it would inevitably encounter.

The concept of the "vanguard workers' party" (VWP) was developed in the late 1970s to deal with the problem of what this framework could be in countries that almost invariably had no working class of any size or political importance.¹ The VWP, which should operate according to the principles of "democratic centralism," is intended to guide the development of the state and economic apparatus, mobilize popular energies for the revolution, and ensure that the state follows a "progressive" and pro-Soviet foreign policy line.

¹ From a Soviet theoretical standpoint, the concept of a Third World "vanguard workers' party" must not be confused with that of a "proletarian vanguard party." The latter category describes full-fledged Communist parties such as that of the Soviet Union, while the VWP refers to the looser, multiclass grouping that must be formed in the absence of a significant proletariat.

The Soviets believe that correct development of the VWP and its apparatus should institutionalize Marxism-Leninism and Soviet influence by broadening the bases of what have been narrow, personally dominated regimes. Moscow's object is to make the Soviet position less vulnerable to personal and institutional rivalries or leadership changes. Ideally, the VWP ultimately will become the sole source of "legitimate" political power in the state of socialist orientation—a transition that Soviet theorists acknowledge will take a long time.

Self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist parties in all three African cases—the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Workers' Party (MPLA-PT), FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) in Mozambique, and the Workers' Party of Ethiopia—fit, in theory at least, the Soviet definition of a VWP. The USSR has provided training, financial support, and "approved" status to all of these groups and appears to see them as moving in a positive direction over the long term. Nonetheless, the Soviets have devoted considerable attention to the problems these parties have in carrying out the transition to socialism. Moscow's persistent criticism, which has at times provoked resentment from the Africans, suggests the Soviets believe that the leaders of Angola, Ethiopia, and especially Mozambique still have a long way to go in establishing what the Soviets would consider to be reliable Marxist-Leninist institutions.

Socialist Economic Development

Economic Strategy. There is no authoritative Soviet formula for dealing with the complex problems of economic development in very poor African states. Nonetheless, there are wide areas of agreement in Soviet specialized literature on the general lines that the economic development of these states should take. The essentials of the Soviet economic prescription include a high level of state involvement in the economy, state-sponsored agrarian reform, toleration of some private capitalist activity in "traditional" sectors—such as retail trade and local services—improvement of key government-provided social welfare services, orientation of external trade toward the

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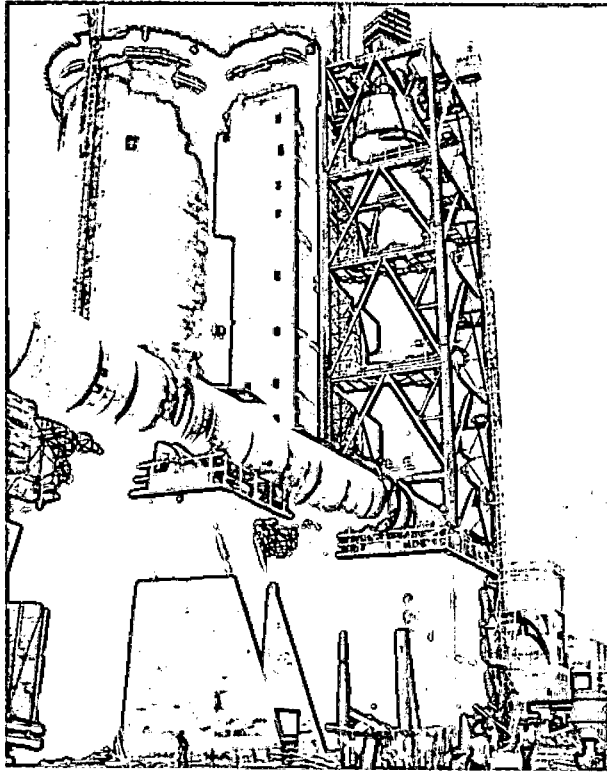
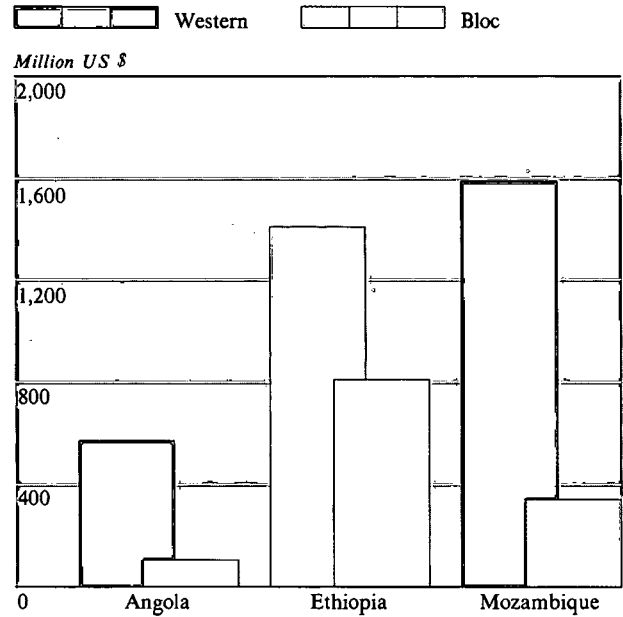


Figure 5. Ethiopian cement factory built with East German and Cuban aid.

Figure 6
Western Versus Soviet Bloc Economic Aid Disbursements to Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, 1975-85



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socialist countries, and the restriction of Western multinational activity. The USSR's own relatively sparse economic involvement in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique has primarily been in the form of project-oriented financial aid and advisory support for the state sector (see figure 5).

In recent years, the Soviets have become increasingly unhappy with the economic failure of their African allies, including oil-exporting Angola. The Soviets have consistently blamed their allies' problems on the domestic environment—backwardness, poor infrastructure, tribalism, insurgent “banditry”—and the “hostile,” capitalist-dominated, international economic context in which they are entwined. Over the past few years, however, Soviet writers have also criticized

what they see as excessive, radical, and inappropriate policies on the part of African Marxist-Leninist leaders. Moscow has emphasized the need to make efficient use of both domestic and Soviet-supplied economic resources. This suggests that Moscow for the moment sees economic performance rather than ideological purity as the key criterion of client economic policy.

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Soviet Aid and Western Investment. The Soviets have not been generous suppliers of economic assistance to Third World states over the past decade, and their economic aid to Marxist-Leninist African states, while rather generous by Soviet standards, falls far short of their massive needs (see figure 6). Moreover, the Kremlin has made it clear on several occasions

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that socialist orientation does not carry with it an automatic claim to the wealth of the Soviet Bloc and that Third World Marxist-Leninist states will have to depend first and foremost on their own resources. This probably reflects a Soviet belief that economic aid yields a lower political payoff than does military assistance and Soviet perceptions of the limits to Moscow's own economic resources. [redacted]

Both Angola and Mozambique have turned to the West for economic aid, and Ethiopia has accepted massive Western economic and famine aid. [redacted]

[redacted] Moscow does not object to most Western investments and, at times, encourages its allies to look for aid where they can get it. The Soviets, however, are wary of Western aid being translated into political influence and warn their clients about Western motives. [redacted]

Foreign Policy Support

Isolating the Insurgents. A key element of Moscow's political approach to the problems of its African allies is the use of a variety of foreign policy instruments, including conventional diplomacy, propaganda, activity in international organizations, and active measures, to try to isolate the insurgents from outside material and diplomatic support (see inset). The Soviets have played on the established predisposition of many Third World countries—and virtually all African states—to be wary of Western "neocolonialist" interference and of groups fighting for change in existing political arrangements or state boundaries. The Soviets and their Bloc allies have consistently sought to portray groups fighting the regimes in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia as the creations of outside powers interfering in the internal affairs of the countries. In addition, they have sought to exploit widespread Third World and Western opposition to South African apartheid to ostracize UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) for their connections with Pretoria. The USSR probably expects that, over the long run, this persistent campaign will help reduce the willingness of various countries to champion the cause of the insurgents and to supply them with material aid. [redacted]

The Soviets and Negotiations. The Soviet attitude toward negotiations involving their African allies, the insurgents, and, in some situations, third parties has been equivocal. In the Ethiopian case, the Soviets have supported and in some cases even sponsored meetings between representatives of the Mengistu regime and the insurgents. On occasion, Soviet officials have indicated their willingness to discuss southern African issues with the United States. On the other hand, the Soviets have consistently opposed US-sponsored negotiations on Namibia and on Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola—talks that dealt indirectly with the future of UNITA and the MPLA regime. Moscow has also warned Angola and Mozambique of the futility of trying to obtain relief from the insurgencies by cutting deals with South Africa, as both did in 1984. [redacted]

The two key variables that shape Moscow's attitudes toward any given negotiating process are, as might be expected, the degree to which the USSR is involved in the process and the potential the negotiations have for increasing the influence of other parties at Soviet expense. In the Ethiopian case, the Soviets had direct or indirect connections to the rebels that enabled them to play a central role in facilitating the talks, while the West did not have enough credibility with Addis Ababa to allow it to play a mediating role. By contrast, apparently neither Luanda nor Maputo consulted the Soviets prior to signing separate pacts with Pretoria, and the Soviets read the US-backed regional negotiations as a direct attempt to cut them out of a regional settlement. [redacted]

Soviet Military Involvement

Military aid is key to Soviet influence-building in the Third World. Moscow's involvement with the armed forces of its three African clients has been extensive—the Soviets have played a decisive role in structuring, equipping, training, and advising them. We believe

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Soviet Measures To Disrupt Zaire's Support to the Angolan Insurgents

The Soviets have aggressively attempted to increase their influence in Zaire—with diplomacy, active measures, press propaganda, and economic proposals. Their primary goals have been to ease real or potential pressure from Zaire on the Angolan regime, forestall Zaire's support for UNITA, increase Soviet involvement in Zaire, and weaken Zaire's longstanding ties to the United States. This campaign demonstrates the USSR's efforts to capitalize on a political opportunity—namely a cooling of US-Zairian relations and a desire by President Mobutu Sese Seko to project a nonaligned image—in an effort to build influence and to temper Zairian support for the Angolan insurgents. [redacted]

We believe Moscow, in pursuing these objectives, is behind a variety of covert influence operations:

- A forged letter—allegedly from the US Ambassador to Congo to the US Ambassador to Zaire—was delivered in late March 1987 to the Zairian Ambassador to Congo. The forgery described alleged US meddling in Zaire's domestic politics and suggested US involvement with the opposition. Although the origin of the letter is unknown, past practice suggests it was a KGB plant intended to embarrass the United States.
- Moscow and Luanda probably were behind a rumor campaign in Zaire warning that "dangerous" US-Zairian military exercise activity threatened neighboring states, especially Angola. The Soviets and Angolans augmented the rumors—intended to stir up opposition pressure on Mobutu to reduce US involvement—with press and radio charges that the United States is turning Zaire into a center for subversion, including using the country to test the AIDS virus for biological weapons.
- The 28 April 1987 edition of the Nigerian news-magazine African Concord ran a story about an alleged US plot to use Zairian airbases as a

springboard for destabilization activities in southern Africa. The report quoted extensively from an alleged memorandum of the Zairian national intelligence service that we believe could have been forged by the Soviets. Similar charges of US machinations have appeared in Angola and elsewhere in the region. [redacted]

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We believe the Soviets will try to increase such operations. Given the Kinshasa media's positive treatment of Soviet views, Moscow may step up efforts to bribe or recruit local journalists. In February, for example, the city's largest daily newspaper, Elima, presented a slick, five-page interview with Supreme Soviet President Tolkunov, which overshadowed a US-authored item on arms control issues. The Soviets may also be setting the stage for additional covert operations designed to embarrass Mobutu beyond Zaire's borders. For example, the US Embassy in Brazzaville suspects the Soviets may have surfaced a story in March 1987 in Congo alleging that Mobutu intended to use the CIA to assassinate President Sassou-Nguesso. [redacted]

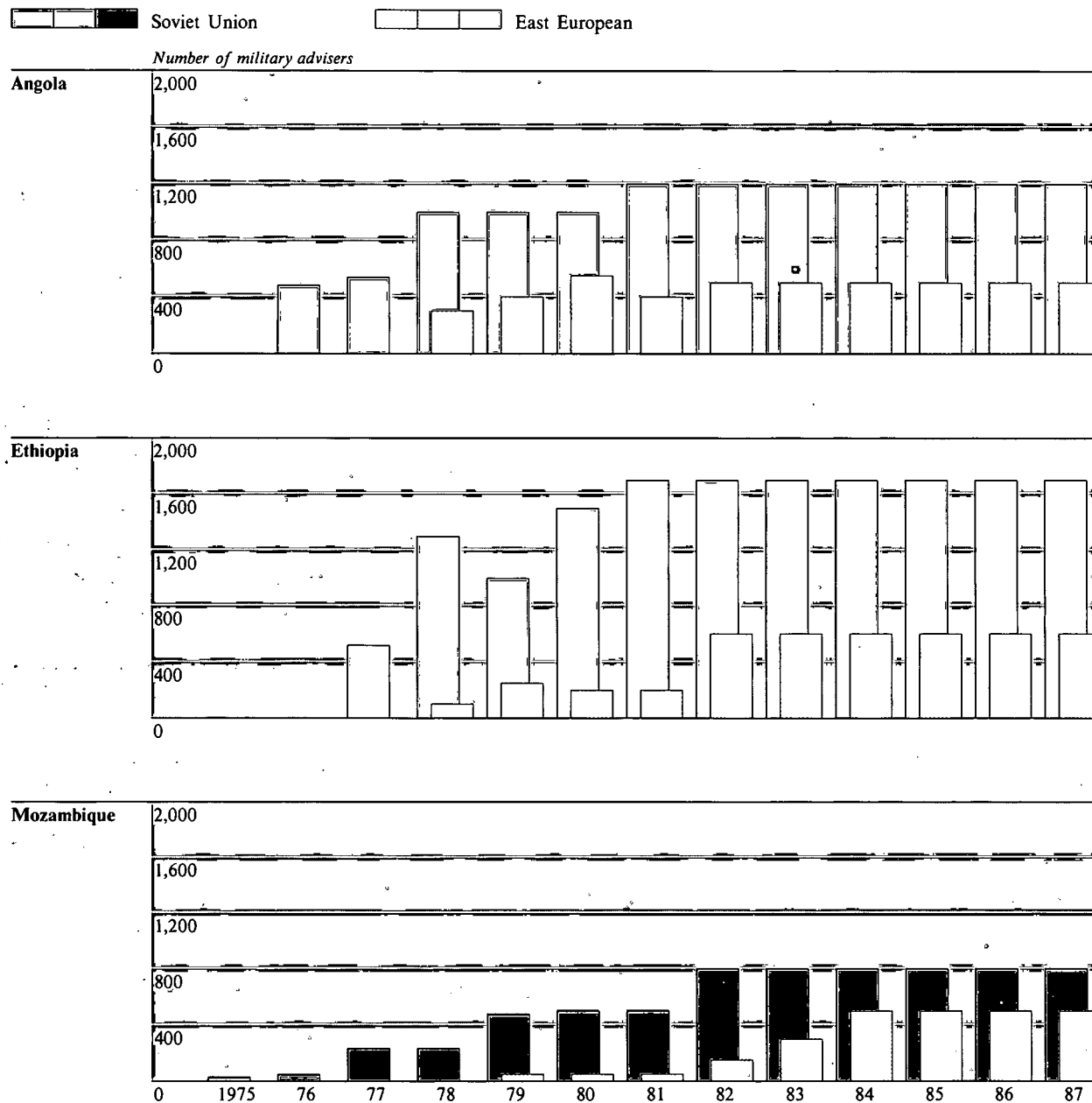
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To persuade Mobutu to withdraw support for UNITA, Moscow would have to convince him that UNITA's operations pose a threat to Zaire's domestic stability—for example, in the border areas—and that his support for UNITA—especially with its "apartheid connection"—jeopardizes his ability to play a political and economic role in the region. We have doubts that Moscow currently has the resources in the region to be successful in these efforts. Moreover, in targeting Mobutu, the Soviets run a major risk: should the Soviet efforts be too heavyhanded or transparent (such as disinformation operations that are exposed as Soviet activities), Moscow could provoke the always-suspicious leader to ignore the USSR's diplomatic and economic overtures or even increase support to UNITA. [redacted]

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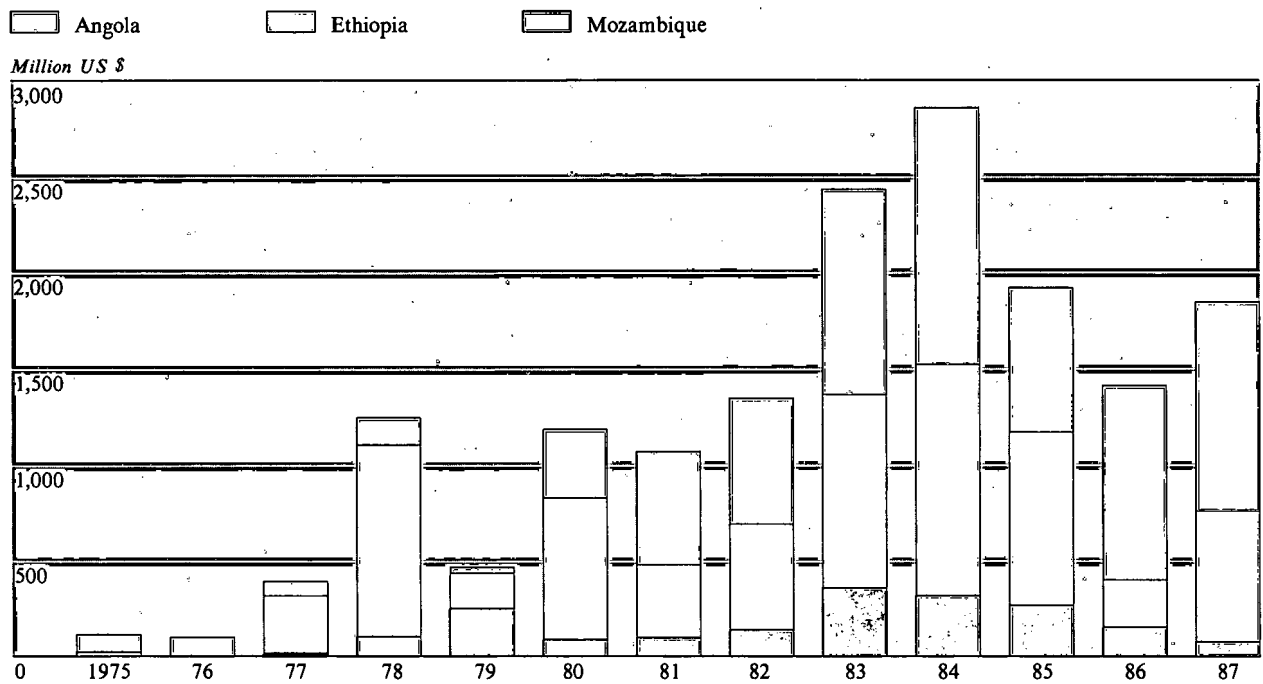
Figure 7
Soviet Bloc Military Advisers in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique



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Figure 8
Soviet Military Deliveries to Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique



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the primary objectives of Moscow's military assistance programs have been:

- Obtaining access to air and naval facilities.
- Establishing a long-term Soviet political and military presence.
- Helping its allies build up conventional forces sufficient to deal with both internal and external threats.

The bulk of Moscow's objectives are clearly self-serving. This does not mean, of course, that the Soviets have ignored the insurgent challenge. Indeed, the threat posed by insurgent activities has contributed significantly to the large Soviet Bloc presence in each country and has led to massive arms deliveries (see figures 7 and 8).

countries. Military Advisory Groups (MAGs) are its key instrument in countries with a large Soviet military presence. The MAGs in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique are each headed by a general, and they perform a variety of functions. They:

- Structure and train the host country armed forces.
- Help each country plan and direct military operations (see figure 9).
- Coordinate Soviet Bloc and Cuban military assistance.
- Perform maintenance on sophisticated military equipment.

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Role of Advisory Groups

The 10th Main Directorate of the Soviet General Staff in Moscow is responsible for administering Soviet military relationships with all Third World

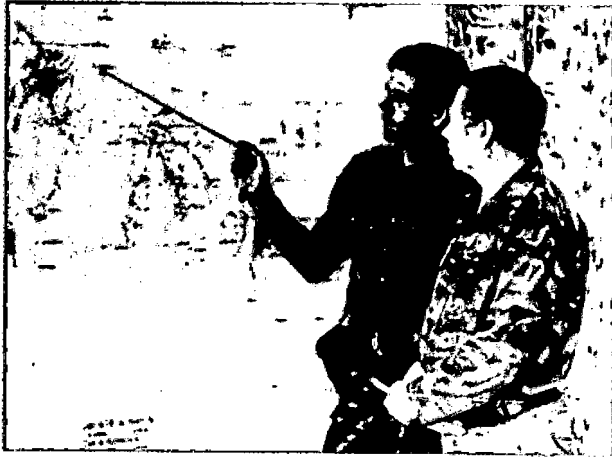


Figure 9. Soviet military advisers planning an operation in Angola. [redacted]

Soviet military personnel are found throughout the military structure of the host country. They maintain advisory links at the national, regional, and local levels. In the national capital, Soviet advisers are located at ministry of defense headquarters. The advisers are also present with major military commands and combat units normally down to brigade level, but sometimes also at the battalion level [redacted]

Expansion and Structure of African Forces

Expansion. The armed forces of Angola and Ethiopia have expanded dramatically since Soviet advisers arrived. Ethiopia's forces have grown from 40,000 troops before the revolution to 220,000 troops today. Angola's forces now number about 100,000 troops and, in Mozambique FRELIMO's army has grown from a mere 5,000 at independence to some 35,000 today. [redacted]

Despite the overall expanded size of these armed forces, none of them enjoys a decisive numerical advantage over the insurgents. A Western rule of

thumb is that government forces need up to a 10-to-1 advantage over the guerrillas. Ethiopia, with the largest army, enjoys a 5.5-to-1 advantage; Angola and Mozambique both possess about a 1.6-to-1 superiority in numbers. Each, however, holds a significant advantage in quantity and quality of military equipment. [redacted]

Military Structure. Soviet military advisers have been instrumental in structuring local military forces along Soviet lines. In Angola and Mozambique, this was relatively easy to accomplish. These countries did not have a coherent military arm in place when the Soviets arrived on the scene. Moscow helped form the preindependence guerrilla forces into conventional forces. The Soviet orientation toward large-scale combat in Central Europe is visible in the emphasis on combined arms formations capable of coordinated use of armor, aviation, artillery, and motorized infantry to defeat enemy forces. The maintenance of a relatively large standing army based on a professional officer corps and draftees also reflects Soviet concepts. In both countries, Soviet advisers are heavily involved in efforts to recruit soldiers for the army. [redacted]

The US Embassy in Addis Ababa reports that Ethiopia did not establish a system for mandatory national military service until 1983. It requires a two-year tour of military duty, as does the Soviet system. [redacted]

The Political Commissar System. A vital organizational element that the Soviets have imprinted on the armed forces of Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique is the political commissar system. The Soviets helped set up such a system in all of the military services to oversee their political reliability, deter coup plotting, and reinforce Marxist-Leninist ideology. The Soviets and East Germans have provided political training both locally and in Europe for virtually all political officers. This effort has been important because the armed forces have served as an essential part of the power base of the new Marxist-Leninist leaders. [redacted]

[redacted] the political commissar system has also had several negative consequences for military morale and performance. In

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Ethiopia, for example, competition between unit commanders and senior political officers hampered military effectiveness during and after the Ogaden War of 1977-78. Although this problem has eased in recent years with the restoration of the power of the commanding officers, there continues to be considerable resentment of the political commissar system in all of these African states in both the officer corps and enlisted ranks. The imposition of political training requirements and the emphasis on political credentials as a basis for promotion suggests that there may be some price paid in the overall standards of officer competence. In spite of these difficulties, however, the commissar system has been successful in that no serious challenge has emerged from the military to either the political leaders or the primacy of Marxist-Leninist ideology. [redacted]

Military Equipment

The quantity and type of military equipment sent by Moscow reflect not only the Soviet General Staff's doctrinal emphasis on large conventional forces, but also its perception of the primary military threat facing these regimes. The immediate challenge confronting Ethiopia in 1977 was the invasion of the Ogaden by Somali conventional forces, and Moscow supplied arms in this period that were designed to improve the capability of Ethiopian forces to deal with this conventional threat. Since the Ogaden war, Ethiopia's security focus has shifted to the northern insurgencies, though building forces capable of deterring any future Somali military moves has also been an important objective. The mix of Soviet equipment deliveries has remained generally consistent over the years. [redacted]

In Angola and Mozambique, the Soviets from the beginning viewed the possibility of a South African invasion with grave concern. The types of systems delivered to all three countries gradually improved from essentially post-World War II combat equipment in the beginning to, more recently, more modern MIG fighters, tanks, and surface-to-air missiles, along with large numbers of armored personnel carriers, trucks, and support vehicles (see figure 10 and table).

[redacted] some recent equipment deliveries, particularly to Mozambique, continue to include World War II-vintage models. [redacted]

Since independence in 1975 and particularly since the early 1980s, the threat posed to the Angolan regime by Jonas Savimbi's UNITA has grown considerably. Nonetheless, the Soviets apparently continue to perceive South Africa as the primary threat to Luanda. Although the Soviets are attempting to upgrade Angola's ability to fight the insurgents, Moscow's significant investment in improving Angola's air defenses along its southern border reflects an overriding concern with the South African threat. [redacted]

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Mozambique did not have to worry about an insurgent threat when it became independent in 1975. Since the early 1980s, however, it has been faced with the fastest growing insurgency in Africa. Soviet arms deliveries immediately following independence and recent deliveries of air defense equipment have been designed to help build a conventional force to meet the South African threat. Deliveries to Mozambique have been far fewer than the levels provided to Ethiopia and Angola, particularly since March 1984, when former President Samora Machel signed the Nkomati accord with South Africa. [redacted]

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Moscow seems unwilling to finance the massive effort necessary to overcome RENAMO and is skeptical about the Mozambican Armed Forces' ability to exploit expanded arms deliveries. Moscow undoubtedly sees Mozambique as less important than either Angola or Ethiopia, which have better economic prospects, important regional roles, and more firmly established Marxist-Leninist institutions. Moscow, however, seems willing to continue to supply arms and advisers to maintain the FRELIMO regime, to check Western influence in Mozambique, and to ensure continued access to Mozambican ports. [redacted]

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[redacted] the USSR also appears willing to support Zimbabwean and Tanzanian forces operating in Mozambique against the insurgents. [redacted]

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Logistics and Maintenance

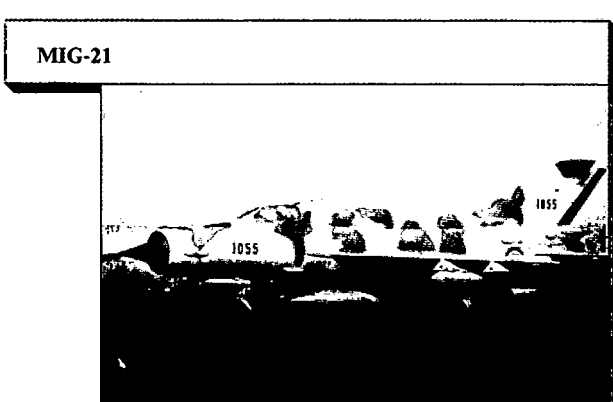
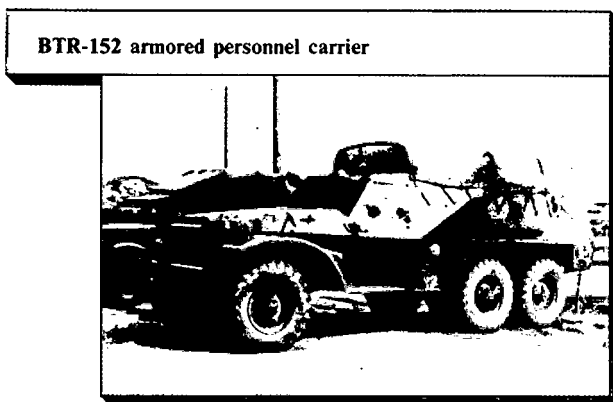
The Soviets have assumed a leading role in establishing and directing logistic operations in support of the counterinsurgency efforts. They have provided the three beleaguered African states with an abundance

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Figure 10
Typical Military Equipment Sent by the Soviet Union
to Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique



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Major Combat Equipment Deliveries From the Soviet Union

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	Total
MIG-23												
Angola								20	8	18		46
Ethiopia		24		10			24	8	2	1		69
Mozambique												0
MIG-21												
Angola	10		11	6	14		19	3	70	4		137
Ethiopia		48	26	2	21			17	19			133
Mozambique								16	30	2		48
MI-8/17												
Angola	7	8	10	2	6	12		22	12	2	25	106
Ethiopia		5	20	5	1				13	12		56
Mozambique			8					5				13
MI-25												
Angola								12	12	9		33
Ethiopia					18				6	14		38
Mozambique								8	4	4		16
Tanks (PT-76, T-34, T-54/55)												
Angola	185		84		17	12	20		46		24	388
Ethiopia		232	253	149	5	25	40	60	34	281		1,079
Mozambique	3		67	79	70	30		65	49	19	2	384
Armored vehicles												
Angola	356		28	40	65	10		138	58	7		702
Ethiopia		95	544	34	43	42	52	101	14	18		943
Mozambique		56	92	2	6		62	66	27	38	42	391
Artillery												
Angola	650		6				24	35	101	6	449	1,271
Ethiopia	698	804	29		61	16	180	57	54	60	4	1,963
Mozambique	200	266	22		24	26	56	34	12	16	42	698

of transport equipment, including aircraft, helicopters, and trucks, and have deployed a Soviet Military Aviation (VTA) contingent to each of these countries to aid internal resupply efforts (see figure 11).

Each of these countries is almost totally dependent on the USSR for maintenance as well as logistic support, reflecting their lack of experience with relatively advanced systems and the Soviets' insistence on performing the complex maintenance tasks themselves.

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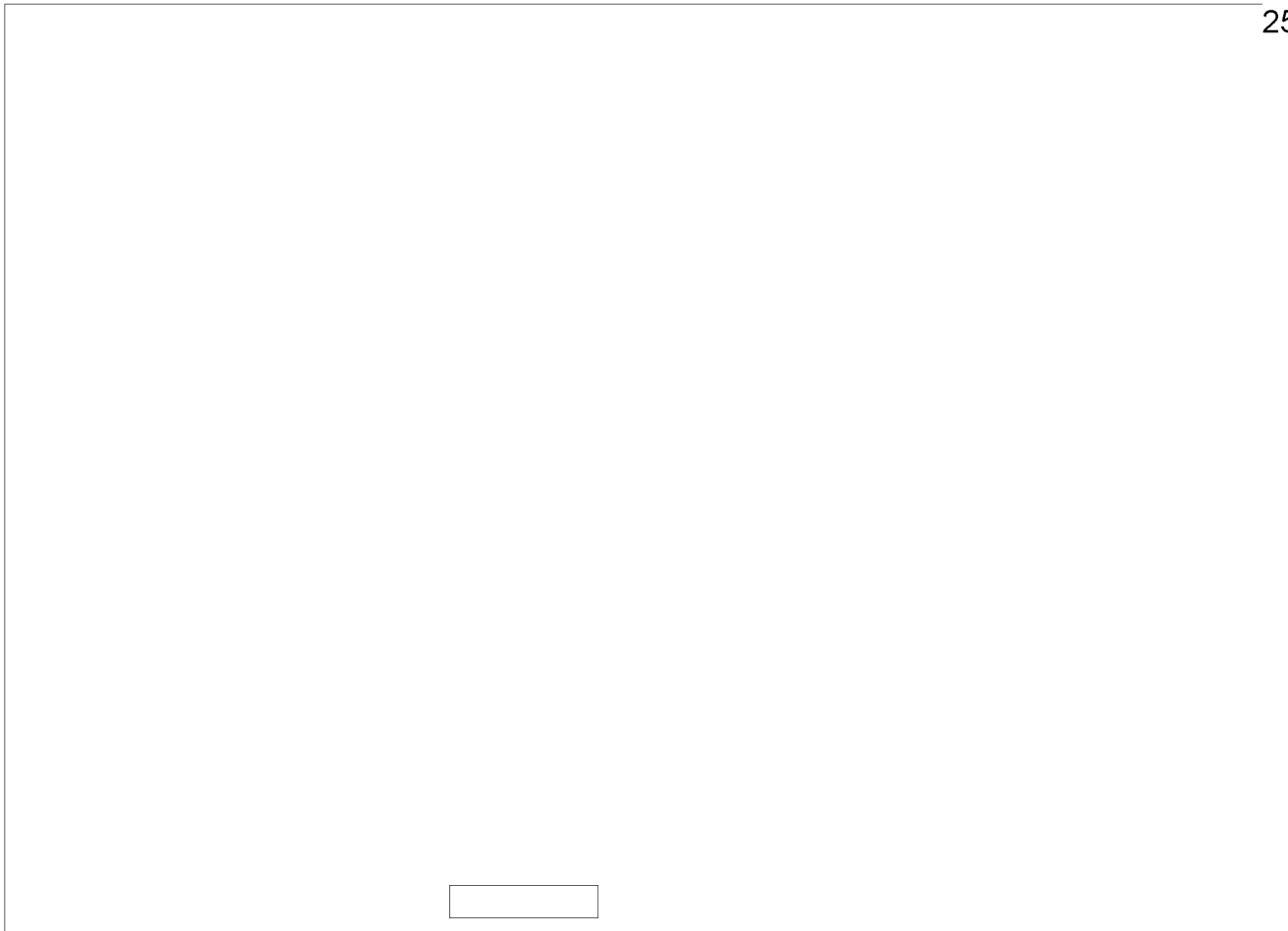
The MI-25 Helicopter Gunship



Although most of the equipment delivered thus far to Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique is primarily suited for conventional warfare, the Soviets have delivered one system that is useful for counterinsurgency operations—the MI-25 attack helicopter. The Soviets have told their clients that the MI-25 can be used in practically any situation involving confrontation with small units. The Soviets' high evaluation of the MI-25 may be based on its successful employment under similar conditions in Afghanistan. Not all their clients agree, however. The Ethiopians have found the MI-25 unsuited for many vital counterinsurgency missions, especially in the mountainous terrain of Eritrea. They claim the MI-25, when fully laden with fuel and ordnance, has limited vertical lift capability and is unable to hover and direct fire. These problems frequently render it useless in support of Ethiopian units pursuing rebels in the mountains. [redacted] more than 20 helicopters, including several MI-25s, have been lost in Angola. We expect the Soviets will improve the capability of the MI-25 in Africa, especially through the incorporation of systems to counter shoulder-fired SAMs and improvement of its reconnaissance capabilities. [redacted]

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armed forces are frequently dissatisfied with Soviet performance in these areas. For example, [redacted] the Ethiopian Air Force has been unhappy with the Soviet requirement that MIG engines be overhauled in the USSR. [redacted]

such efforts, but appears unwilling to make significant changes in its overall system of maintenance and support. [redacted]

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Training

Soviet Bloc military training for Third World clients' personnel takes place primarily in the USSR and Eastern Europe, with some of the simpler training taking place within the host country. Soviet efforts are concentrated primarily on staff training for senior officers and on more sophisticated and technical disciplines such as flight and air defense training [redacted] staff training has concentrated on the same conventional combined-arms operational concepts taught to Soviet

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Each of these African states has looked elsewhere, with little or no success, for military aid. As early as 1980, [redacted]



[redacted] Moscow is quick to use its leverage—based on the heavy dependence of these countries on the USSR—to discourage

officers. Upon returning from the USSR, these senior officers assume the best assignments and commands, including the leadership of some elite units that act as "palace guards" for the pro-Soviet heads of state.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

Paying for Soviet Military Aid

The Soviets have provided military equipment to their clients on favorable repayment terms and, in some cases, [redacted] at no cost. We estimate that up to 40 to 50 percent of the military aid is provided on a grant basis. Nonetheless, the Soviets expect that the credit they provide will eventually be repaid. [redacted]

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Mozambique currently does not have the resources to pay for Soviet military equipment, but the Soviets continue to provide some aid on concessionary terms.

[redacted]

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The Cubans, meanwhile, apparently are responsible for the bulk of basic training for junior officers and enlisted personnel. Most of this training takes place locally. Some specialized training takes place in Cuba and focuses on areas such as counterintelligence, interrogation, and the study of enemy subversive actions, [redacted]

[redacted]

Ethiopia's debt to the USSR mounted to over \$3 billion by the mid-1980s, [redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

Angolan debt to the USSR also has increased rapidly, from about \$2.1 billion at the end of 1985 to nearly \$3.5 billion in December 1986, [redacted]

[redacted] The dramatic fall in oil prices during 1986 made it harder for Luanda to pay for its military aid, [redacted]

[redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] Many of the Soviet promises of nonmilitary aid have vanished, and almost all of their assistance is in the form of military equipment or advisers. [Redacted]

Financial problems notwithstanding, the Soviets have been quick to supply large quantities of military equipment when these countries have been faced with a deteriorating military situation. Major military airlifts have given the impression of a Soviet policy that calls for sending the arms quickly and worrying about the repayment details later. [Redacted]

Although the USSR continues to pressure Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique to pay off their obligations, it will probably continue to defer repayment for the foreseeable future on the basis of the following considerations:

- The Soviets probably realize that the grave economic situation in these countries—particularly Ethiopia and Mozambique—makes significant repayment virtually impossible at the moment. Pressure for repayment under these circumstances would almost certainly lead to a major confrontation, which the Soviets would prefer to avoid.
- Moscow probably calculates that the political benefits of having relatively loyal Marxist allies in the Horn and southern Africa are worth the costs.
- The debt issue reinforces the allies' already deep military dependence on the Soviets, and may enable Moscow to extract future political or military concessions. [Redacted]

Soviet Military Advice

[Redacted]

The National Level

Angola. Moscow has been directing a political-military strategy apparently intended ultimately to defeat the insurgents in a protracted conflict. The strategy has been aimed at containing UNITA and keeping the rebels off balance while being careful not to provoke South Africa. Angola's Soviet-style conventional campaign, however, has been for the most part unsuccessful. Despite the current military stalemate, the Soviets have counseled Luanda against any political accommodation with UNITA that would bring Jonas Savimbi into a ruling coalition. They apparently believe the charismatic Savimbi's political skills and popularity would give him an edge in a coalition government. [Redacted]

Ethiopia. The situation in Ethiopia is somewhat different in that most of the insurgent groups there are not attempting to overthrow the regime or gain a share of power in the central government, but are fighting for autonomy or independence. As in Angola, Soviet military advice has called for large sweep campaigns supported by airpower. These campaigns, however, have been largely unsuccessful in dealing with the insurgencies. [Redacted]

There has been a duality in the Soviet approach over the past several years to the Ethiopian strategy toward the northern insurgencies. [Redacted] Moscow favors Ethiopian consideration of a political solution to the conflict on the basis of some form of limited autonomy for the northern provinces. On the other hand, the Soviets appear to have concluded that applying pressure on Mengistu to make a political settlement could backfire by arousing his nationalist sentiments, which could override his affinity for Communism and dependence on the USSR. [Redacted]

Mozambique. Despite the grim security situation in Mozambique, the Soviets appear to believe that their basic goal—maintaining a generally pro-Soviet "socialist" regime in Maputo—is secure for at least the

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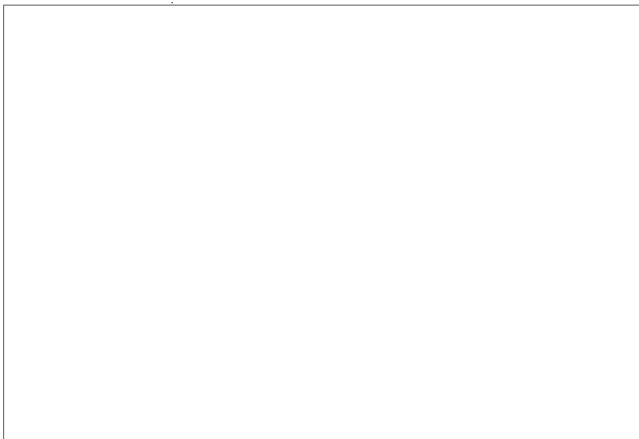
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near term. Moscow continues to counsel Maputo to defend key cities against the insurgents and is supplying some military assistance, but has not made the major commitment of aid that would be needed to defeat RENAMO. [redacted]



- The need for adequate preparation at all levels prior to a major campaign. [redacted]



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The extent to which client operations directly reflect Soviet advice is unclear. [redacted]

[redacted] the Soviets are deeply involved in planning major campaigns. [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet advisers in Angola have the final say in determining the planning of major combat operations. [redacted]



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The Operational Level

On a broad scale, the Soviets' operational advice to their clients reflects their basic military concepts—centralized control, massive troop strength, heavy concentrations of armor and firepower, and operations designed to achieve victory in a relatively short period against large conventional forces. Their rigid approach and lack of a formal counterinsurgency concept reflect their focus on Europe, where the forces and terrain bear little resemblance to conditions in Africa. [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted] The advice appears to focus on:

- The creation of secure enclaves around the vital elements of the client state's political and administrative base—the capital, other major cities, key economic areas, and main lines of communication.
- The use of major campaigns aimed at searching out and destroying insurgent groups, disrupting insurgent base areas, and hindering resupply of insurgent groups.
- Large-scale multidivisional combined arms assaults on rebel-held areas and sweep operations intended to open major roadways.

Government forces have had some success in using large-scale combined-arms attacks on rebel-held towns when their advantage in numbers has been substantial, as occurred in both Ethiopia and Angola in 1985, and have been able to open up key roads for daytime travel by heavily armed convoys. However, they have rarely been able to destroy major insurgent concentrations or control large areas of the countryside. [redacted]

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Whatever the substance of their recommendations, Soviet advisers frequently have difficulty getting African field commanders to act on their advice. For example, [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet advice is often heeded by a small but influential group of senior Ethiopian officers at defense headquarters at Addis Ababa, but that most senior field commanders are opposed to Soviet recommendations. In Mozambique, [redacted] military commanders now tend to look more toward Zimbabwe for advice because they believe their Soviet advisers are serving no useful purpose. [redacted]

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Military Writings on Tactics

There has been a perceptible change since 1980 in the number, detail, and orientation of Soviet unclassified articles about particular tactical problems related to fighting guerrillas. Coverage has increased on night combat, mountain warfare, ambushes, and jungle warfare. These articles have been expanded over earlier writings—which were few and sketchy—to include more details and analysis. They reveal a change in the perception of certain tactics, including a more balanced view of the role of helicopters in mountain and jungle conditions as well as praise for certain tactics that had been attributed to the “bandits”; foremost among these is the use and importance of surprise. Numerous articles discuss the need to use scouting parties, the problems of landing helicopters, and the difficulty in judging targets and positioning to fire in mountains. In general, they give more attention to the conditions under which such operations should be carried out, by whom, and for what purpose. They also stress the need for reliable communications as well as the use of local residents to discover counterrevolutionary hideouts.

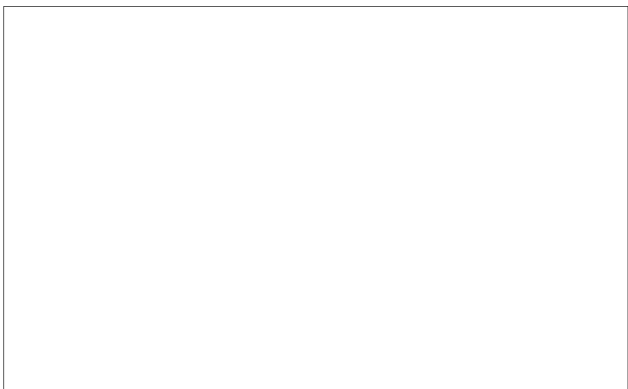
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The increased attention in Soviet writings to counterinsurgency operations suggests the Soviets are in the process of reevaluating the requirements for this demanding mission. Many of these articles have used the US experience in Vietnam as a point of departure, but it is clear that the vast majority of them relate directly to the Afghan situation. Although many also have potential applications to the situations in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, we have seen no articles specifically applying the concepts developed in this Afghan-oriented literature to African counterinsurgency operations.

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allowing Moscow to introduce Cuban troops without the negative repercussions that undoubtedly would accompany the intervention of Soviet Bloc troops.

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[Redacted]

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Angola. Following Angolan independence in 1975, Cuba gradually increased its longstanding low level of involvement with the MPLA by sending advisers and military support personnel to assist the Marxist-Leninist group. This group of Cubans has steadily expanded, [Redacted]

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[Redacted] to about 37,500 military personnel. Of these, some 29,500 are combat troops assigned to air, air defense, and ground combat units, while the remaining 8,000 Cubans are specialists, technicians, and advisers assisting the Angolan armed forces. [Redacted]

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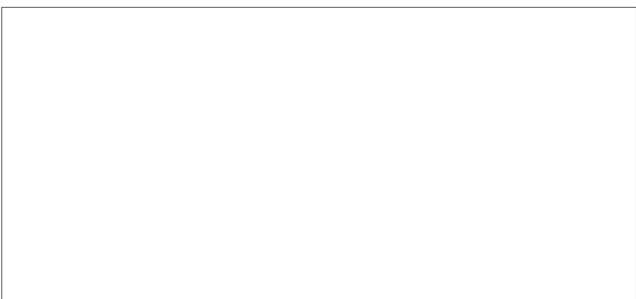
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Participation in Combat

[Redacted] Soviet advisers are, as a rule, not permitted to participate directly in combat. Moscow apparently wants to avoid casualties and the political consequences of direct, nondeniable involvement in what are essentially civil wars. [Redacted]

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In addition to their military presence, in Angola the Cubans have an estimated 6,000 civilian advisers providing medical and economic assistance. According to diplomatic sources, they work in all parts of the Angolan Government, performing both advisory and functional tasks. Cuban civilians also serve as teachers, doctors, construction workers, agricultural experts, and economic advisers. [Redacted]

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The Role of Soviet Surrogates

The Cubans

The Soviets rely heavily on Cuban support to Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique (see figure 13). Cuban troops were vital in establishing and consolidating pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist regimes in Angola and Ethiopia. Indeed, the introduction of Cuban troops was probably the determining factor in deciding the outcome in these two countries during the early stages of Soviet Bloc involvement. These joint Soviet-Cuban interventions transformed Cuba from an essentially passive recipient of military largess into an active and valuable military ally of the Soviet Union. Havana's nonaligned credentials are particularly valuable,

Ethiopia. The relationship between Cuba and Ethiopia started to develop in early 1977, when Mengistu became chairman of the Military Council after a bloody power struggle. The first 75 Cuban military advisers arrived that year, and, following Somalia's attack on Ethiopia in 1977, the number grew to some 16,000 to 17,000. This included Cuban troops who were organized into combat brigades and played a key role in defeating the Somalis. [Redacted]

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Since the Ogaden War ended in 1978, the Cuban military presence has steadily declined. The Cubans have not been willing to get involved in operations against the insurgents, probably because Fidel Castro was unwilling to turn on the Eritreans, whom Cuba had trained and supported before Mengistu's rise to

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Transferring the Lessons of Afghanistan?

After more than seven years of experience in fighting the Mujahedin in Afghanistan, the Soviets have made some adjustments—both political and military—to their approach to the insurgency there. A close scrutiny of Soviet activity, however, suggests their experience in Afghanistan has not led to a unique approach to counterinsurgency warfare that they might use in support of their African allies. [redacted]

Soviet troops are gaining valuable experience fighting in Afghanistan [redacted]

[redacted]

More than a half million Soviet soldiers have served in Afghanistan, and a number of senior officers, including Sokolov, have been closely associated with the war. [redacted]

[redacted]

In fighting the Mujahedin, the Soviets have increased their use of special-purpose forces and air assault units, improved their intelligence, and deployed specialized security units. The bulk of their forces, however, remain traditional mechanized infantry whose main responsibility is protecting fixed installations and guarding lines of communication. Soviet guidance to their African clients about structuring their armed forces appears to follow these patterns.

[redacted]

In Afghanistan, the Soviets have employed some of their most advanced equipment and have modified older equipment as a result of combat experience.

The Soviets have provided their Afghan and African clients with some of the same types of equipment, but not the latest models—probably because the clients cannot afford them and would have difficulty operating them. In 1986 the Soviets significantly increased the number of heavy artillery pieces, automatic mortars, and helicopters assigned to their own troops in Afghanistan. Recently, the Afghan military received more advanced artillery and infantry fighting vehicles. Angola also received a significant number of artillery and mortar pieces in 1986. We expect more helicopters, artillery, and armored vehicles will be sent to Moscow's African clients who are fighting insurgents. [redacted]

The Soviets and the Afghan Government have had little success implementing economic, political, or social programs to win the allegiance of the populace, primarily because of their lack of control outside of Kabul and other major cities. Indeed, the bitter hostility of almost the entire population to the Soviet presence has made it impossible for Soviet-run efforts to win acceptance. The Soviets have encouraged the regime to establish political organizations to co-opt local leaders and tribal groups. These suggestions have sometimes been accompanied by economic incentives. These efforts have had limited and usually only temporary success. Widespread efforts have been made to win over insurgent groups, local leaders, and refugees during the "national reconciliation" campaign that began in December 1986, but most regime overtures have been rejected. Similar Soviet efforts to win the support of the populace are not evident in the African countries. [redacted]

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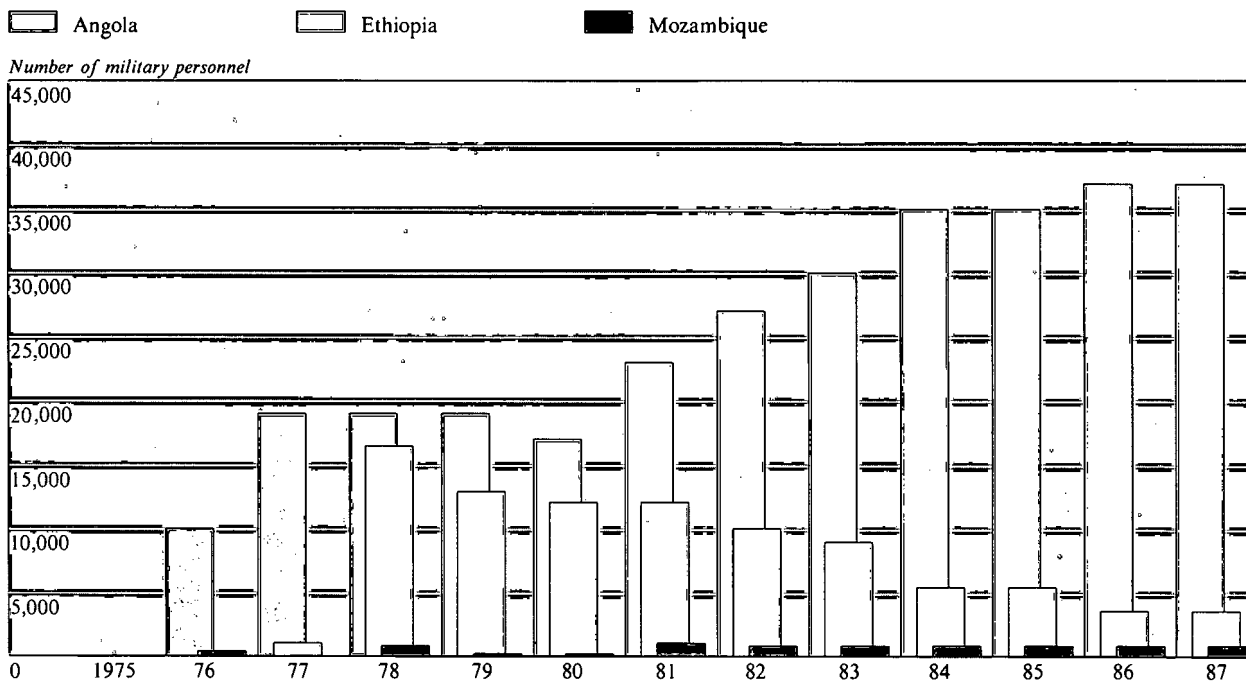
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Figure 13
Cuban Military Presence in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique



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power. This reticence, and reduced fears of a Somali invasion, are the likely reasons behind the reduction of Cuban forces to about 3,000 to 4,000. About half of this total are military advisers and half are combat troops. The advisers provide technical assistance, but do not have the extensive operational roles that they do in Angola and Mozambique. The combat troops provide an ostensible deterrent against a Somali invasion but have played no role in combating the northern insurgency. In addition, there are some 1,100 civilian advisers and technicians in Ethiopia.

Mozambique. Cuba moved quickly to establish diplomatic relations with Maputo shortly after Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975.

Cuba initiated economic relations with Maputo in 1977 and sent civilian advisers to rebuild Mozambique's deteriorating sugar industry. There are currently some 900 civilian technicians in Mozambique.

In 1977 Cuba began sending military advisers to help train and organize Mozambique's Army. The estimated 800 Cuban military advisers and technicians currently in Mozambique are attached to some Army units, principally motorized infantry and artillery units, at battalion level and above.

the Cuban advisers are more

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aggressive and experienced in counterinsurgency operations than their Eastern Bloc counterparts and are more forthcoming. [redacted]

[redacted] the Cubans' primary function is basic training for new troops. The Cubans also play a key role in running the security service. [redacted]

[redacted]

- Large-scale materiel and advisory support for the African ally's military forces aimed at the creation of large conventional forces.
- Use of these forces to secure the client's capital, key cities, and vital economic regions against conventional and insurgent threats and to expand the areas controlled by the state by gradually pushing the insurgents back.

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Other Surrogates

Other Soviet Bloc countries, particularly East Germany, and to a lesser extent Bulgaria, also play a key role in assisting Soviet efforts. The East German presence is primarily evident in the internal security and intelligence apparatuses in these countries. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Vietnamese instructors—noted for their expertise in guerrilla warfare tactics—teach basic military skills such as reconnaissance, jungle combat, and ambush tactics. [redacted]

- Consistent support for the Marxist-Leninist client state in the international arena in order to secure broad recognition of it and to delegitimize the claims of the insurgents.

The Soviets seem to expect that, in the long run, consolidation of the state's power and authority, expansion of the domain physically controlled by the state, elimination of alternative political forces, and withering of the insurgency as a result of persistent military pressure and erosion of outside support will ensure the defeat of the insurgent challenge. [redacted]

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Assessment and Outlook

Although we did not find a unified Soviet doctrine for counterinsurgency warfare in the Third World or parallels to Western theory in the Soviet approach, our research has revealed a pattern in Moscow's aid to its African clients facing insurgencies [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] we believe we have identified the main elements of the overall Soviet approach:

- A strong emphasis on building up the client state's administrative, security, political, and economic apparatus to establish its power and ensure compliance in areas under its control.²

The important role administrative, economic, and political factors play in Moscow's advice to its African clients does not mean the Soviets attach a low priority to the military dimension of their clients' difficulties. Indeed, they concentrate the bulk of their assistance in this area. Nonetheless, Moscow does not appear to believe that it must help its clients achieve decisive military defeat of the insurgents in the near term. It seems to treat the insurgency threat as a very important, but still subordinate, part of the long-term challenge of helping its Marxist-Leninist allies consolidate power. [redacted]

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Results as of Late 1987

Moscow has enjoyed mixed results in implementing its overall approach to building these African states and helping them deal with insurgency. [redacted]

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² It should be noted that this prescription is not unique to states confronting insurgencies. Virtually all of its elements apply to fledgling Marxist-Leninist regimes that are not torn by overt civil strife but which—in the Soviet view—are still vulnerable to counterrevolution. [redacted]

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Building the State. In Ethiopia the state apparatus is relatively strong. Through a mixture of terror and intimidation directed at opponents and rewards for supporters, Chairman Mengistu has created—with Soviet Bloc help—a state structure responsive to his dictates, a reasonably loyal military, and a security mechanism capable of maintaining tight political control. Ethiopia's economic performance has been poor by any standard, but this has not led to meaningful political opposition. [redacted]

The regime in Angola has had moderate success in developing the state structure, especially in those areas of the country that form the main ethnic base of the MPLA. It has had difficulties consolidating its hold in other regions. The armed forces still require extensive Soviet and Cuban advisory support, and the security of the regime itself would be doubtful without the 37,500 Cuban combat troops and military advisers. Angolan economic performance has been uneven—oil and mineral revenues have somewhat offset the poor performance of other industrial and agricultural sectors. [redacted]

The government in Mozambique has had little success in creating a viable state apparatus, and the performance of its armed forces has been dismal—a result of incompetence and ethnic and tribal differences. As a consequence, the insurgents have gained in recent years. The economy is in disarray, with little prospect for improvement. [redacted]

Combating the Insurgencies. Despite the lack of success in defeating the insurgencies, the military situation in these three countries, from Moscow's long-term perspective, probably does not appear to be irretrievable or, in the Ethiopian case, particularly serious. The Ethiopian insurgents have been effectively confined to the northern regions and do not pose a major threat to Addis Ababa. In Angola, UNITA enjoys wider geographical scope than the Ethiopian rebels, but, in the wake of government offensive operations since 1985, is not in a position to threaten the capital or the regime's main source of revenue, the

Cabinda oilfields. Finally, while the Soviets undoubtedly regard the military situation in Mozambique as a serious problem, [redacted] they do not see RENAMO as a threat to Maputo in the near term. Moreover, Zimbabwean military intervention on FRELIMO's behalf has slowed insurgent momentum and relieved the Soviets of having to deal with such a threat over the near term. [redacted]

Vanguard Workers' Parties. The Workers' Party of Ethiopia, from a Soviet standpoint, appears to be the most developed of the African Vanguard Workers' Parties. The party, however, is still heavily dominated by Mengistu and his military supporters and is far from the civilian-controlled party the Soviets have advocated. Soviet assessments of the Angolan MPLA-PT note that it has made some progress toward becoming a national party of reliable commitment to Marxism-Leninism. However, the MPLA-PT has not been able to transcend ethnic and racial barriers and has been prone to factionalism. Mozambique's FRELIMO is suspect in Soviet eyes—it has been ineffective in carrying out virtually any of the tasks of the “national democratic revolution,” and in recent years its leaders have been less vocal in their commitment both to “scientific socialism” and Soviet foreign policy positions. The problems these parties have had in these and other states of “socialist orientation” have fueled an ongoing debate in Soviet academic and policy writings on the “correct” role of the VWP in Third World countries. [redacted]

Outside Support. None of the insurgent groups has obtained meaningful external diplomatic recognition, though this is primarily due to regional political circumstances rather than to Soviet diplomacy, active measures, or propaganda. In particular, African opposition to Eritrean attempts to redraw existing boundaries and UNITA and RENAMO association with

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South Africa have been inhibiting factors. Moscow probably believes, however, that persistent campaigning on these themes and championing of its client regimes' causes in the international arena serve to reinforce the Third World diplomatic consensus against the insurgents, to build political support for the three governments, and to complicate Western efforts to aid the insurgents.

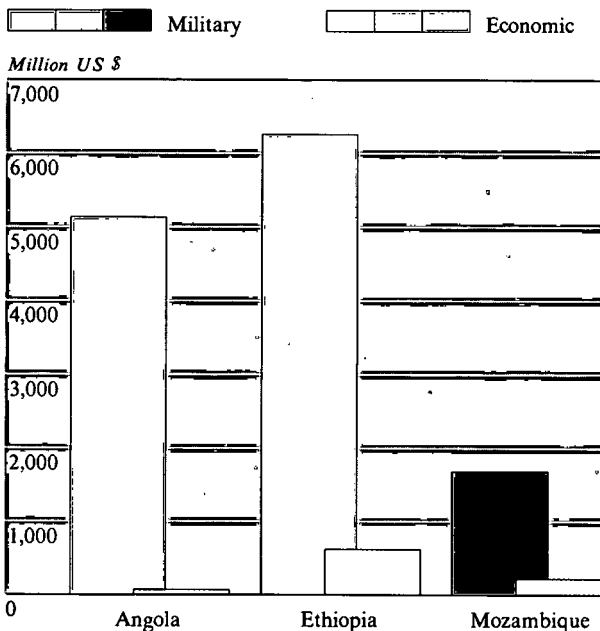
The Soviets have not had much impact on the insurgents' material support. Ethiopia's northern insurgents have consistently obtained arms, money, and supplies from the Arab world and front groups throughout Europe. RENAMO probably still receives modest support from South Africa, and UNITA gets South African and US military aid. In all three cases, the insurgencies have also shown themselves capable of capturing arms and supplies from government forces and would be able to sustain themselves, albeit at reduced levels, even if outside support were cut off.

Moscow will probably continue willingness to discuss southern Africa with the United States in bilateral exchanges on regional issues and may amplify its presently vague proposals for an international conference on the area. The Soviets are probably more interested, however, in using these talks as a means of obtaining information on US policy and intentions than they are in establishing any kind of meaningful negotiating forum.

Costs to the USSR. We estimate the total cost of Moscow's economic and military support for its African clients since the mid-1970s to be about \$13.4 billion (see figure 14). The Kremlin did not anticipate this large economic burden when it first moved to support its African allies, and Moscow has frequently stressed that its aid is not open-ended. A variety of open source writings and recent Soviet efforts to tighten the terms of client military debt payments suggest the USSR intends to keep the costs of its involvement with these Marxist allies under tighter control.

Nonetheless, Moscow's expenditures on its African clients represent a small part of overall Soviet military and economic outlays. We do not believe cost

Figure 14
Soviet Military and Economic Aid Deliveries, 1975-85



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considerations will significantly affect Moscow's underlying commitment to its African allies. At present, the Soviets probably see the political and military benefits as outweighing the economic burden.

In spite of the various problems the Soviets have experienced in helping their African clients deal with the insurgencies and consolidate power, they are probably fairly satisfied with the results of their approach. First, it has served to promote what we believe are their basic interests and objectives in these

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countries: increasing their political role in southern Africa and the Horn, establishing a military presence, gaining access to air and naval facilities, and promoting leftist change in key regions. Also, while the Soviets do not control the internal politics of these states, they have amassed significant levels of political influence. The Kremlin can afford to be patient in pursuing these policies, since it does not face substantial domestic opposition to its involvement in Africa, and the costs—while an object of concern—are tolerable. [redacted]

Vulnerabilities

Although Moscow's approach to the insurgencies against its African clients has, for the most part, served its interests and objectives, we believe that its approach and its position in these countries have several vulnerabilities that could hamper its effectiveness in the long run. Moscow appears to be aware of and to have devised responses to some of these vulnerabilities, while others raise questions that remain unanswered. [redacted]

Insurgent Persistence. At the very least, prolonged insurgent military action means that Luanda, Maputo, and Addis Ababa must devote substantial resources to large military forces, which obstructs the process of economic and political consolidation. More serious from the regimes' standpoint, insurgent persistence contributes to public passivity, and in some cases, outright opposition as the futility of the government's military efforts becomes increasingly evident. Finally, if government forces are weak enough, as in Mozambique, the insurgents may make military gains sufficient to threaten key cities, vital economic targets, and, potentially, the regime itself. [redacted]

All this increases the costs to the Soviets of supporting their allies, contributes to friction between African military leaders and their Soviet advisers, and, at times, leads a client's political leadership to consider alternatives to heavy reliance on the USSR and Marxism-Leninism. Moscow has usually responded to these problems by increasing arms shipments and trying to improve its clients' military performance. The absence of viable alternative sources of political and military support has so far contained the political fallout from the clients' poor military performance. In

the absence of a more successful approach to the insurgencies, however, the Soviets will continue to experience tension and difficulties in their relations with these states. [redacted]

Instability of Client Leadership. The Soviet position in all three African states remains vulnerable to sudden leadership change through assassination or coup. None of the ruling parties has created a mechanism for leadership change, and a leader or faction less committed to Marxism-Leninism and the USSR could emerge suddenly. Ethiopia appears the least susceptible to a coup because of Mengistu's political iron grip. The Angolan leadership also appears fairly secure, at least by African standards, despite ethnic and racial tensions within the top leadership. Mozambique has the least stable political equation, and a political move by military leaders willing to cut a deal with the RENAMO insurgents cannot be ruled out. [redacted]

The Soviets are presumably sensitive to these problems, having previously lost political ground in Africa following coups in Ghana, Mali, and Guinea, and they have several instruments they can use to protect their position in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. Their extensive advisory presence in the administrative, military, security, and political institutions allows them to monitor political developments and, possibly, to try to promote a preemptive coup or countercoup by party or military elements more loyal to the USSR. Also, we assume that the Soviet and East European services have cultivated independent networks of sources and unilaterally penetrated host country security operations. The presence of Cuban combat troops in Angola and Ethiopia might also discourage plotters. Finally, should a coup occur, the Soviets would probably have a fair degree of leverage over the successor regime by virtue of its dependence on Soviet arms and, in Angola, Cuban troops. While none of these factors guarantees that a coup hostile to Soviet interests will not take place, they provide some degree of "insurance" against potentially harmful instability. [redacted]

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Poor Economic Performance. All three of Moscow's African clients have experienced serious economic difficulties and none has a particularly encouraging economic outlook, although Angola's situation will improve if oil prices rise. [redacted] at least some officials in Maputo and Luanda have come to see aspects of the Marxist-Leninist economic model as part of their problem, and all three countries have expressed dissatisfaction with what they see as inadequate Soviet economic aid. These difficulties have already led Mozambique and, to a more limited degree, Angola to turn to the West for economic aid. [redacted]

The Soviets have not been opposed in principle to their African clients' obtaining Western aid, but [redacted] various Soviet writings indicate that Moscow is concerned about the possibility of increased Western influence. Moscow will probably rely on its clients' military dependence to guarantee its long-term presence and influence. In view of the Soviets' own economic woes as well as their past record, we believe it is unlikely they will substantially increase their economic aid. [redacted]

Generational Change. In the next 10 to 20 years the "revolutionary generation" in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia will give way to leaders who did not experience either colonial rule or the period in which

Soviet military and political backing helped the regimes consolidate power and defeat outside challenges. Their world view may be more directly affected by the postrevolutionary experiences of economic decline, persistent insurgency, and dependence on a foreign power. They may be less inclined to accept military solutions to the insurgencies, Marxism-Leninism, or close relations with Moscow as necessary national policies, and more open to political and economic pragmatism at home and genuine nonalignment abroad. [redacted]

The Soviets appear to see the development of the Vanguard Workers' Party as the main answer to the problem of generational change. They believe that an institutionalized Marxist-Leninist VWP should eventually become the primary and, ultimately, the only possible arena of leadership competition and advancement. This would guarantee that future leadership change would take place within a Marxist-Leninist institutional framework and that future leaders will remain loyal at least to the forms of Marxism-Leninism. Moscow has had extensive experience with self-professed Marxist parties that broke away from Soviet-approved policies and presumably hopes to ensure the loyalty of the African VWPs by education and guidance in the "correct" methods of building the party. [redacted]

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Appendix

Soviet Writings on Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

In the past, Soviet military doctrine and political theory have held that local wars and military conflicts in the Third World are an outgrowth of Western imperialism and its resistance to national liberation movements in the Third World. Soviet theorists have long described the "national liberation process" as a positive and historically ordained trend and one in which the Soviet role is to champion people oppressed by colonial or foreign-dominated "neocolonial" regimes. Over the years, the Soviets have gained much expertise in dealing with a variety of anticolonial guerrilla and insurgent movements by providing training, materiel, and advisory and political assistance to such forces in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. [redacted]

Today, however, Soviet ideologists and strategists are faced with the problem of defining, analyzing, and prescribing responses for situations in which antigovernment insurgencies confront friendly Marxist-Leninist regimes. A comprehensive review of two and a half decades of Soviet political, ideological, and military writings indicates that the Soviets have not yet formulated a distinct doctrine of counterinsurgency. There is no discussion of counterinsurgency as a unique political-military problem demanding a unique response from the Soviet state. In our judgment, there are several reasons for this somewhat surprising omission:

- The persistence of these insurgencies raises sensitive ideological questions that Soviet theorists may prefer to avoid. Moscow's client regimes ostensibly rule in the interest of the "worker and peasant masses." Acknowledging that substantial opposition to Marxist-Leninist governments persists among these groups could call into question critical elements of these regimes' claims to legitimacy and undercut Soviet explanations of the "national liberation" process.

- The inertia of military doctrine and the military establishment's focus on massive combined operations against NATO and China may make it difficult for advocates of flexible, small-unit concepts applicable to the Third World to gain a hearing.
- The Soviets may not view these Third World insurgencies as sufficiently common or threatening to their security interests to require the formulation of a separate military doctrine. [redacted]

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If the Soviets have secretly developed or are developing a doctrine applicable to counterinsurgency, it is not evident in their writings or actions. The Soviet literature does, however, provide some insight into Soviet thinking on the question of anti-Marxist insurgency in the Third World. [redacted]

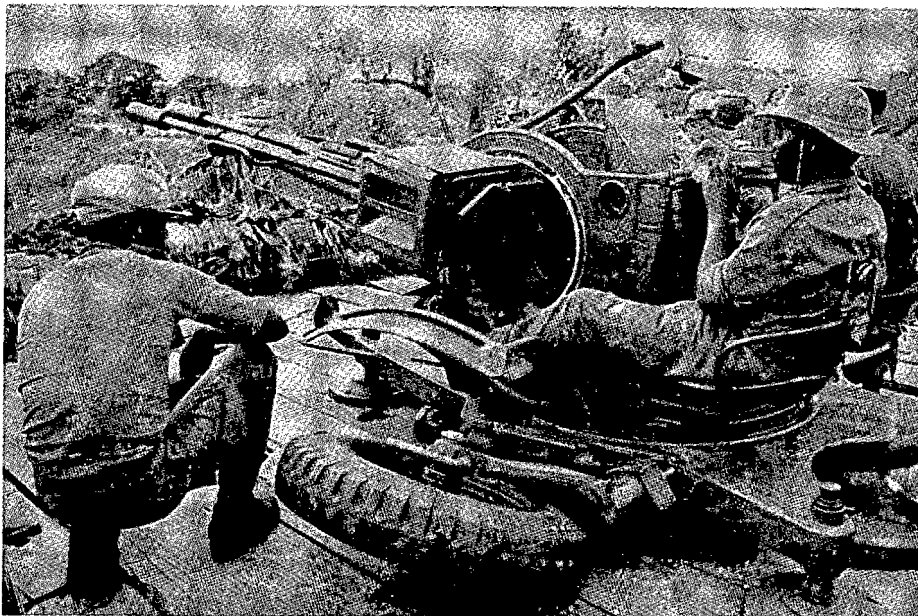
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Soviet observers have long noted that during the revolutionary process, a variety of elements may rise up in opposition, including counterrevolutionary class forces and groups and individuals seeking personal gain. According to the Soviets, antigovernment rebels in the African cases are made up of two elements: "internal reactionaries" and "bandits" (see figure 15). Soviet literature explains the ability of these elements to survive over several years almost exclusively as a result of outside support from the "imperialist" world, not because they attract significant internal support. Indeed, Soviet accusations regarding intensified training and equipping of the counterrevolutionaries by the United States and other nations have increased dramatically since the invasion of Afghanistan. [redacted]

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Figure 15. Angolan guerrillas
man captured ZU-23.



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Possible Reevaluation

Two recent articles, however, suggest there may be a move toward a more realistic picture of the insurgency problem. *Izvestiya* political observer Aleksandr Bovin noted in early 1986 that a variety of factors, including economic backwardness, the strength of tradition and religion, and the errors of revolutionary leaders have fostered counterrevolution against socialist-oriented Third World states and pushed some "workers and peasants"—the ostensible beneficiaries of revolutionary change—into the camp of the opposition. An article in the February 1987 edition of Moscow's *Military History Journal* discussing the Muslim rebellion in Soviet Central Asia during the 1920s—often cited in Soviet writings alluding to Afghanistan—also suggests the Soviets are taking a more realistic view of the insurgency problem. In the past, the guerrillas in this rebellion—called *basmachi*—were portrayed as lawless bands supported by

foreign imperialists and engaged solely in banditry. The February article, however, admits that the *basmachi* had certain legitimate grievances as well as support from the local population. The appearance of these articles in such authoritative publications suggests there is high-level interest in the USSR in taking a more balanced look at the insurgencies. Most Soviet writing on the subject, however, continues to stress the role of external meddling in sustaining the rebels.

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