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The Evolution of Soviet Perspectives on Third World Security
NCSEER Contract #805-03
Principal Investigator: S. Neil MacFarlane

Executive Summary

Analysis of both Soviet commentary and Soviet behavior with respect to Third World security and conflict suggests that:

a. the capacity of the Soviet Union to cooperate constructively in crisis management and conflict resolution in the 1970s, although small, was underestimated in the West;
b. this capacity expanded considerably during the mid and late 1980s; and
c. this evolution was a product not merely of international and domestic constraints, but of a process of learning.

The evolution of Soviet perspectives on Third World security was a significant permissive condition underlying the success of bilateral Soviet-American diplomacy in the management and resolution of conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia and the Horn, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. Although the public policy implications of this study have been to some extent undercut by recent events in what was the USSR, there is good reason to believe that as the situation in the Commonwealth stabilizes, various components of it will seek once again to play a more active role in the affairs of the Third World. Those responsible for - and whose works reflect - this cognitive transformation are likely to play a role in defining future approaches of post-Soviet states (and in particular Russia) in the Third World. As such, one may expect this learning experience to have a lasting impact on the policies of successor states. The power potential of the post-Soviet commonwealth is substantial and eventually, it will recover some, if not most, of the Soviet position in world affairs. The conclusions drawn from experience in the Third World and the restructuring of perceptions of the nature and significance of Third World conflict which resulted from this experience are likely to have a durable effect on post-Soviet interpretation of Third World politics. Moreover, it appears (and this is to some extent confirmed by interviews and recent Russian practice) that the lessons drawn from Soviet policy in the Third World during the 1970s and 1980s have
some significance in defining post-Soviet states’ approaches to internal ethnic and social
conflicts, many aspects of which resemble the civil and regional conflicts in the Third World
that Soviet policy makers had to deal with in the past two decades.¹ In this sense, learning
from experience in the Third World has an important (and probably positive) restraining
effect in post-Soviet domestic politics. Finally, to the extent that Soviet behavior with respect
to Third World conflict was a product of American policy, the analysis has some broader
implication for American policy towards other potential rivals in the Third World.

In approaching the evolution of Soviet perspectives on Third World security, I divided
the study into two parts. The first was conceptual, dealing with change in Soviet perspectives
on the following topics:

1. the sources of conflict in the Third World;
2. the significance of Third World conflict in world politics (linkage, escalation, the
correlation of forces);
3. the nature of and motivations underlying the roles of the superpowers in Third
World conflict;
4. the utility of force and of negotiation in dealing with Third World conflicts;
5. prospects for superpower cooperation in dealing with Third World conflict;
6. capacities of international (e.g. the United Nations) and regional (e.g. the OAU or
ASEAN) organizations for conflict management and resolution.

The answers provided by Soviet commentators and policy makers to these questions give
some indication of how they thought (and think) about Third World conflict as a problem in
international relations.²

¹ The reluctance of the Soviet Army to deploy to Baku at the end of 1989, for example
suggests that in the aftermath of their experience in Afghanistan they were unenthusiastic about
involvement in civil conflicts among Islamic populations. Likewise, the Russian government’s
reversal of Yeltsin’s decision in the autumn of 1991 to send army units into Chechen-Ingushetia
displays a similar sensitivity to the use of force in coping with ethnic conflicts in mountainous
terrain.

² There is clearly some degree of problem with the meaning of published Soviet comment
on Third World conflict, particularly in the pre-glasnost’ era. Notably, one must ask to what
extent writings were propagandistic, having no necessary relation to understanding of the issues
being written about, and intended instead to deceive their own publics and readers abroad.
Careful reading of a wide sample of sources, however, allows the analyst to distinguish between
the articulation of doctrine, efforts to disinform, and muted analytical debate.
The second was more practical. It focussed on four cases (the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1967 to 1972; the Vietnam conflict during the Nixon period - 1969-73; Central America - 1979-89; Southwest Africa - 1981-88), addressing the following issues:

1. Soviet interests perceived to be at stake in the conflict in question;
2. the Soviet approach to efforts at conflict resolution; and, more specifically;
3. Soviet approaches to superpower collaboration in conflict resolution;
4. the effect of American policy on Soviet crisis behavior.

My fundamental purpose in these cases was to explore the extent to which the USSR was a viable participant in processes of conflict management and resolution and whether and how this changed over time.

With regard to the first part of the study, there was evidence of substantial evolution in all of the categories enumerated above. In many of them, evidence of significant reformulation predates the arrival of Gorbachev and subsequent reform of domestic and foreign policy. As such, it would be inappropriate to dismiss such change as a reflection merely of changing policy needs in a period of domestic crisis and reform.

1. Prevailing Soviet views on the sources of World conflict shifted from near unanimous attribution of these events to the destabilizing impact of imperialist (and particularly American) policy to a focus on indigenous sources of conflict (the territorial legacy of colonialism, ethnic and social contradictions, and religion).

2. There was a broad shift in Soviet comment on the significance of Third World conflict in and the nature of its relation to world politics. In the 1970s, conflicts between the forces of national liberation and those of domestic reaction and international imperialism were characterized as an important aspect of the global shift in the correlation of forces in favor of world socialism. This line of analysis weakened in the early 1980s and by the end of the decade had disappeared. In the earlier period, the prevailing Soviet perspective was to deny the existence of linkage between competition in the Third World and the conduct of the central superpower relationship. By 1988, it was widely held that competition in the Third World had important negative consequences for the US-Soviet relationship and impeded the attainment of critical objectives of Soviet foreign policy. As such efforts to resolve outstanding Third World disputes dividing the US and the USSR conduced to the attainment of
critical Soviet foreign policy objectives. In the 1970s, Soviet spokesmen and scholars tended
to play down the prospect of escalation from Third World conflict to global confrontation
(with the important exception of the Middle East). This position also weakened in the early
1980s, and by the middle of the decade, the dominant Soviet perspective stressed the great
danger of escalation from such conflict.

3. In the 1970s, Soviet comment focussed on the role of the USSR as defender of the
forces of progress in a struggle of global dimensions between light and darkness. The United
States played the villain, a power committed to frustrating the desires of the peoples of the
Third World for liberation and wedded to retaining the Third World as a rear area in the
battle against social progress. By the end of the 1980s, this line of analysis had also largely
disappeared. The focus became increasingly nonideological, the two superpowers being cast
as actors pursuing concrete and conventional state interests (economic, diplomatic, and
military) and seeking a balance of interests on a regional and global scale.

4. Not surprisingly, although in the 1970s force was seen as a legitimate, and
occasionally desirable means of furthering the struggle between imperialism and socialism on
a world scale, and as frequently a necessity in specific local contexts, by the late 1980s it
was seen almost by definition as undesirable, wasteful, and dangerous (see point 2). Peaceful
political settlement was seen, by contrast, as the only appropriate means of conflict resolu-
tion.

5. In the 1970s, and in specific instances up until the mid-1980s, the very possibility
of superpower collaboration in the management and resolution of Third World conflict was
rather consistently denied. This is, as shall be noted below, at variance with the historical
record for that period. None the less, the strength of this perspective suggests the existence
of important cognitive impediments to cooperation between the USA and the USSR in
regional security initiatives. Such a perspective follows logically from the views on the
sources of conflict and on the roles of the superpowers already mentioned. Again, by the mid
and late 1980s, Soviet perspectives displayed substantial change. Given that neither side had
any concrete interest in sustaining conflict, and given that both stood to suffer from the
damage that competition in the Third World inflicted on their central relationship as well as
from potential escalation, both stood to gain from efforts at collaboration.
6. This was accompanied, finally, by fundamental revision of Soviet perspectives on the capacity of international and regional organizations to manage conflict. Whereas in the 1970s, Soviet comment had displayed indifference towards the United Nations' capacity to play a useful role in conflict management, and ambivalence regarding the capacities of regional organizations, by the late 1980s, Soviet writers displayed great enthusiasm about the UN as a conflict manager. In contrast, their evaluations of regional organizations seemed to be determined to a far lesser degree by political considerations and was more attentive to the actual strengths and weaknesses of these bodies as potential conflict managers.

With regard to part 2 of the study, I am still working my way through it. Analysis thus far suggest several tentative conclusions. Although analysis of Soviet commentary during the 1970s does not conduce to great optimism in assessing the Soviet potential for collaboration in the management of regional conflict, their diplomatic practice in instances such as the Middle East (1967-72), and in Vietnam (1969-73) suggested that in addition to the zero-sum objectives implicit in Soviet commentary on regional conflict, the USSR was pursuing other less confrontational ends (e.g. status and the legitimation of the role of the USSR as an actor in Third World politics, and the avoidance of escalation). To the extent that American diplomacy was attentive to these preoccupations, there was room for cooperation in the effort to resolve regional conflicts. This leaves me with an impression somewhat different from the conventional wisdom concerning Soviet diplomacy of this period, which casts the USSR as an essentially uncooperative spoiler.

The difference in Soviet behavior between the earlier and later cases suggests that as time passed, the relative significance of zero-sum competitive goals (influence, strategic position, ideological transformation) declined in comparison to more benign ones (role and status), while the Third World as an object of Soviet policy declined in importance relative to other arenas of world politics. This broadened substantially prospects for meaningful dialogue and cooperation on regional issues in the Third World. These enhanced prospects are reflected in Soviet behavior in the later stages of the two cases from the later period.

The overall conclusion one is left with is that the potential for cooperation with the USSR in the management of regional crises during the early period of detente and its gradual demise, though small, was underemphasized and incompletely exploited, while the transfor-
mation in Soviet perspectives on Third World conflict created substantially broader avenues of cooperation in the late 1980s. Although in many respects the restructuring of Soviet policy in the Third World was related to growing American resistance to Soviet expansion and to the foreign policy needs occasioned by the deepening domestic crisis in the USSR in the early and mid-1980s, reformulation of Soviet perspectives and policy is closely related to their experience of failure of the broad lines of policy towards the Third World characteristic of the mid and late 1970s. As such, it is reasonable to assume that a process of learning was of significance in determining the content of Soviet new thinking and practice in the Third World under Gorbachev.
Soviet Perspectives on Third World Security

Final Report

I. Introduction

A. Goals

This research project covers the evolution of Soviet commentary on Third World security, and Soviet diplomatic behavior in four cases of regional conflict and efforts at cooperative conflict resolution. The project reflected my interest in assessing the prospects for superpower cooperation in the management and resolution of Third World conflicts, through an examination of how Soviet academics and policy makers thought about Third World security and through an examination of their diplomatic and military behavior in a limited number of Third World crises. The period covered in the analysis was 1970 to 1991, that is to say, from the inception of detente to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In approaching this subject, I was particularly interested in two issues. The first was the extent to which "traditional" Soviet theory and practice relating to Third World security left room for dialogue, cooperation, and compromise on peripheral crises during the era of detente from 1971 to 1980. To the extent that it did, the failure to control superpower competition in the Third World and to limit the spillover of the negative consequences of such conflict into the central superpower relationship could be interpreted to some extent as a result of misperception and error in American policy.

The second was how the transition in Soviet perspectives on Third World security from old to new thinking affected prospects for superpower cooperation on Third World conflict and why this transition occurred. In particular, to what extent did it reflect a process of learning? By learning, I mean a cognitive transformation in which the accumulation of experience disconfirming the validity of traditional modes of understanding (theories of

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3 The cases studied are
1. the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1967-72;
2. the Vietnam War during the Nixon Administration (1969-73);
3. conflict in Central America from 1979-89;
causation, methodological assumptions, interpretive principles) of an empirical phenomenon (in this instance Third World conflict) results in the abandonment or substantial restructuring of prior interpretive structures and their replacement with a body of generally held theories and assumptions which allows a more accurate analysis and prediction of the phenomenon in question.

A third, and related, aspect of the study was an effort to assess the extent to which Soviet thinking and writing about Third World security and conflict is homogenous, comprising an internally consistent body of analysis and prescription which changed reasonably monolithically over time, or whether there existed a sufficient plurality of perspectives within this body of sources to make generalization about Soviet attitudes at any point in time or about change over time in Soviet perspectives difficult. To the extent that such plurality of perspective existed, to what extent could one associate it with specific institutions and bureaucratic interests?

A final goal of the work was to address the perennial issue of the relationship between theory and practice, in this instance in the context of Soviet approaches to Third World conflict.

When complete, the study will make three contributions. The first relates to the literature on Soviet policy in the Third World in the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras. Although there have been a number of important studies of Soviet thinking regarding the Third World

this field attempt to relate the empirical phenomena in question to broader questions of theory in international relations and comparative foreign policy. This work seeks to integrate the empirical record of Soviet writing on and behavior with respect to Third World conflict into the theoretical discussion of the sources of state behavior, and in particular of learning, as a source of change in policy.

B. Method

The assessment of Soviet theoretical perspectives on security and conflict in the Third World is based on a broad survey of Soviet government and party statements and of the journal and monographic literature relating to this subject. The net is cast widely in order to give confidence as to the accuracy of general propositions concerning "Soviet thinking" at any given point in time, as well as to assess the extent of divergence of opinion on relevant issues and to analyze the nature of such divergence (i.e. whether it falls along institutional lines or whether there are "opinion clusters" which cross institutional boundaries).

It is recognized at the outset that Soviet writings serve a number of purposes (e.g. the articulation of doctrine, debate and analysis, and disinformation), and that statements within them may serve instrumental or cognitive purposes. They must therefore be read with care if their meaning and significance are to be reliably identified. These problems are discussed in detail in a methodological chapter prefacing the discussion of Soviet thought. Suffice it to note here that assessment of these sources must be based not only on what is said, but of who is saying it and what their affiliation and background are, the intended audience of the statement, and the internal and external environmental conditions in the context of which the statement appears.

In order to give some structure to this subject, several themes were identified as a basis for analysis:

1. the sources of Third World conflict - why does it occur;

2. the significance of Third World conflict in world politics
   a. the influence of Third World conflict on the "correlation of forces";
b. the nature of linkage between Third World competition and central superpower relations;
c. possibilities of escalation from Third World conflict to global confrontation and general war.

3. the nature of and motivations underlying the roles of the superpowers in Third World conflicts;

4. the utility of force as an instrument of policy in managing or resolving Third World disputes, both for local actors and for the superpowers;

5. prospects for and the nature of superpower cooperation in Third World disputes;

6. the capacity of Third World states and their regional organizations to resolve their own disputes, and the role of international organizations (e.g. the United Nations) in the same vein.

These themes were chosen for the following reasons. In the first place, how one explains Third World conflict (and in particular the role which one attributes to imperialism as a cause of conflict) has obvious implications for one's evaluation of the feasibility of cooperation with the United States in the management of regional conflict. Moreover, it may be an indicator of the strength of Soviet commitments in a given region. Stressing the specific and sui generis character of a regional conflict is a means of "decoupling" it, which in turn serves as an instrumental argument for retreat without damage to credibility.\(^5\)

Second, issues relating to the place of Third World conflict in world politics are a good guide to the implicit Soviet assessment of the benefits and costs associated with their policies in the Third World. Third, comment on the nature of American activities and motivations relating to Third World conflict serves as a more direct gauge of the Soviet assessment of the merits of collaborative or competitive relations with the United States in the Third World. Comment on their own role serves as an indicator of what types and directions of policy are desirable at any give time for the USSR. Comment concerning the necessity, desirability, and utility of force as an instrument of policy give some idea of how -

at any point in time - Soviet commentators weigh the relative merits of unilateral military versus collaborative diplomatic behavior. Comment on the capacities of regional actors and organizations to resolve their own problems provides some measure of the Soviet attitude towards regionally based efforts at conflict resolution as well as of the Soviet desire to engage or disengage from specific regional conflicts. Finally, comment on the role of international organizations such as the United Nations gives an indication of Soviet assessment of the merits of "multilateralizing" conflict management and resolution.

The second, practical part of the study, as noted earlier, focussed on four episodes in the history of Soviet-American relations in the Third World, two from the 1970s and two from the 1980s. The spread was chosen in order to provide an indication of the nature of Soviet crisis behavior during both the Brezhnev and the Gorbachev eras, and to provide reasonably complete geographical coverage of the Third World. The method of approaching the cases closely approximates that developed by Alexander George - the focused case study comparison 6, and stresses the following questions as a basis for comparative analysis:

1. what interests was the USSR pursuing in the case under consideration?
2. to what extent and in what ways did Soviet behavior display interest in conflict management and resolution?
3. what were the constraints in the case under consideration on the Soviet capacity to pursue cooperative negotiated solutions; and
4. to what extent did American behavior influence Soviet propensities to seek negotiated solutions to regional conflicts.

The principal sources employed in this part of the analysis were secondary (Western) scholarly accounts of the events in question, memoirs of participants in negotiations involving the Soviets, and Soviet accounts of the conflict in question and interviews with Soviet scholars and diplomats. Given changes in access to Soviet archival materials, I intend to supplement this research with efforts to obtain diplomatic records in a subsequent trip to Moscow.

6 See, for example, Alexander George and Richard Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp.94-97.
II. Results

A. Soviet Perspectives on Third World Security

Considerations of space do not allow a detailed recounting of the development of Soviet perspectives on Third World security. Over 500 sources have been consulted in this section of the study. Instead, I shall begin with a brief summary of my conclusions concerning the existence of a plurality of views on the subject. I shall then describe the basic trends in the evolution of Soviet perspectives on the themes mentioned above. I shall conclude with a summary of my conclusions concerning learning. The notes provided for the analysis which follows are representative of prevailing trends rather than comprehensive. A full accounting of manuscript and interview sources is not possible, given the space limitations of this document.

The sources which I have consulted suggest in the first place that for much of the period under consideration (1971-1979 and 1987-1991) there was considerable community of perspective on these issues. The only periods in which settled orthodoxy was difficult to identify were those of the early 1980s, in which emergent revisionist conclusions reflecting critical assessment of the accumulation of experience during the Brezhnev era began to challenge more conservative perspectives characteristic of the 1970s, and in 1985-8 when these conservative perspectives fought an unsuccessful rearguard action against the increasingly predominating themes of "new thinking" as regards Third World security. In this sense, the impression one gets is that of the replacement of one orthodoxy by another, divided by an period of disarray and debate.

This is not to say that there was no plurality of perspectives during even the settled periods. There was, but even in such periods, there was clearly a dominant and a subordinate position. An example might be the evidence of a debate of sorts among various Soviet commentators in the late 1970s on the question of the roots of conflict in the Third World. The two principal available modes of interpretation closely parallel methodological divisions in the Western literature between globalists and regionalists - the former stressing the salience of the bipolar competition and the policies of one or both superpowers (and China) in accounting for the incidence of local conflict, and the latter stressing instead the primacy
of local factors in causing and determining the course of local conflicts. In the context of this debate, the globalist position was unambiguously favored, to judge from the statements of policy makers.

Moreover, there were sometimes different emphases in different sources, though it is unclear whether these reflected a division of analytical labor or genuine divergence of perspective. An example is the far more frequent discussion of roles of Soviet forces in the Third World in the military journals. This contrasts rather markedly with the greater discussion of political, ideological, and military instruments in the civilian academic journals. One can account for this in terms of the institutional interest of the military in advertising the utility of its assets in the context of the general competition for resources in the USSR.

On the other hand, it may simply have been the province of military writers, and not civilian ones, to discuss issues relating directly to the use of force. During the pre-Gorbachev era, in this context, there was a far clearer demarcation of expertise between military affairs and the social sciences than in the United States, there existing very few civilian scholars who were even competent to discuss military issues. The principal journal of the Main Political Administration (Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sил), not surprisingly, fell somewhere in

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7 See, for example, the discussion in 1978 issues of Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' on the sources of conflict in Africa, involving V. Sofinskii and A. Khazanov, and V. Kudryavtsev (all tending to emphasize indigenous factors), and V. Vorob'ev (taking the opposite view. Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' (1978), #4, p.38; #6, pp.68-9; #8, pp.34, 36.

8 See, for example, L. Brezhnev:
   Instability in Africa is born differently. It is caused by external forces that are trying to prevent African peoples from choosing that path which they consider most appropriate. These forces are trying to set some African countries against others, they kindle and fan discord, and provoke quarrels over problems which came to the African peoples from colonial times.

9 E.g. Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal, and Morskoi Sbornik.

10 E.g. Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia, Narody Azii i Afriki, and SShA: Politika, Ekonomika, i Ideologia.
between, combining as it did an appeal to a military and military-political audience with responsibility for conveying to this audience the basic principles of party doctrine.

1. The Sources of Third World Conflict.

The range of variation existing here, as inferred above, has at the one end purely globalist (class) explanations, and at the other purely local interpretation. In Soviet discourse, the first - which dominated discourse in the 1970s and early 1980s - focuses on the agency of capitalism in its imperialist manifestation as a cause of Third World conflict. The imperialists seek to resist the efforts of the peoples of the Third World to achieve national liberation and autonomy in world politics, because they see the Third World as a rear area in the struggle against world socialism, and because they seek to exploit its resources. Conflict in the Third World results from the collision of these forces. If imperialism did not impede the forces of national liberation and social progress, conflict in the Third World would not exist. As one writer put it with reference to Angola:

Numerous facts give a solid basis for declaring that the conflict in Angola, and the worsening of the situation around it are the result of crude interference of imperialist forces in the affairs of the Angolan people ... It is a matter not of some internal political or tribal problem, but of open crude imperialist interference.  

A secondary source of conflict stems from the efforts of traditionally dominant social layers or classes who, in alliance with external imperialism, are seeking to impede the movement of their societies towards socialism. The essence of the analysis is class, at both the international and domestic levels.

The second - which grew increasingly common in the early 1980s and by 1987 had become the dominant interpretation - disengages the explanation of Third World conflict from the global contradiction between capitalism and socialism, and from marxist ideology in general, and instead stresses factors indigenous to the Third World - notably the irrational territorial legacy of colonialism, and the existence of internal social, ethnic, and religious

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divisions. The basis of explanation here - as Mirsky in fact pointed out in the citation in note 12 - is not strictly related to class or "objective" aspects of relations of production, but instead is subjective, or superstructural.

This revision has broader significance as well. First, class and class struggle are central organizing principles of Marxism-Leninism. Their abandonment, or significant shift in the importance accorded to them in the analysis of political processes constituted, therefore, a fundamental challenge to the cognitive structure informing Soviet views of the world around them. The displacement of class had wide ramifications not only for examination of Third World politics, but for the legitimation of the Soviet state and for the explanation of the internal political order in the USSR itself. This suggests several lines of further research. Was the revision of assessments of the role of class in Third World politics in part a surrogate suggesting the need for similar revision in the analysis of Soviet politics? Or, conversely, was the reassessment of class in Third World politics an externalization of evolving internal political analysis?

Secondly, this line of analysis was closely linked to an attack - implicit and then explicit - on the universality of Marxist theory, and in particular the uncritical application of...
categories of class analysis developed in the European context to the very different social, economic, political, and cultural conditions of the Third World:

On the eve of the collapse of the colonial system, it was considered self-evident that after the liberation of the Asian and African countries either the power of the proletariat or that of the national bourgeoisie would be established. Reasoning involuntarily from a position of "eurocentrism" and ignoring the specifics of backward societies in which neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie were fundamental classes (in contradistinction to the western society studied by Marx), our scholars carried over the laws of capitalist development in Europe to countries with entirely different conditions.¹³

What we see then in the evolution of Soviet attitudes towards the sources of Third World conflict is a growing critique of previous globalism, and the fundamental Marxist-Leninist postulates underlying it, and growing awareness of and attention to local and regional factors (including culture) as fundamental explanatory variables. As Soviet scholars themselves recognized, this evolution reflected a growing experientially based awareness that the concept of class struggle (both internally within Third World societies and externally in the global competition between capitalism and socialism) did not provide an adequate analytical and predictive basis for the examination of an entire series of conflicts in which friends of the USSR (and in the case of Afghanistan the USSR itself) were involved.

2. Third World Conflict and World Politics (the Correlation of Forces, Linkage, and Escalation)

a. the correlation of forces.

Here the dominant position of the 1970s paralleled closely (in conclusions if not in method) the theory of bipolarity’s exposition of the significance of the "periphery" in world politics. Soviet writers -- particularly in the party leadership and apparat -- generally maintained that the "national liberation movement" was one of the three principal forces of the world revolutionary movement of struggle against capitalism and imperialism. The conflicts of the peoples of the Third World against the western powers constituted an

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important contribution to the gradual shift of the correlation of forces in favor of world socialism.\(^{14}\)

By the heyday of the "Gorbachev era" in the late 1980s, this position had been more or less completely abandoned. Analyses employing the concept of the "correlation of forces" grew increasingly rare. The formulation of Soviet foreign policy in terms of global class struggle came under increasing scrutiny, with spokesmen such as Shevardnadze arguing in mid-1988 that previous Soviet policy had been flawed because of the excessive role it played by the concepts of class and class struggle.\(^{15}\) The focus henceforth was to be on the concrete state interests of the USSR, rather than on the ideological chimera of the struggle between social systems.\(^{16}\)

\(^{14}\) As Brezhnev put it in 1976:

We are living in an epoch of fundamental social changes and socialism's positions are continuing to strengthen and widen. The victories of the national liberation movements are opening new horizons for countries that have gained their independence. The class struggle of the working people against the oppression of the monopolies, against exploiter systems, is intensifying. The revolutionary-democratic, anti-imperialist movement is acquiring increasing scope. Taken as a whole, all this signifies the development of the worldwide revolutionary process. Such is the mighty stride of history.

"Doklad Tsentral'nomu Komitetu KPSS", Pravda (February, 25, 1976), p.7. See also Mikhail Suslov's comments on this subject in a speech given in Bryansk and printed in Pravda (September 19, 1979), p.2.

\(^{15}\) See Shevardnadze's speech in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as reprinted in Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR (1988), #15, pp.27-46, and in particular 35-6. See also S. Pronin, "Ideologia vo vzaimosvyazannom mire", Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia (1988), #10, pp.5, 9, 10.

\(^{16}\) What this meant in terms of national liberation was well put by a Soviet academic in conversation with ANC activists in Harare, Zimbabwe, in March of 1990. When asked what the guiding principles of Soviet policy in the Southern African region were, he responded that they were twofold: Soviet policy should be cheap, and its gains should be convertible into hard currency.
b. linkage

The issue of linkage was of considerable importance in the context of detente in the mid-1970s, given the occasional attempts by the Nixon (and Carter) Administrations to tie the fruits of detente to Soviet behavior in the Third World (detente as policy), and more importantly because of the impact that Soviet activism in the Third World had on popular and elite support for detente in the United States. On the whole, Soviet writers rejected the notion that their support of friends in the Third World could be held hostage to detente. The best known exposition of this position was Brezhnev's at the 25th Party Congress:

Some bourgeois gentlemen affect amazement and raise a howl over the solidarity of Soviet Communists with the struggle of other peoples for freedom and progress. This is either naivete or, more likely, deliberate obfuscation. After all, it could not be clearer that detente and peaceful coexistence refer to relations between states. This means above all that disputes and conflicts between countries must not be settled by means of war or by means of the use of force or the threat of force. Detente does not in the slightest abolish, and it cannot abolish or alter, the laws of class struggle.17

And in the first days of detente, the Soviet applied this principle to American behavior as well, as, for example, when they failed to link American behavior in Vietnam and Cambodia (viz. the invasion of Cambodia and the mining of Haiphong Harbour) to the SALT I process.

They also quite clearly rejected the notion that -- whether or not linkage was a matter of policy -- Soviet confrontational behavior in the Third World might make detente so unpopular in American domestic politics that pursuing it would be difficult even for the best-intentioned of American politicians. At the time of Soviet/Cuban intervention in the Ethiopian-Somali conflict, Secretary of State Vance reportedly told Andrei Gromyko that Soviet activities in the Horn of Africa were creating a climate in public opinion which was making it difficult for the United States constructively to pursue detente in areas such as arms control.18 This particular construction of the problem was quickly and derisively dismissed within weeks by Georgii Arbatov. In general, to the extent that public opinion (the views of the "broad masses") were deemed significant, this was by definition as a factor supportive of detente.

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18 Private communication.
The common position by the late 1980s was diametrically opposite. It was classically stated by V. Kolosovskii in 1988:

Postwar history shows that a more or less serious crisis even in the most distant corner of the planet can quickly resonate -- sometimes very seriously -- on Soviet-American and on interbloc relations ... The experience of detente in the 1970s suggests that it is impossible to seek a normalization of relations between the USSR and the USA, between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, taking into account only questions of arms limitation and the adjustment of bilateral cooperation ... The development of regional crises and the behavior of the two sides in relation to such crises was the most important catalyst -- precisely a catalyst and not a pretext -- for the sharp worsening of Soviet-American relations at the turn of the decade.19

This is perhaps a specific variant of the more general turn in Soviet thinking about security from unilateralism to interdependence. As is well known, Gorbachev reformulated Soviet doctrine concerning security at the 27th Party Congress in 1986 with the proposition that each state's security depended inversely on other states' perceptions of threat, and therefore that security was mutual and universal. It follows that unilateral competitive steps with regard to Third World conflicts degrade the system of security by enhancing others' perceptions of threat.

c. Escalation

Soviet authors also played down this aspect of the interrelationship between global and regional security in the 1970s.20 In this respect, the Brezhnev era differs importantly from

19 A. Kolosovskii, "Regional'nye Konflikty i Global'naya Bezopasnost'", Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia (1988), #6, p.32. This rendered explicit the implication in Gorbachev's formulation of the universality of security at the 27th Party Congress in 1986. V. Dashichev, also writing in 1988 on this theme, characterized the Soviet leadership's failure to comprehend the nature of linkage between Third World crises and Soviet-American relations as one of the most significant failures of Brezhnev's foreign policy. In Literaturnaya Gazeta (May 18, 1988), p.14.

20 There was, during the 1970s very little reference to the possibility of escalation of conflict in the Third World to the level of general confrontation and war between the United States and the USSR. In general, the period was seen as one of the "affirmation in practice of the principle of peaceful coexistence of states" leading to the deflection of the "threat of thermonuclear war".
that of Khrushchev, when Soviet spokesmen tended to emphasize the escalatory linkage between local and general war. Soviet confidence clearly deteriorated in this regard during the early 1980s, given the radical deterioration of Soviet-American relations and the election of Ronald Reagan as president of the United States. By 1982, Arbatov was averring that:

Today, a rash, adventurist policy by any country, even a small one, represents a danger to the entire international community.  

Again, this prefigures much of what the political leadership and academic analysts had to say about the dangers of escalation from regional conflict during the mid and late 1980s. The concern over escalation in conditions of the nuclear arms race and the potential consequences of nuclear exchange was, as shall be noted below, a critical factor underpinning the renunciation of the use of force in relations between states (and in relations among substate groups) characteristic of the Gorbachev era.

With regard to the sources of the changes in Soviet perspective, suffice it to note here that they appear to be overdetermined. The domestic crisis in the USSR -- and the attendant need for improvement of relations with the West and the United States in particular -- implied a necessity to reorder the nature of superpower relations in the Third World in a less confrontational direction. Clearly, one might argue that the recasting of the Soviet understanding of the role of the Third World in the global struggle between capitalism and socialism and of the role of that struggle as a basis for Soviet foreign policy, the reassessment of the nature of linkage, and the renewed focus on escalation (coupled with an increasingly intense and alarmist stress on the potential consequences of nuclear war) all served to justify a reduction in tension in the Third World. In this sense, they may have reflected "motivated bias" rather than cognitive change. It is hard to believe, for example,

"Postanovlenie TsKKPSS ot 31 Yanvarya 1977 Goda: O 60-i Godovshchine Velikoi Oktyabrskoj Revolyutsii", Pravda (February 2, 1977), pp.1-2. The critical exception was the Middle East, where throughout the period, Soviet writers continued to emphasize the danger of escalation.


22 See, for example, Evgenii Primakov's 1987 assertion that because regional conflicts could spark a global confrontation, it was now dangerous to view such conflicts "from the standpoint of Soviet-American rivalry". In "In the Same Boat", New Times (1987), #42, p.15.
that Soviet analysts really believed that any use of force in the Third World carried an unacceptable danger of global thermonuclear war.

Yet Soviet conclusions with regard to the significance of the Third World and with regard to the role of the Third World in world politics are sensible derivations from past Soviet experience. Most students of the subject would have agreed by the mid-1980s that Third World conflicts (again with the exception of the Middle East) were of marginal significance to the international balance of power. Substantial gains were hard to come by and tended to be ephemeral. In the Soviet case, it would be difficult to point to concrete long term gains emanating from their "victories" in Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Vietnam, while it was evident that the effort to sustain these dubious gains carried not inconsiderable costs. While the USSR was busily defending inviable regimes in Angola, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan, the United States was greatly increasing the costs borne by the Soviet Union in such efforts through the Reagan Doctrine. In the meantime, real shifts in the global balance of power were occurring as a result of the Reagan central military buildup and the growing economic strength of Germany and Japan. Rational evaluation of experience would lead, in other words, to the conclusion (to paraphrase General Bradley) that the USSR was fighting the wrong wars in the wrong places at the wrong times.23

With regard to linkage, although stressing the importance of the interconnection between Third World disputes and the central superpower relationship while noting the primacy of that relationship in Soviet foreign policy in the nuclear era served the instrumental purpose of justifying retreat, the fact is that revised Soviet perspectives on the issue are far closer to the truth than were their Brezhnevian predecessors. There is little doubt that Soviet and Cuban activities in Angola strengthened the right wing in the Republican Party in 1976 and delegitimized the pursuit of detente in American domestic politics. The Soviet and Cuban intervention in Ethiopia had similar effects and delayed the SALT II negotiation in the process. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan resulted in tangible, though perhaps not terribly

23 It is perhaps significant in justifying cognitive interpretation of changing Soviet evaluations of the significance of the Third World and Third World conflict that many American scholars (in the context of a quite different resource base) were coming to similar conclusions regarding the irrelevance of Third World competition to the basic objectives of the United States.
impressive, sanctions and costs to the USSR, and again contributed substantially to the arrival of the Reagan Administration. In short, if one understands group learning as a recasting of interpretive filters and decision rules in the face of experientially based cognitive dissonance, there is good prima facie evidence that such a process was at work here.

3. The Roles of the Superpowers

Soviet comment on the roles of the superpowers was strongly informed by their perspectives on class, class struggle, and the correlation of forces. In the earlier period, examination of the role of the superpowers in the Third World and with specific regard to Third World was (on the whole) characteristically manichaean. The United States was attempting to restrain the natural process of national liberation, in order to retain the Third World as a rear area in its struggle with the Soviet Union, and in order to continue its exploitation of the resources and labor of the underdeveloped Third World states. Its basic interests were antithetical to those of the peoples of the Third World. Although the United States was perceived to be incorrigible, its position in the mid-1970s was seen to be relatively weak and weakening further, presumably as a result of the setbacks it experienced in Vietnam, Angola, and Ethiopia. The USSR, by contrast, was cast as a leading force in the world revolutionary movement, committed to furthering the process of global revolutionary change. It was the Bol'shevik Revolution and the rise of the world socialist system after World War II which created the preconditions for the success of national liberation movements in the Third World by giving new states an alternative to continuing dependence on the world capitalist system, by deterring imperialist attempts on a global scale to reverse the process of liberation, and in that the socialist states could assist in repulsing such attempts as might occur.

There were important limitations on the activism inherent in this definition of role. Consistent with traditional marxist theory, Soviet commentators almost universally insisted that the USSR did not export revolution, but assisted others in resisting the export of counterrevolution. In this latter context, as Mark Katz pointed out some time ago, Soviet writers were traditionally somewhat cautious about commenting on military assistance in the Third World. As time passed in the 1970s, and in the wake of successes in national liberation revolutions in Southern Africa, Soviet definition of their responsibilities in the Third World grew more expansive. This was particularly true of military sources. On rare occasions, writers went so far as to posit a direct military role for Soviet forces:

the influence of world socialism on the outcome of the armed struggle in favor of freedom-loving African peoples is realized in a number of ways: the delivery of weapons, the transmission of the military experience of its armies, and, in especially critical circumstances, the direct forestalling of the aggressor.

Thus far, the discussion leaves the impression of a Soviet Union intent on pursuing unilateral zero-sum objectives in its policy in the Third World, unconvinced of the necessity of dealing with the United States, and reasonably confident of its capacity to expand influence and reduce that of the United States relying on its own capabilities. This was paralleled, though somewhat more ambiguously, by some confidence in the socialist system's ability to replace the international capitalist economy in satisfying the needs of Third World states for trade, investment and aid.

Yet there was evident in Soviet discourse the existence of a number of other less confrontational motivations as well. In addition to the clearly zero-sum objectives of


26 See, for example, A. Ivanov and L. Mogila, "Voennaya Mashina YuAR -- Orudie protiv Osvoboditel'noi Bor'by Afrikanskikh Narodov" *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (1976), #12, p.92; or V. Kirsanov, "Natsional'no-osvoboditel'naya Voina i Razgrom Inostrannoi Interventsii v Angole", *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (1977), #8, p.76.

influence, and in certain instances strategic position, we have already seen that the objective of avoiding escalation was a preoccupation of varying importance to Soviet academics and policy makers during the 1970s and early 1980s. Although it weakened somewhat in the mid-1970s, it never disappeared in the Middle Eastern context. Moreover, when the United States began to reassert itself in the Third World later in the decade (in Africa the Shaba interventions of 1977 and 1978 are the turning point) and in the early 1980s in the context of rapid deterioration in the overall Soviet-American relationship, concern about escalation grew once again.

In addition, there was some evidence of attentiveness to excessive cost. Even in the heyday of perceived Soviet strength, Soviets who wrote about the issue of their military involvement in the Third World evinced far less enthusiasm for intrusion into situations where such action might involve a face off against powerful military adversaries. In Africa in the mid-1970s, for example, in discussions of specific regional conflicts where intrusion might result in confrontation with the South African Defence Force, Soviet writers were less forthcoming in their offers of support than they were in general discussions of regional conflict.28 One might infer from the reluctance to take on potentially heavy military burdens in such instances some willingness to explore diplomatic resolution.

Beyond this, some Soviet leaders spoke in such a way as to suggest that status and prestige were important aspects of the Soviet agenda as a rising global power with interests in the Third World.29 The objective of status was not necessarily zero-sum in character. Indeed, it could be achieved only to the extent that already preponderant powers (e.g. the United States) recognized it. This was presumably why the Basic Principles Agreement was

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28 Hence, in a discussion of Namibia, a writer in Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil spoke of Soviet political and military assistance to SWAPO, without any specific mention of military instruments. "Narod Namibii Boretsya", Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil (1978), #3, p.85.

29 See, for example, A.A. Gromyko: There is not a single significant issue which today can be decided without or in defiance of the Soviet Union. And if anybody were to try to show that one could manage without the Soviet Union in the resolution of these issues, people would consider him odd. Pravda (April 4, 1971), p.8.
of such importance to the USSR in the early 1970s. Its significance seemed rather obscure to American diplomats, but was quite clear to Soviet ones. It established in a bilateral superpower document the fact of Soviet equality. Soviet pride in this achievement was evident in statements by both Brezhnev and Gromyko in 1970 and 1971 to the effect that the USSR had reached a position in world affairs where no issue could be resolved without its participation. In short, the evidence suggests an array of Soviet goals - both positive (e.g. influence), and negative (e.g. the avoidance of escalation and the danger of defeat), and both zero-sum (e.g., again, influence and strategic position) and neutral (e.g. status and a place at the table). This suggests that it would be inappropriate to dismiss, even at the zenith of Soviet optimism and activism, the possibility that the USSR could have participated constructively in conflict management.

The evolution in role definition is about what one would expect. In the Gorbachev era, the previous emphasis on bipolar competition diminished. Instead, the principal preoccupation of the USSR in regional conflicts was to assure that they did not escalate into global confrontation. Avoidance of nuclear war was joined by a number of other interests and values which transcended the competition between social systems in Soviet foreign policy.

The recognition that both social systems shared common transcendent interests brought a softening of the Soviet definition of the American role in the Third World. It came to be recognized that the United States was not by definition unalterably opposed to peace and progress in the Third World. The United States in fact shared certain objectives with the USSR in the Third World and as such was a potential collaborator in the search for an end to regional conflicts. The evolution of Soviet attitudes on American-South African relations is a good case in point. Traditionally, the Republic of South Africa was seen as America's stalking horse in a campaign to prevent the full liberation of the peoples of Southern Africa. South African and American interests were perceived to be congruent. By the early 1980's, however, some analysts had come to see that there were in fact substantial differences between South African and American regional objectives, while by 1985, some were
mentioning positive aspects of American policy without qualifying comment. By 1988, Soviet spokesmen were positing that the USSR and the USA shared an interest in the elimination of apartheid and in minimizing the negative fallout in their central relationship emanating from persisting regional conflict. In this instance, we see, therefore, that the United States has moved from being an unequivocal adversary to being a promising collaborator in the search for peace in the region. Not surprisingly, as the United States mediated peace initiative on Angola and Namibia gathered steam in 1988, the Soviets abandoned their previous criticism of Crocker’s regional diplomacy and began to support the American effort both in rhetoric and, as part 2 of my study shows, in policy.

With regard to the Soviet role, as the emphasis on the revolutionary class character of Soviet foreign policy declined under Gorbachev, so too did the frequency of assertions that the USSR was the leading defender of the Third World in its resistance to imperialism. Soviet spokesmen increasingly identified the pursuit of interests shared with the United States (global values, such as the avoidance of war, environmental degradation, and underdevelopment) as basic priorities of Soviet policy in the Third World. This served as a rationale for cooperation with the United States in the pursuit of managed solutions to Third World conflicts. Underlying this was the redefinition of security mentioned earlier.

At the same time, Soviet writing and practice displayed growing sensitivity to the notion that as their power declined, their relevance as an actor in the Third World was diminishing. This suggested a continuing concern with status, which perhaps grew stronger as the USSR’s power declined. The final point with regard to Soviet objectives and role concerns the concretization of interest noted earlier, the emphasis on economic gain and on profitability in foreign policy at the expense of power-political and ideological competition.

To summarize, it appears that the USSR always entertained a range of goals in the Third World - some of which were zero-sum and confrontational in character, some of which were essentially neutral with regard to the balance of power, and some, finally which were

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30 See, for example, V. Shubin, "Rezhim Aparteida -- Parametry Krizisa", Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia (1985), #12, pp.63-4. This appraisal was accompanied by an increasingly sophisticated assessment of how the apartheid issue played in American domestic politics.
positive sum (i.e. both sides gained). The essential difference between the 1970s and the Gorbachev era is that the weight accorded to each category of objective has changed, with neutral and positive-sum objectives gaining prominence at the expense of zero-sum goals.

As with the subjects discussed earlier, this redefinition of both Soviet and American roles had considerable instrumental value, in laying the basis for a more rewarding relationship with the West at a time when such improvement was dictated by the domestic economic needs of the USSR. But again, it was also consistent with accumulating Soviet experience which disconfirmed the prior construct. To judge from the experience of competition for influence and strategic position, Soviet zero-sum behavior conduced to unacceptable costs. Their role of support for "progressive" (anti-Western and socialist oriented) forces had mired them in a series of unproductive and expensive relationships with dependent and inviable regimes.

4. The Use of Force

There is no need to go into great detail here, particularly given the space limitations of this report. The foregoing analysis suggests the likely directions of Soviet policy concerning the use of force. At the outset, it is pertinent to note that we are talking about two things here.

The first is the question of Soviet use of force in the pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. As was seen earlier, Soviet writers have always been careful in their discussion of this topic, but during the early and mid-1970s, their willingness to address it in a broad sense (i.e. the role of military support for Third World friends and allies), expanded and on rare occasions, this extended to a contemplation of direct use of Soviet forces in the resistance to the "export of counterrevolution". It bears stressing, however, that such references were limited to the military literature, were not terribly common there, and were avoided in the discussion of conflicts where militarily impressive adversaries could be engaged. This suggests considerable caution in this realm even in the heyday of Soviet optimism.

As time passed, and the use of force in Afghanistan in particular brought less than positive results, while the United States began to reassert itself more broadly in challenging Soviet positions, even this cautious and qualified endorsement of the use of force to resist the
American export of counter-revolution disappeared. There was very little of a specific nature in the Soviet literature of the early 1980s regarding the utility of force in the pursuit of Soviet objectives in the Third World.

The second concerns the broader question of the utility of force in general as a means of solving problems in interstate and civil regional politics. In the 1970s, the opinion was common that force was an acceptable, and often necessary, means of achieving national liberation and of defending the gains of the national liberation revolution against attempts by local or international "reaction" to reverse the historical process. Where the choice was one of war or submission, the choice of force was preferable, understandable and deserving of support. By contrast, there was little evidence of great enthusiasm about diplomatic settlement as an alternative available to Soviet friends in the Third World.

This tendency was more or less completely reversed in the Gorbachev era. As Evgenii Primakov once put it:

peaceful coexistence means not only ruling war out, but also ruling out force and even a demonstration of force in relations between states.  

In some instances, this was extended to specific conflicts, as when President Assad of Syria was informed at a state dinner of the Soviet belief that the Arab-Israeli conflict could not be resolved by force.

This extended to the consideration of internal wars as well. Although given the problems that criticism of the strategy of revolutionary war would have caused in relations with friendly movements (e.g. the ANC or the PLO) ensured that such criticism was rare, there were occasional explicit statements to the effect that force was not a promising strategy for movements struggling for liberation, as, for example, when Vladimir Tikhomirov ruled out the war of liberation as a viable tactic of struggle for the ANC in South Africa, calling it

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31 Primakov (op.cit., note 25, p.15. See also M. S. Gorbachev, "Politicheskii Doklad Ts. K. KPSS", Pravda (February 26, 1986):

Socialism unreservedly rejects wars as a means of settling interstate political and economic differences and ideological disputes. Our ideal is a world without weapons or coercion, a world in which every people may choose its path of development and its way of life freely.
an albatross around the neck of the liberation movement. The weight of Soviet argument with regard to the tactics chosen by its friends involved in civil and regional conflicts shifted towards peaceful negotiated settlement.

Once again, this was a conclusion quite understandable from Soviet experience in the Third World in the 1970s and early 1980s. The Soviets began the decade involved directly in military struggle in Afghanistan, with allies involved in civil wars in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Kampuchea, and supporting liberation movements waging armed struggle in Namibia, South Africa, El Salvador, and Palestine (to name the most prominent examples). In Gorbachev’s first years in office, the Soviets were beginning to pay an unacceptable price for their involvement in Afghanistan, their Angolan, Mozambican, and Ethiopian clients were showing at best no success in these ongoing struggles, and the liberation struggles just mentioned were showing no signs of success. In the meantime, many of the countries involved in these conflicts, poor to begin with, were being reduced to ruin. There were, in short, good empirical grounds for suggesting that the principal conflicts in which the USSR found itself directly or indirectly involved were leading nowhere, while their costs were rising. This is not a solid endorsement for the proposition that force is useful in attaining foreign policy objectives in the Third World. The negative consequences of these conflicts for the Soviet-American relationship have already been noted. In other words, there is again a solid experiential basis for the recasting of Soviet analytical constructs regarding this aspect of Third World security.

5. Superpower Collaboration in Conflict Resolution

If force were no longer perceived to be a particularly sensible instrument of policy with respect to Third World conflicts and peaceful settlement based on a balance of interests were the logical approach to dealing with Third World conflicts, if the USA were no longer perceived to be unalterably opposed to Soviet interests in the Third World and to the interests of liberation and "progress", and instead was perceived to share certain critical common interests with the rest of humanity, one would expect a revision in Soviet perspectives.

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32 Not surprisingly, Tikhomirov’s article was picked up by South African newspapers and is accurately summarized in The Johannesburg Star (November 23, 1989).
towards collaboration between the two superpowers. And indeed, such a revision occurred. The preponderant Brezhnevian Soviet assessment of prospects for cooperation with the United States was implicit in their characterization of the American role in the Third World considered above. As noted earlier, the United States was the source of the problem and not part of the solution. As such, the United States was hardly a promising and disinterested participant in conflict resolution. American peace efforts were generally characterized as hypocritical efforts to maintain imperialist hegemony at the expense of the genuine interests of the peoples concerned. This generalization applies widely to Soviet comment on American initiatives in the Middle East (Camp David, Lebanese peacekeeping, Sinai peacekeeping), and Southern Africa (Zimbabwe and Namibia, in particular), and elsewhere.33

Revision of this hardline perspective was already implicit in the evolving debate on the nature of the United States during the Brezhnev era. To the extent that one characterized American foreign policy as being dominated and determined by a monolithic "monopoly capital" whose interests were unalterably opposed to those of the national liberation movement and the world socialist system, there seemed little prospect for constructive cooperation. To the extent, however, that one conceived of the bourgeoisie in the United States to be divided between more and less realistic circles, and/or that the government of the United States possessed a degree of autonomy in its political role, such prospects expanded.34

A degree of openness in the earlier period to the possibility of superpower cooperation in the management of Third World disputes is also evident in the terms of the Basic Principles Agreement mentioned above 35, and in various proposals on the part of Soviet

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34 The foregoing is informed by the discussion of evolving Soviet debates concerning the nature of American politics and government in Professor Franklyn Griffiths' Ph.D. dissertation (Images, Politics, and Learning, Harvard, 1969), and his article, *********** International Security (1984), # , pp. .

leaders to establish "codes of conduct" for superpower behavior in the Third World. It was, however, clear from the terms of reference of these documents and from contemporaneous Soviet practice that the fundamental purpose of such initiatives was to control competition rather than to eliminate it or resolve conflicts per se. The bipolar essence of Soviet perspectives and policy remained intact.

More significantly, perhaps, one sees in Soviet commentary surrounding UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the great enthusiasm displayed by the Soviets for a reconvening of the Geneva Conference on the Arab-Israeli dispute some intimation that despite the overarching zero-sum structure of analysis of East-West relations in the Third World a recognition in the first place that Soviet-American cooperation in this instance served a number of objectives of Soviet foreign policy which were of particular importance in the Middle Eastern context (e.g.

Again, the contrast with the Gorbachev era is quite striking. Although the transition was a sticky one, held back not only by domestic factors inside the USSR, but also by various dimensions of the conflicts in question, and there is much evidence of disagreement on the wisdom of cooperating with the United States during 1985-7. However, once the USSR decided to withdraw from Afghanistan in early 1988 and sought and received American assistance in the negotiation of its extrication, the climate changed perceptibly. This was evident in practice, as will be demonstrated in the discussion of Southern Africa and Central America below. It was also evident in Soviet discussions of the issue of superpower cooperation in conflict resolution.

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36 See, for example, Brezhnev's outline of such a code in "V Druzhestvennoi Obstanovke: Rech' Tov. L. I. Brezhneva", Pravda (April 8, 1981), p.2.

37 For example, the decision of the United States to resume military assistance to UNITA in 1985 after a nine year hiatus complicated any transition that the USSR might have made earlier to a collaborative diplomacy in this instance.

38 See, for example, the Pravda commentary on the significance of the Afghan agreement: Having achieved the maximally favorable external conditions for the elimination of one of the most dangerous and bloody struggles, [the Geneva Agreements] give the key to the settlement of regional conflicts ... The practice of the past decades, the entire history of the development of events around Afghanistan, demonstrates
6. Regional and International Organizations

The literature on these issues was examined in order to determine how Soviet writers perceived the role of multilateral institutions at both the global and regional level with respect to crisis management and conflict resolution, and how these perceptions changed over time. During the 1970s, the United Nations was seen principally as a weapon in the political struggle against the West. Soviet diplomacy there as it related to Third World conflict - and the comment surrounding it - centered on the UN’s (and in particular the General Assembly’s) utility as a means of marshalling international consensus behind the national liberation movements with whom the USSR was allied. That is to say, with regard to "revolutionary wars" in the Third World, the UN was an instrument in, rather than as a means to resolve, conflict.39

There were, of course, exceptions. It has already been noted that in some instances during the 1970s, the Soviets recognized clear advantages in limited cooperation with the West on regional security issues (e.g. avoidance of escalation, recognition of status). Not surprisingly, on occasion, therefore, they participated in security council efforts to defuse or to resolve certain conflicts (e.g. Resolutions 242 and 338). In general, and in contrast to the

the perniciousness and the sterility of attempts to find a solution to conflicts by force ... The Afghan experience obviously demonstrates that the only correct path is the search for political settlement ... In this fashion, intelligent, realistic cooperation [between the USSR and the USA] is able to contribute in a fundamentally constructive way to the unblocking of regional conflicts, although of course, it is impossible to search for their solution only at the table of Soviet-American negotiations.


39 As Andrei Kozyrev recently put it:
The East used to talk of the "aggressive nature" of imperialism, and the West, of communism, leaving to the UN the role of an arena where polemical swords clashed.

Gorbachev era, however, the United Nations was hardly at the center of Soviet evaluation of Third World security.

The assessment of the role of regional organizations in conflict management was also complex in the 1970s. Soviet evaluations varied from case to case. It is very difficult to find enthusiasm regarding ASEAN in the Soviet literature of the 1970s and early 1980s, in large part because of the close perceived connection of this organization to the United States, and because of the intense anti-communism of most of its members. Such comment as there was seemed to view ASEAN as an actual or potential instrument of US foreign policy. By contrast, Soviet comment on the OAS evolved from intense hostility in the period subsequent to that organization's legitimation of the American intervention in the Dominican Republic to greater tolerance and even sympathy in the 1970s, as the Latin American members of the organization displayed greater independence from and resistance to US regional objectives.

In the cases of the Arab League and the OAU, considerable ambivalence was evident in Soviet comment. This was a product of a number of factors. The membership of these organizations included states following extremely conservative domestic policies, and very anti-Soviet foreign ones (e.g. Ivory Coast in Africa, and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East). Moreover, both organizations were at least in part informed by specific regional ideologies (Panarabism and Panafricanism) stressing the minimization of external influences and the necessity for member states to solve their own problems (collective self-reliance). This was good in the sense that it served to limit imperialist intrusion in regional affairs. But the exclusivity was "tous azimuts", and could also limit Soviet presence and influence.

On the other hand, it was generally assumed - given the history of these regions - that the overall thrust of regional organizations would be anti-Western and hence "objectively" good. Moreover, from an instrumental perspective, Soviet authors understood that the OAU

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40 See, for example, Georgii Kim’s comments on the ASEAN states’ response to the Afghan invasion, in "Osvobodivshiesya Strany na Rubezhe 70ikh i 80ikh Godov: Faktory Stabilizatsii i Destabilizatsii", Azia i Afrika Sevodnya (1980), #3, p.5.

41 See, for example, A. M. Arsenin, "Dva Raunda 'Novovo Dialoga'", Latinskaya Amerika (1975), #5, pp.5-6.
and the Arab League were institutional manifestations of widely held elite values on regional unity, that serious criticism of them was likely to be offensive to these elites. So on balance Soviet assessments were reasonably positive.\(^{42}\) Again, in general, there was little sustained consideration of the role of these organizations in conflict management and resolution.

Perhaps the most decisive change in Soviet perspectives towards the role of regional and global multilateral organizations in regional security is the reassessment of the United Nations. At the risk of oversimplification, the "globalization" of Soviet perspectives on international relations implied an interest in institutions which would operationalize this trend. The choice made was the United Nations. Characteristic of Soviet thinking about Third World security in particular during the Gorbachev era is a movement to center stage of discussion of the United Nations and the attribution to it of a pivotal role in the management and resolution of Third World conflicts. Gorbachev himself underlined the critical role of the United Nations in operationalizing his "comprehensive system of international security" in the following way:

Objective processes are making our complex and varied world more and more interrelated and interdependent. And it stands increasingly in need of a mechanism capable of responsibly discussing common problems at a representative level. It needs to be a place of mutual quest for a balance of the differing contradictory, yet real, interests of the contemporary community of states and nations. The United Nations is called upon to be such a mechanism by its underlying idea of its origin. We are confident that it is capable of fulfilling that role.\(^{43}\)

In a more concrete sense, Soviet spokesmen and commentators came to see the United Nations as a very useful instrument to manage and resolve regional conflicts.\(^{44}\) The historical ambivalence they displayed towards the peacekeeping role of the United Nations

\(^{42}\) A good example of this modulated assessment from the period is V. Mikhin, "OAE: Golos Svobodnoi Afriki", Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' (1979), #9, pp.117-8.

\(^{43}\) M. Gorbachev, "Reality and Guarantees for a Secure World", New Times (1987), #39, p.3. For a more recent perspective, see V. Petrovskii, "Postkonfrontatsionnaya Perspektiva ON", Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenia (1990), #4, pp.16-24.

\(^{44}\) See Ambassador Belonogov's comments in Pravda (October 3, 1988), p.6.
disappeared and they began to contemplate Soviet participation in them. They began to display growing interest in resurrecting and strengthening UN military structures to support an expanded role for the organization in crisis management. They positively reevaluated the potential contribution of the United Nations in the resolution of conflicts in which their allies were involved.

Change in the assessment of the role of regional organizations in crisis management and conflict resolution is less obvious. There has been far less comment here than on the UN. The issue continues to be peripheral in Soviet discussions of regional security. Perhaps the most that can be said is that political and ideological factors influencing analysis of these organizations have become less significant. This has permitted a more balanced and open assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of these organizations. In the case of the OAU, for example, greater attention has been paid to the organizational and financial weaknesses of the organization and to the deep divisions within it.

B. The Case Studies

In the first section of this project, I was interested primarily in what evolving Soviet perceptions of Third World security tell us about their capacity throughout the period 1970-1991 to contribute constructively to crisis management and conflict resolution in the Third World. The analysis thus far demonstrates the existence of severe conceptual and perceptual

45 See, for example TASS' interview with Vladimir Petrovsky concerning the discussion of peacekeeping at the 43rd session of the United Nations General Assembly in FBIS-SOV-88-201 (18 October, 1988), p.8.

46 See A. Shalnev, in Izvestia (September 30, 1988), p.5. See also Kozyrev (op.cit., note 39).

47 with reference to Kampuchea, for example, see P. Tsvetov, in Izvestia (October 13, 188). On Afghanistan, see Pravda (June 16, 1988). There are numerous positive assessments of the UN role in the implementation of the December 1988 accord on Angola and Namibia, and frequent similar comments on the growing UN role in Central America.

48 This comment is based primarily on interviews conducted in Moscow in August 1991.
constraints on such capacity during the 1970s. These weakened during the early 1980s and by 1987 had largely disappeared.

A secondary conclusion one might draw from the analysis is that Soviet commentary suggests the existence of a spectrum of objectives in the realm of Third World security ranging from:

1. the clearly zero-sum variety (e.g. influence, strategic position, and the denial of same to the United States) through

2. those that were not obviously zero-sum in the sense that a Soviet gain did not obviously mean US loss (e.g. the establishment of a legitimate and respected role in regional politics and recognition of the right to be consulted associated with this role) to

3. the clearly positive sum (e.g. the avoidance of confrontation in areas where critical interests of the two superpowers overlapped such as the Middle East, or the avoidance of escalation from local conflict to general war).

One of the accepted conventional wisdoms of the late 1970s and early 1980s in the West was that there was no potential for cooperation with the Soviets in the Third World, because there was no common ground. The third category of objective suggests that this was not so, and indeed, the practice of the two superpowers during that period suggests a degree of tacit and more or less explicit cooperation designed to ensure the achievement of mutually accepted positive sum objectives. The second also suggests some potential for cooperation in that recognition of Soviet prestige objectives did not, ceteris paribus, draw into question fundamental American objectives, while it may have carried some potential for tangible quid pro quos.

Characteristic of the 1970s and early 1980s was a weighting of Soviet objectives which strongly favored the zero sum agenda. As Soviet thinking and behavior evolved under Gorbachev, it appeared that Soviet priorities were shifting from the earlier emphasis on zero-sum objectives to a much stronger focus on positive sum ones, and also issues of status and role.

The case studies were chosen as a means of exploring these issues. The two from the 1970s (the Middle East from 1967 to 1973) and Vietnam from 1969-73) were chosen as a means of examining the extent to which zero-sum objectives overrode neutral and positive
sum ones in practice - or, to put it another way, the extent to which Soviet behavior during the Brezhnev era demonstrated a capacity for meaningful cooperation with the United States in the management and resolution of Third World conflicts. The second two (Central America 1980-1990 and Southern Africa 1980-88) provide a means of exploring how changing Soviet perspectives during the 1980s translated themselves (or did not) into change in behavior towards ongoing conflicts which divided the superpowers.

Western case study analysis of Soviet behavior in the Third World in the 1970s and early 1980s generally takes as a given the existence of fundamental conflict of interest between the United States and the USSR, and then explores the causes and implications of Soviet behavior in the context of this overarching conflict. The approach taken here is somewhat different. The focus is on Soviet policy not towards the conduct of conflicts, but towards their management and resolution. The fundamental issue is whether Soviet behavior displayed any capacity for genuine cooperation in conflict resolution.

The principal measure of "genuineness" is whether Soviet policy makers were willing to accept risks or losses in their relations with friends and allies in the Third World in their diplomacy vis-a-vis the United States. If, for example, the Soviets were willing to adopt positions at variance with those of Egypt or Syria in the post-1967 Middle Eastern context in order to achieve a common position with the United States on Middle East peace, and were willing to push these two states towards compromise, then one would conclude that their pursuit of a Middle Eastern settlement was not mere rhetoric. Likewise, if they were willing to pressure Vietnam into moderating its positions on a settlement of the Vietnam War as an element of Soviet detente diplomacy, one would reach a similar conclusion.

The two cases both demonstrate a Soviet capacity to play down the zero-sum aspects of their agenda in an effort to resolve or to contain crises where the conflict in question carried significant potential costs in the relationship with the United States, or where the Soviet Union recognized substantial gains in relations with the United States.


In the case of Vietnam in the period under consideration, the North Vietnamese government was unenthusiastic about a political settlement of the war short of full unification
under their control.\textsuperscript{49} Soviet-Vietnamese relations had been troubled in the past as a result of differences over conduct and settlement of the war (as in 1954 or just prior to Khrushchev's ouster in 1964). The Soviets were very cautious about getting out ahead of the Vietnamese, because of the significance of Vietnam in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute, and given the past troubles in their bilateral relationship. On the other hand, as American and Soviet interest in detente evolved in the early 1970s, and as the United States to some extent linked the settlement process in Vietnam to the evolution of detente, the Soviet government did indeed begin to support the negotiating process in real terms. As Pike points out, for example, in 1972, the Soviets pressured the Vietnamese into retreating from their more extreme position on the question of unification (i.e. that it should occur under the exclusive authority of the VNWP) and to accept a coalition government and arrangement to share power in the south.\textsuperscript{50} At the same time, the Soviets acquiesced without significant objection to unilateral American pressure on the Vietnamese to settle (e.g. the mining of Haiphong Harbour).

In short, in this instance, Soviet policy makers faced a number of tradeoffs among objectives. Cooperating with the United States in resolving the conflict in Vietnam meant risking the alienation of and loss of influence in North Vietnam, a consideration of some importance given the significance of Vietnam in Sino-Soviet relations and the importance of Vietnam in the context of Soviet efforts at encirclement and containment of China. In this instance, the incentives of assisting the United States outweighed more clearly zero-sum objectives.

2. The Middle East, 1967-72

In the Middle Eastern case, the basic issues were not entirely similar. Certainly, in the post-1967 environment, the Soviets were attentive to the zero-sum objectives of expand-

\textsuperscript{49} See, for example, Douglas Pike, \textit{Vietnam and the Soviet Union} (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1987), p.93.

\textsuperscript{50} ibid., p.96. This is not to argue that Soviet pressure was the determining or the dominant factor in causing North Vietnam to moderate its position at the peace talks.
ing and sustaining influence and presence in the Arab world. Indeed, it was in this period that the Soviets obtained a substantial array of military facilities in Egypt in particular which considerably increased their capacity to project and maintain force in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Soviet "penetration" had been substantially facilitated by the Arab-Israeli conflict which created significant military dependencies of the Arab states on the USSR. The front line states were strongly committed to the removal of Israel from occupied territories, and were predisposed not to negotiate on this subject, since negotiation at the very least implies recognition.

In these circumstances, the USSR clearly had substantial incentive to maintain its relations with Egypt and Syria in particular, and faced substantial risks in the pursuit of balanced regional settlement (in the sense that such a pursuit would both complicate their relations with Arab states upon whom the Soviet regional presence depended, and, if successful, would undermine the military dependence which provided the material basis for Soviet influence and presence in the region.

On the other hand, as has already been noted, the Middle East - as an area where vital interests of the superpowers overlapped and where their policies were clearly in conflict, and where war or impending war among their friends was an apparently permanent feature of regional politics - was an area of particular Soviet concern about the escalatory potential of local conflict. Moreover, in practice, the Soviets displayed a reasonably clear awareness that in this instance anyway, linkage did apply. There was a clear connection between policy in the Middle East and the process of evolving detente.

This is related to a further point. Soviet diplomacy in the period of 1967 to 1972, and particularly in its later stages displayed great sensitivity to issues of role and status in the region and a clear desire to have Soviet equality with the United States - and the Soviet presence in the region - institutionalized and legitimized in diplomatic instruments. This concern was evident in Soviet Middle East diplomacy from 1967 to 1972 and in the Basic Principles Agreement of 1972.

The bottom line in this case, covering the immediate aftermath of the 1967 War, the War of Attrition, and the period subsequent to that war and leading up to the temporary
collapse of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship in July of 1972, is aptly summarized by George Breslauer as follows:

Soviet behavior during 1967-72 indicated intense Soviet interest in a political settlement of the conflict based on superpower collaboration - but not at any price; and neither the United States nor Israel was willing to pay the Soviet price.51

Soviet behavior responded to an array of objectives (influence, role, avoidance of war and the dangers of escalation, and improvement of Soviet-American relations). The policy implications of these objectives were not entirely consistent. Concern about maintaining and strengthening detente suggested efforts to resolve this persistent complication in Soviet-American relations. Bilateral cooperation with the United States in the pursuit and achievement of a settlement between Israelis and Arabs was a promising means of legitimizing and rendering permanent the Soviet regional role, as well as of limiting the escalatory potential of the conflict.

To the extent, however, that a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict necessitated pressure on Soviet allies to moderate their objectives and abandon traditional positions (such as the non-recognition of Israel), this, however, endangered Soviet influence and the strategic advantages drawn therefrom. This effect could, however, be muted if the United States was clearly seen to be applying similar pressure to its regional ally, Israel.

Soviet behavior in this case displays a willingness to pursue settlement through concession to the United States and through pressure on regional allies as long as and to the extent that the United States recognized the legitimacy of a Soviet role in the process and that the United States was seen to be symmetrically pressuring its ally, and where the United States was not perceived to be attempting to undermine Soviet relations with Arab states. In so doing, they more than once faced serious problems in their relations with their most

prominent regional client, Egypt. Where the United States did not apply symmetrical pressure on Israel, and where consequently, Soviet settlement diplomacy drew into question the stability of its ties to the Arab states, and where the Soviets perceived American diplomacy to be aimed at weaning Egypt in particular away from its relationship with the USSR, the Soviet Union drew back.

The essential problem in this sphere lay in an American unwillingness persistently to constrain Israel, and in an apparent desire at various phases to freeze the Soviets out of the Middle Eastern diplomatic and strategic arena. In this instance, Soviet policy makers concluded that cooperation with the United States would result in a clear and asymmetrical deterioration in the Soviet regional position. Had the United States pursued a policy in the region taking into account the balance of Soviet and American interests in the region, the case would have given a clearer picture of the extent and limits on the Soviet capacity to engage in a collaborative diplomacy of conflict resolution. Since the United States did not do so, assessing the Soviet capacity for cooperation in the search for conflict resolution is problematic. What is clear from the case is that the image of the USSR as a power unequivocally opposed to pursuing a peace settlement and committed to the manipulation of conflict short of war to retain and strengthen its competitive position is deficient.

One might argue that these two cases from the 1970s are hardly typical, and that, therefore, conclusions drawn from them do not have general application. I am not claiming that they do. All that I am arguing is that these two cases demonstrate that in specific conditions - despite the predominantly zero sum quality of Soviet perspectives on the Third

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52 See, for example, the reports of serious tension with Egypt over the Soviet peace plan of January 1968, as cited in Galia Golan, Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War II to Gorbachev (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.71.

53 Viz. the American supply of Phantoms to Israel during the War of Attrition, and the American adoption of a unilateral approach to peace in the First Rogers Plan in December 1969, and the subsequent Soviet decision to provide air defence assistance to Egypt in January 1970.

54 I should note that my understanding and analysis of this case have benefitted considerably from the work of, and conversations with George Breslauer and Alexander George.
World during this period - there is empirical evidence to suggest that they were capable of cooperation with the United States in crisis management and conflict resolution.

A second important empirical point emerges from both cases - that Soviet attitudes towards collaborative approaches to regional conflicts depended strongly on American policy. In the case of Vietnam, the United States was clearly desirous of a peace settlement, clearly sought Soviet cooperation in attaining it, was clearly willing to accept substantial concessions to the regional ally of the USSR to get to an agreement and to force these concessions on its own hapless regional client. In the Middle Eastern case, the United States had at best an ambiguous position towards Soviet role, on occasion attempted to use its diplomacy of peace to weaken Soviet influence in the region, and more than once appeared either unwilling or unable to apply steady pressure on its ally in the pursuit of a balanced compromise. The incapacity of the United States to emphasize positive sum objectives in its regional diplomacy tilted the balance in Soviet priorities towards zero sum objectives.

As detente deteriorated in the mid and late 1970s, as the United States Congress denied the Soviet the major economic benefits they had associated with the process of Soviet-American detente, and as American actions in the post-1973 Middle East, in Chile, and in Angola underlined the American commitment to competitive unilateralism in the Third World, the potential for Soviet collaborative diplomacy diminished. The growing perceived weakness of the United States - as its position in Vietnam collapsed and as the power of the Executive rapidly decayed - also favored a tipping of the balance in the spectrum of Soviet objectives towards the more competitive range. Even in this context, however, it is hard to know whether there was any significant potential for collaboration with the USSR in regional crises. None was tried. What, for example, would the Soviet response have been if, in the aftermath of the Portuguese Revolution in April 1974, the United States had solicited Soviet support of an OAU-based agreement on nonintervention in the Angolan and Mozambican transitions to independence?

3. Southwest Africa and Central America, 1980-91

By 1980, because of the significance of competitive bipolarity in Soviet perspectives in the Third World, the disappearance of the constraining impact of detente, and lessons
drawn from previous American unilateralism in the Third World, and the string of apparent victories at the expense of the United States in the late 1970s, Soviet policy in the Third World was heavily weighted towards the zero-sum end of its spectrum of objectives in the Third World. To take an example from the end of the 1970s, Soviet comment on issues such as the Anglo-American initiative on Zimbabwe display a not unreasonable deep suspicion that American efforts at conflict resolution were part of a stratagem designed to minimize Soviet influence and to deny the Soviet Union the role and status to which its leaders felt entitled. Soviet policy in the Zimbabwean case was designed to effectuate a unilateral military solution embedding Soviet influence in that country. Although, as noted above, hints of concern about the wisdom of Soviet activism were beginning to emerge in the academic literature in the early 1980s, this was not evident in policy.

In the early 1980s, Soviet diplomacy in the Angolan case displayed a total rejection of the nascent Crocker initiative. Participants in the regional dialogues with the USSR on Southern Africa maintain that there was no evidence of Soviet willingness to compromise on Southern African security issues. Indeed, patron and client perspectives on conflict resolution were the reverse of those in the cases from the 1970s. In 1982 and again in 1984, the MPLA government in Angola displayed a far greater willingness to compromise on regional security issues (e.g. the linkage issue and direct negotiation with South Africa) than did the Soviets, while the Soviets, in public anyway, maintained a very hard line. That said, the unwillingness of the Soviets to resist Angolan efforts to find a settlement to regional issues suggests that the Soviets understood that they had no alternatives to suggest to the Angolans.


56 Michael McFaul, however, cites a reference by former Secretary of State George Schultz to an intriguing remark by then Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in 1982 to the effect that Southern Africa was one of two possible areas (the other being nuclear nonproliferation) in which the USSR and the USA could possibly cooperate fruitfully. See M. McFaul, "Rethinking the Reagan Doctrine", *International Security* XIV, #3 (Winter 1989-90), p.118.
In the Central American case, the victory in Nicaragua was greeted as an event of "immense historical significance" and kindled Soviet enthusiasm for revolutionary armed struggle elsewhere in the region.\textsuperscript{57} This was dampened somewhat by the failure of the "final offensive" in El Salvador at the end of 1980, and largely disappeared with the American invasion of Grenada in 1983. As American pressure on Nicaragua intensified, the Soviets responded by providing the Nicaraguans with sufficient military assistance to contain the contras while deterring the possibility of invasion from without, in the general context of a shift in conceptual emphasis from revolutionary expansion to defence of the revolution. Although some Soviet comment displayed in this context of growing pessimism an interest in bilateral superpower cooperation to resolve outstanding regional conflicts so as to stabilize the position of Nicaragua in particular, there was little evidence in Soviet diplomacy of interest in substantial Soviet-American cooperation in this regard, not least because the United States itself was not obviously interested in any solution short of the removal of the Sandinistas. Nicola Miller's characterization of Soviet objectives in this period as, "firstly, to avoid humiliation in Central America and, secondly, to make life for the United States as hard as possible in the region" seems consistent with the evidence.\textsuperscript{58}

The formation of the Contadora group in January 1983 as a regionally based peace initiative evoked a generally positive reaction in the USSR. To the extent it was successful it would produce an improvement in Nicaragua's regional security position. Moreover, it was independent of the United States, and American attitudes towards the Contadora process were ambivalent. Again, however, there was little accompanying diplomacy.

The advent of Gorbachev coincided with the repeal of the Clark Amendment and the initiation of American assistance to UNITA. This may have delayed any substantial redirec-

\textsuperscript{57} For typically enthusiastic responses to the Nicaraguan revolution and positive assessments of its regional and global significance, see S. Mikoyan, "Revolyutsionnoe Tvorchestvo Prokladyvaet put' k Pobede", \textit{Latinskaya Amerika} (1980), #2, p.5; and Mikoyan, "Ob Osoebnostiakh Revolyutsii v Nikaragua i eyo Urokakh s Tochki Zrenii Teorii i Practiki Osvoboditel'noho Dvizhenia", \textit{Latinskaya Amerika} (1980), #3, pp.34-35.

tion of Soviet policy. There was, however, little evidence that a quest for political settlements to regional disputes dominated Soviet perspectives in 1985-87 in any case. The preferred Soviet approach to "rationalizing" their Third World commitments - to judge from increasing military assistance and more offensive strategies in Angola, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan - appeared to be to try to win through escalation.

The failure to win, or to improve conspicuously the military situation of beleaguered allies, despite escalation of commitment in any of these venues, the Soviet decision to cut their losses in Afghanistan, the substantial improvement in Soviet-American relations evinced in the INF Treaty of December 1987, and the cooperation of the United States and the United Nations in the negotiation of the accords permitting Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan all occasioned a substantial revision in Soviet diplomacy of political settlement. In the Angolan case, the Soviets in 1988 embraced and cooperated in furthering a US-mediated negotiating process involving Cuba, South Africa, and Angola which culminated in the tripartite agreement involving removal of Cuban troops from Angola and Namibia's transition to independence, inter alia. There is general agreement among both academics and policy makers that Soviet pressure on Angola and Cuba was useful in producing their agreement, though it was not the determining factor. Soviet pressure was also instrumental in bringing an agreement between UNITA and the MPLA in 1991 on a resolution of Angola's civil war.

It is important to stress that Soviet behavior in the period leading up to the settlement - and the role for the USSR and the United Nations defined in it - suggests that the USSR, while seeking to reduce its commitments and the costs of them, remained sensitive to issues of regional role and prestige. The Soviet Union supplemented its diplomacy of conflict resolution with further increases in military assistance to the Angolans in order to enhance Angolan confidence in the settlement process and to give the South Africans a greater

59 As I show in a chapter entitled "The Evolution of Soviet Perspectives on African Politics, 1976-91" in the volume cited in note 55, Soviet comment on Southern Africa in 1985-6 was, if anything, even more vitriolic than usual.

60 This failure reflected the weakness and disorganization of their allies, and also effective American counterescalation.
incentive to participate constructively in negotiations. Limited applications of force, in other words, were no longer elements of a competition for influence, but were instead aspects of a strategy of political settlement and (in terms of Soviet prestige) damage limitation during a period of disengagement.

In the Nicaraguan case as well, the later Gorbachev era was one of unambiguous Soviet support of regionally generated settlement initiatives and increasingly close coordination of Soviet and American positions as agreement approached and was implemented. Ultimately, the Soviets accepted the termination of their military assistance to Nicaragua, and the Sandinista loss of power in that country with equanimity. What appeared important, from the Soviet perspective, was not that their position and influence remain intact, but that they avoid the humiliation of having their regional friend forcibly removed. The Esquipulas Accord satisfied this rather unambitious objective.

To summarize, Soviet behavior in these regional crises evolved in a direction entirely consistent with the changes in Soviet perspectives outlined in the first section of this report. Their actions in the later period reflected a clear understanding of the linkage between Third World competition and US-Soviet relations, and a concern through dialogue to minimize the former's effects on the latter. They cooperated in or supported effective processes of political settlement, and reduced their prior reliance on military instrumentalities in regional diplomacy. Their actions implied an acceptance that the United States was a viable participant in negotiations leading to solutions based on a balance of interests. Their embrace of a prominent United Nations role in the Angola-Namibia settlement and a somewhat less prominent role (thus far) in Central America confirm in practice the evolution in their perspectives on that organization, while their support of the Esquipulas process suggests in practice their recognition of the potential of regionally originating efforts at conflict resolution as well. In a more general sense, their acceptance in both instances of outcomes well short of their prior aspirations, outcomes which substantially reduce their influence and position in the regions in question supports the conclusion that they attributed less importance to the Third World, and to influence within it. Finally, their effort to ensure, in the context of reduction of Soviet commitment, that previous "clients" were not faced with forceful ejection suggests a continuing concern over status and prestige, as does the role they reserved
for themselves in the Angolan context as a guarantor of the accord.