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Third World is trampled as giants fight for more

By Hilary Ng'weno

NAIROBI — The two superpowers do not challenge each other in Europe where the armies of the Warsaw Pact and the NATO alliance stare down the barrels of each other's guns. No, the challenge — and the bloodshed — takes place in the bushes of Africa, the deserts of the Middle East, the jungles of South-east Asia and the mountains of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. To quote an old African adage: When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.

Still, the Russians are perplexed by the Third World's reaction to their intervention in Afghanistan. After all, only a few months earlier, the Third World leaders praised the Soviet Union as their natural ally. Why, then, when the issue of Soviet troops in Afghanistan came up in the U.N. General Assembly did over two-thirds of the Third World nations vote with the imperialist West for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops?

The Kremlin's confusion about Third World responses is mirrored in the United States. American policy-makers cannot understand why the Arabs are not running into their arms for protection against the atheist Russians. Why aren't the non-aligned countries unanimously opposed to Russia's naked aggression against an independent Third World nation?

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In the accompanying two articles, American and Soviet spokesmen debate who's to blame for the upheaval in Afghanistan. Marshall Shulman, an adviser on Soviet affairs to the U.S. secretary of state, is on leave as head of Columbia University's Russian Institute. Vladimir Ostrovsky is a political commentator for the Soviet press agency Novosti. Both articles are from WorldPaper.

The Soviets and the Americans are both puzzled by the Third World's evaluation of events in Iran and Afghanistan because each sees the rest of the world only in terms of its own national interest. They have divided the world not as it is, but as they wish it to be, and in the process they have misjudged the magnitude of the Third World's mistrust of them both.

That mistrust comes from three decades of bitter experience. In the years since World War II, the only wars that have been fought between the Americans and the Russians have used Third World surrogates in Third World regions like Korea, the Middle East, Indochina, Angola, the Horn of Africa. These wars — financed, engineered and fueled by the superpowers — have taken the lives of millions and have caused immense suffering.

In Vietnam the United States perfected some of the most lethal instruments of destruction the world has ever known. The Soviet's ability to move men and materiel quickly in combat was tested in the Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1978 and later put to use in the December 1979 Soviet move in Afghanistan. The Soviets also successfully tested their ability to coordinate global operations when they ferried thousands of troops from Cuba to Angola.

The sense of mistrust is not helped by the blatant propaganda the superpowers pour out to justify their rape of the Third World. When Russian troops overthrew the Afghan government of Hafizullah Amin and installed their hand-picked man, Babrak Karmal, their line was that they had been invited by the Afghans in accordance with a mutual defense pact. The propaganda machinery forgot to explain why Amin and his family were summarily executed by the soldiers they had invited into their country. (The Chinese were more honest when they invaded Tibet. They told the world that Tibet had always been part of China. Although the world may have been shocked by China's aggression, there was at least an element of honesty in its stated intentions. Nothing remotely similar can be said of the activities of the superpowers in the Third World.)

Oil vs. Freedom

The current problems in western Asia stem from American duplicity in Iran. It was in the name of freedom that Washington encouraged or condoned the shah in his tyrannical ways. What did it matter that his dreaded SAVAK detained, jailed and tortured thousands of Iranians so long as the oil flowed freely and the Russians were kept at bay? While it may be true that the Iranians have always had an interest in checking Russia's southward expansion, what motivated the Americans to give military and economic assistance to the shah's regime had to do with American national interests, not Iranian interests. However great the cost to the people of Iran in freedom and political stability, Iran was to be the local guarantor of American access to cheap oil from the Middle East and Gulf countries. It is little wonder that, even with the Russians breathing down their necks, the Iranians still hold the United States to be the No. 1 Villain. And they do not need a cantankerous old imam to egg them on.

Then there is the economic plight of the Third World. Year after year Third World people see the economic gap widening between themselves and the superpowers. It makes no difference whether the relations are between the Soviet Union and her socialist Third World client states or between the United States and her capitalist Third World client states. Nearly two decades of trade between Cuba and the Soviet Union have led to the same kind of dependency for Cuba as that between, say, the United States and Somoza's Nicaragua.

While the Russians shout against imperialism, they do next to nothing to help its victims get out of the mess in which colonialism left them. Countries that opt for a Marxist-Leninist way of life do get some assistance. But as Angola, Mozambique, Somalia and Ethiopia in Africa, Cuba in America, Syria and Iraq in the Middle East and Cambodia in Southeast Asia have found out, Soviet assistance is more likely to be in tanks and armaments than in productive or useful commodities.

America may give more economic aid to its Third World partners, but the volume of the aid is strictly determined by its own strategic interests, as it has demonstrated in

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Morocco, Zaire, Egypt, Pakistan and Nigeria. And America often directs its development aid to nations from which it can extract even more in minerals and other resources.

Disunity Over Oil

A few countries, mainly the oil producers, have tried to shake loose from this one-sided type of relationship, but even OPEC has discovered that it is not easy to beat the superpowers at this economic game. OPEC nations thought they had found an answer by increasing oil prices, only to find that increased oil prices fueled inflation in the industrialized Western world. That in turn raised the prices of the manufactured goods they needed to import from the West.

Oil producers have been assuming that they can increase their oil prices indefinitely in order to force the industrialized nations to index the price of their manufactured goods. But even they realize they are in a bind. If indexing leads to disruptions in the economies of the Western nations, the OPEC countries' large oil-surplus investments in the West will be jeopardized. Further, as happened with Iran, if the oil producers adopt policies that the United States and its allies do not like, their assets can be frozen indefinitely.

Saddest of all, by fighting the Western powers for a more equitable distribution of income from oil production, the oil producers have nearly ruined the economies of the rest of the countries in the Third World. The resulting disunity weakens the Third World's only weapon against the policies of the superpowers: solidarity among the non-aligned nations.

Non-oil-producing Third World nations are angry at the oil producers, at the West for wasteful consumption, and at East and West for their resistance to importing finished products from the Third World.

All of this adds up to enormous mistrust of the superpowers and explains the seemingly contradictory reaction of Third World nations to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Superpowers Go Home!

One clear message, however, can be heard above this confusion: Superpowers go home! That was the message in the U.N. General Assembly when the question of the presence of Soviet troops came to a vote in January. And it has been the message behind earlier U.N. resolutions that have declared many areas in the Third World nuclear-free zones.

For the Third World to say "Superpowers go home" is one thing. It is quite another to force them out. The two superpowers often exhibit the qualities of a rapist, but there is no single police force efficient enough to curb their activities if they are determined to act out their aggressions. Even when individual rapists are loose in society, it is sometimes futile to appeal to their reason. Often it is much more useful to educate their potential victims in the art of self-defense.

"Don't go out in the dark alone" is one warning. It is good advice, too, in international affairs. Third World nations should avoid walking in dark political alleys alone. Within the non-aligned movement they have company and political light to guide them safely past the clutches of the superpowers. Indeed, these members of the Third World who have abandoned the non-aligned path are the ones who have fallen victim to rape by the superpowers — Iran, Afghanistan, Zaire, Angola, Somalia, Cuba, Vietnam.

One other suggestion given to women who live in dangerous surroundings is to carry some instrument of self-defense — a knife, mace, a whistle — or even to take lessons in karate or judo. Similarly, Third World nations must provide themselves with some form of self-defense against aggression from the superpowers. Since aggression need not always be a military invasion, however, self-defense methods should be multipurpose. They should include at least one fail-safe mechanism to keep superpowers from involving themselves in the conduct of a Third World country's national affairs, however indirect that involvement may be.

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U.S. conniving stirs trouble

By Vladimir Ostrovsky

MOSCOW — High-sounding U.S. statements concerning Southwest Asia ring hollow when put side by side with American activities against Afghanistan.

For over 13 months, the enemies of Afghanistan have been trying to destroy it from within and to put together an army to invade the country from outside. The units of a 30,000-strong invading army are being organized in numerous centers in Pakistan in order to train rebels for subversive and terrorist operations. The combat units are being formed from the so-called Afghan refugees, who number over 380,000 in that country. CIA agents, Pakistani officers and reactionaries who have fled from Afghanistan recruit men for the army. They operate from the training centers outside the cities of Chitral, Cherat, Kohat, Peshawar, Quetta and Nourshera.

Subversive and terrorist groups in the camp outside Kohat, for instance, are trained by officers of Pakistan's Ninth Infantry Division. Last spring a hand-picked group of rebels underwent training directly in the Pakistani military garrison of Kharian.

In May 1979, the American intelligence men in Pakistan who were engaged in training Afghan rebels were led by the well-known CIA operative Louis Dupree. With the participation of men under his command, a "National Liberation Front of Afghanistan" was set up last summer. The leader of the front, Ahmed Bashir Zakhria, immediately left for the United States, where he toured California, Florida and Michigan to raise money for the rebels. Washington must have known about the tour of the Afghan reactionary. The counterrevolutionary "front" is still maintaining close contacts with the CIA through another of its leaders, Ziya Naseri.

Alliance Sought

Last August, staff members of the U.S. General Consulate in Peshawar met with leaders of the Afghan reactionary forces. The Americans attempted to convince them to set up a single military alliance within the counterrevolutionary movement, thus uniting the various reactionary groups of rebels entrenched in Pakistan. This was only one of the practical steps taken to construct an invading army under the wing of the U.S. proponents of "democratic" order in Afghanistan and "peace" in Asia.

A radio station broadcasting to large audiences was set up in the hope of attracting more "refugees" to Pakistan to swell the ranks of the new army. For many months now, the station has been beaming out subversive programs daily to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The equipment for the station was bought with Saudi money.

Organized support of the Afghan counterrevolution involves quite a few countries. On June 20-21, 1979, the Pakistani vessel Al-Kasum entered the port of Karachi; it had brought from the United States 2,000 tons of weapons and ammunition. Another vessel, the Rustom, came in from China at about the same time, carrying 8,000 tons of weapons and ammunition. The military cargo from both vessels was unloaded and sent on to warehouses in Peshawar, from which the Afghan counterrevolutionaries are supplied with arms.

China's Designs

In February and March of last year, Lt. Gen. Ghulam Jilani, secretary of Pakistan's ministry of defense, had talks in Peking. In March and April, Zhang Tingfa, commander in chief of China's air force, paid a return visit, during which he discussed the coordination of subversive activities against Afghanistan and aid to the rebels. The Chinese guest familiarized himself with the situation on the Afghan-Pakistani border.

This was more than idle curiosity. Chinese military instructors have long been working in the vicinity of Chitral, where both rebel units and Pakistani advisers are being trained. Hundreds of experts are needed to prepare an invading army, all the more so since the rebels are getting more than small arms.

It is well known that the idea of establishing a Pamir Islamic Republic was put forth by Peking as early as the beginning of last year. The Chinese leaders hoped to carry out their plan with the help of the pro-Chinese separatist organizations Shoalee Jawid and Setame Meli. They counted on the Dungans and Uighurs living in the Badakhshan Province in northeast Afghanistan. China made areas in its Xinjiang Province available as centers to train rebels. Peking's perfidious scheme provided for annexing part of the Afghans' territory, thus dealing a blow at the April revolution.

U.S. officials never mention these facts. They prefer to spread propaganda about the "Soviet threat" in Southwest Asia. But people know the price of Washington's and Peking's high-flown words about peace.

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Twisted stories expose Soviets

By Marshall D. Shulman

The Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan has significantly altered the international landscape for the foreseeable future.

For the United States, it is a matter of regret that U.S.-Soviet relations have suffered as a consequence of Moscow's ill-advised course.

Globally, as the broader implications of the Soviet resort to force against its non-aligned neighbor became apparent, it is the stability of the international system itself that has suffered. Every country is less secure when one country loses its sovereignty and independence to Soviet aggression.

It may never be possible to reconstruct satisfactorily all the calculations that went into Moscow's decision. Clearly there was gross miscalculation at some stage — or perhaps throughout the entire period of several months in which Moscow prepared its intervention. What is somewhat surprising to the student of Soviet foreign policy is its failure to have available any plausible justification for the extreme action of armed invasion. The Soviet version of events comes apart at the seams whenever it is subjected to scrutiny. This leaves the student and the policy-maker unable to do more than conjecture what really led to the Dec. 27 coup against President Hafizullah Amin and what it portends for future Soviet intentions.

It may be illuminating to examine some of the inconsistencies of Moscow's explanations measured against what is known about the events in Kabul. The gist of Soviet official statements to the United States and many other governments was that their military forces were invited by the Afghan government to assist in a struggle against outside forces. This flies in the face of overwhelming evidence that the primary purpose of the Soviet invasion was to suppress a popular uprising against the repressive government.

Advisers-Betrayers

It would be easier to give credence to the Soviet version if events had proceeded smoothly on the night of the takeover. However, Afghan troops loyal to President Amin put up a fierce struggle against the Soviets who attacked him at Durulaman Palace and caused his death. Hundreds of casualties on both sides bore witness to Afghan resistance to a Soviet-installed regime. The resistance might have been even greater had it not been for Soviet deception.

Afghan military forces were partially neutralized by Soviet military advisers purporting to be aiding Afghanistan — an object lesson for other countries where Soviet military advisers are present.

A further anomaly in the series of events surrounding the coup was the unexplained death of Viktor Paputin, Soviet first deputy minister of internal affairs. Paputin's presence in Kabul was noted in early December, although no official announcement was made about his mission. The next public mention of Paputin was an obituary in Pravda in early January. The obituary was less prominent than would be expected for an official of Paputin's rank, and no details of his death were disclosed — only the date: Dec. 28, 1979, the day after the Afghan coup.

If the Soviet claim that they were invited to invade seems flimsy, so does the argument that Afghanistan was threatened by outside forces. Only weeks after the invasion and following votes in the United Nations to censure Moscow (13-2 in the Security Council, 104-18 in the General Assembly), did Soviet propaganda elaborate on this hollow allegation. In a major Pravda article on Jan. 19, Aleksei Petrov wrote of "tens of thousands" of mercenaries supposedly involved in Afghan fighting before the Soviet invasion. Yet the former Afghan government never filed any complaint with the U.N., and all evidence indicates that resistance to the Communists led by Amin was essentially an indigenous, self-sustaining movement by Islamic nationalists.

Petrov also claimed to name two vessels allegedly delivering arms to Afghan rebels based in Pakistan. His allegations distort the true state of affairs: most of the weapons used by proponents of the "revolutionary" regime that took power in 1978 were of Soviet manufacture, captured from the Afghan army, and, in the later stages, obtained through wholesale defection of Afghan military units.

No Soviet tale of intrigue is complete without the CIA. Petrov recklessly applied a CIA label to well-known American anthropologist Louis Dupree, who lives in Pakistan and whose hundreds of friends in the region know this charge is false.

Twisted Story

An even more astonishing allegation of CIA connections was broadcast over Moscow television in late January by Leonid Zamyatin, a leading propagandist of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee staff. Zamyatin asserted that President Amin had been a CIA agent who intended to betray the revolution. He failed to explain why a CIA agent would have sought to impose a Marxist regime upon his country, as Amin did. Zamyatin also failed to explain why a CIA agent would call for a massive Soviet military intervention, which is what Soviet propaganda says Amin did just before his death. One can only note that it was President Brezhnev, not President Carter, who congratulated Amin on his "election" as president of Afghanistan in September 1979.

The attempts to discredit Amin and the contrived Soviet charges of outside forces threatening Afghanistan suggest a hypothesis about the real reasons for the invasion. The Soviet Union saw a gradual deterioration in the domestic position of the Marxist regime that deposed President Daoud in April 1978, and lost patience with Amin's group who refused to take Soviet advice about governing the country. Unwilling to let events take their own course, the Soviets installed a puppet through armed intervention. The great danger is that this will succeed and whet Soviet appetites for similar aggression elsewhere.