

**THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY
TOWARDS AFRICA FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV**

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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5370043

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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PREFACE

The Theory and Practice of Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Africa had been analysed by two schools of scholars. There is a body of literature from the Russian perspective and another from the Western perspective. However there hadn't been a penetratingly deep analysis from the African perspective. The author of this thesis being an African and having lived and studied in both Russia and the West therefore attempts to address that gap in the literature.

My thanks are due to my academic advisor Professor Davis Daycock for his valuable advice and assistance in the preparation of this thesis. I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Professor and Mrs. St John, Professor Ken McVicar and Professor Jim Fergusson for their kindness and inspiration throughout my studies in this University.

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is the world's second largest compact land mass; it comprises 11.7 million square miles. The African continent measures some 5,000 miles from north to south, a distance comparable to that from London to Peking, and at its broadest, over 4,000 miles from east to west. In addition to Africa's size, there is much diversity in terms of the people and natural habitat.

Because of Africa's immense natural resources, it was one of the primary targets of the European colonialists, imperialists and neo-colonialists. Unlike other regions of the world, for instance Latin America which was dominated by one imperialist power, Spain, virtually all the imperial powers descended on Africa.

Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Portugal and Italy all came in to colonize and plunder the resources of various sections of the continent. In the case of certain states like Cameroon and Togo, more than one colonial power colonized the state at different times. Africa's peculiar history therefore made it a heterogeneously complex region. It however remained a region of immense importance and became a pawn in the ideological rivalry which raged on between the superpowers.

Although the African continent is very far from the Soviet Union; its immense wealth, human and strategic mineral resources as well as its geo-political location made it a zone of considerable politico-strategic and economic interest to

the Soviets.

It must however be pointed out that Moscow's politico-strategic and economic interest in Africa predates the Bolsheviks, in fact it stretches as far back as the fourteenth century.¹ Whereas one must concede that in terms of politico-strategic priorities, Africa always ranked below Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East and Asia,² the continent's importance on Moscow's foreign policy agenda cannot be overlooked.

From the fourteenth century, successive Russian Czars had always courted Ethiopian monarchs to advance Russia's interests.³ The relationship with Ethiopia continued to the nineteenth century. During that period, Czarist Russia was locked in a tense rivalry with other European powers especially Britain and France.⁴

In this competition, Russia's leaders were most anxious to safeguard Russia's maritime communications with the Far

1. Patman, Robert G. The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement. (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), p.25.

2. Hoffman, Eric P. and Robbin F. Laird. Soviet Foreign Policy: Classic and Contemporary Issues. (New York: Aldine de Grueter Inc., 1984)

3. Patman, Robert G. The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement. (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), p. 25.

4. Wilson, Edward T. Russia and Black Africa Before World War II. (New York: Holmes and Meir, 1974), p. 16.

East. In addition to maintaining strategic access to the Red Sea via Ethiopia (Abyssynia as it was then called), the country's economic resources such as coffee, butter, honey, hides and meat were also of much interest to the Russians.⁵

After the British managed to enforce a military occupation over Egypt and for that matter the Suez in 1882⁶, Czarist Russia did all it could to have influence over Ethiopia. The primary motivating factor was that control over Ethiopia presupposed guaranteed access to the Red Sea and control over the source of the Nile at the same time.⁷ This could enable the Russians to use Ethiopia as a powerful lever against British influence and control over Egypt because by manipulating the flow of the Nile, Egypt could easily be turned into a desert.⁸

With such clout, Russia's freedom of maritime navigation along the Red Sea and the Suez route to the East could not be cut off.⁹ Besides, the Russians felt that control over

5. Patman, Robert G. The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement. (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), p. 27.

6. Epstein, Leon D. British Politics in the Suez Crisis. (U.S.A.: University of Illinois Press, Urban, 1964), p. 5.

7. Patman, Robert G. The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 27.

8. Cited: Ibid.

9 See Wilson, p.270

Ethiopia would prevent the British colonialists from carving a sphere of influence for itself from Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope thereby denying the latter maritime access to India and the Far East.¹⁰

In order to make Ethiopia a Russian protectorate, Czarist Russia sought to promote Ethiopian nationalism as a means of undermining British influence in Ethiopia. It is scarcely surprising that Russian military officers and aid provided by the Russian Red Cross contributed greatly towards Ethiopia's victory during the Italian-Ethiopian War of 1896.¹¹

The cordial relationship between the Russian Czars and the Ethiopian monarchs ended in 1917 after the Bolshevik Revolution. This could be attributed to the fact that monarchs do not take kindly to revolutions and revolutionaries, on the other hand, Marxism-Leninism had no place for feudalism either. Thus Lenin did not continue any meaningful relationship with Ethiopia or any of the states in that region.

After the communists consolidated their hold on power, no serious attempts were made under both Lenin and Stalin to establish relations with Africa. Khrushchev was the first

¹⁰. Patman, Robert G. The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement. (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), p. 27.

¹¹. Ibid.

Soviet leader to seriously begin efforts at establishing meaningful relations with the anti-colonial national liberation movements of Africa. It must be noted that Khrushchev's overtures were consistent with the tenets of the Comintern. In the years after Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko and finally Gorbachev all tried in various ways to develop Moscow's ties with Africa.

It is this development of Soviet interest in Africa which forms the basis of this thesis. The analysis of the conceptual evolution of Soviet foreign policy will begin with its Marxist-Leninist base. Upon this foundation, Stalin's "Two-camp doctrine," Khrushchev's "Triangular international relations model," Brezhnev's "Quadrilateral international relations model" and finally Gorbachev's concept of "New thinking" [novoe mishlenia] in foreign policy will be analyzed.

These various models and approaches will be related to the African continent and especially Africa's national liberation movements. Those factors which accounted for the successes and failures of Soviet involvement in Africa will be highlighted. The main objective will be to determine whether Soviet foreign policy towards Africa emanated from among other considerations, a significant premise of political altruism and genuine concern for the colonised and oppressed people of Africa or whether it was designed primarily to advance Moscow's ideological, strategic and material interests without little or no consideration for the real interests of the

African people.

The method adopted here is that of the applied case study. Examining the development of Soviet foreign policy in its African setting will provide important insights into the underlying directions of Soviet foreign policy generally and also allows us to form judgements about Soviet/Russia's role in the African liberation struggle. Such a method also provides a critical vantage point for assessing Soviet/Russian scholarly interpretations of Moscow's involvement in Africa.

CHAPTER 1.1

A Critical Analysis of the Marxist-Leninist Theory of International Relations

Basically, Karl Marx did not devote much attention to the field of international relations. Even though he wrote on world politics which encompassed the role of classes and the various diplomatic constellations and maneuvers of the day,¹² his basic contention as it bore on international relations was that class identification take precedence over national ones. Therefore the modes of economic production with their attendant class relationships were central for understanding all political processes including international relations. Other Marxists including Vladimir Lenin elaborated on that basic idea.

However, Marx helped to unmask one aspect of international relations that was ignored by scholars of the nineteenth century. Marx, as Marcel Merle noted, brought about the interdependence of phenomena - economic and political, internal and external - and to discern, behind the apparent incoherence of the facts, the inexorable march towards the globalization of international relations.¹³

¹². Lynch, Allen. The Soviet Study of International Relations. (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 335.

¹³. Merle, Marcel. Sociology of International Relations. (Paris: Armand Publishers, 1974), p. 84.

Marxist hypothesis postulated that the contradiction between the forces and mode of production under capitalism would lead to a dynamic surge on the part of capitalism to expand in an effort to resolve this fundamental question. Thus, the urgent need for markets for the disposal of surplus production as well as the need to have extra sources for the supply of raw materials would be the main motivating factor which would turn the wheels of international politics. According to Lenin this phenomenon would lead to the internationalization of capital and the subsequent globalization of the capitalist system whereupon the labour force would consequently internationalize.¹⁴ At this stage, the attendant contradiction between globalized capitalism and internationalized labour would become antagonistic, the class struggle which would result in the defeat of capitalism and socialism would be ushered in.¹⁵

Using the dialectical method, Marxists and Marx himself postulated that economic determinism fuelled societal development from its primitive stages to the feudal, then subsequently to the bourgeois-capitalist state. Thus it is only logical that since the class struggle was the main motor driving that dialectical development from the bourgeois-

¹⁴. Merle, Lenin. Sociology of International Relations. (Paris: Armand Publishers, 1974), p. 347.

¹⁵. Dougherty, James G. and Robert L. Pflatzgraff. Contending Theories of International Relations. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), p. 215.

capitalist stage, the class struggle would effect the negation which would destroy capitalism.¹⁶

Marxism's revolutionary views on international relations were totally different from most of the previous international relations views. Typically, sovereign states had been regarded as the primary de facto and de jure subjects of international law and international relations.

The colonies were not ascribed any legal status, they were regarded primarily as appendages of the metropolitan colonizer subject. Thus for instance in Africa, France and Great Britain held legal sway over most of the colonized states. Marxists however viewed the state as a temporary superstructural entity which would be negated as soon as the transition from feudalism to socialism via capitalism occurred. From the Marxist perspective, the class struggle and objective class interests would determine the qualitative direction of socio-political development.

Lenin like Marx did not devote much of his theoretical writings to the theory of international relations. His principal thesis on this subject was contained in "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism". In this text, Lenin focused on the dynamics of the internal contradictions of capitalism to explain international politics. Global politics was basically predicated on the resolution of those

¹⁶ See Dougherty and Pflatzgraff, p.216

contradictions. According to Lenin, the progressive concentration of the forces of production as foreseen by Marx had led to the transformation of competitive capitalism into "monopolistic finance" capitalism. This phenomenon which fused banking and industrial capital led to the creation of an international financial oligarchy which controlled the fates of whole countries. Lenin argued that "the more capitalism developed, the more the need for raw materials arises, the more bitter competition becomes, the more desperate the need for new colonies."¹⁷

Basically, five main elements namely monopolization; the merging of bank capital with industrial capital and the consequent emergence of a powerful financial oligarchy; the export of capital, which is critical to the system's survival as distinct from the export of commodities; the rise of international monopolies which divide the world among themselves; and the completion of the territorial division of the world constituted the core of the Leninist critique of imperialism.¹⁸

Thus both Marx and Lenin had a clear emphasis on economic determinism as the most important factor in the development of international relations. Based on that premise, Soviet

¹⁷. Lenin, V.I., Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism Collected Works, Vol. 22. (Moscow: Lawrence and Wishert, 1964), p. 6.

¹⁸. Lynch, Allen. The Soviet Study of International Relations. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 15.

international relations theorists held the view that international monopoly capital would necessarily always be very expansive and wage wars to maximize its interests. Socialism on the other hand would have the means of production harmonized with the mode of production and would therefore not engage in wars of aggression.

However following the dialectical laws of development, there would eventually be a clash between international monopoly capital and the international labour force. This clash in the context of the class struggle would automatically result in the negation of capitalism and the triumph of the proletariat.

Thus the Marxist-Leninist perspective on international relations was predicated on the objective resolution of the contradictions between international monopoly capital and the international proletariat. It must be noted that the elevation of the importance and value of commodities to an ultra high level led Marx and other Marxists to develop the concept of the "fetishism of commodities" which was further generalized into the concept of "reification" - the reduction of human interpersonal relations to relations among commodities.

According to Marxist-Leninist theory, "international reification" is a feature of capitalism. The terrain of "international reification" is the international labour market where the free labourer, in this context, the international

proletariat is forced to treat his living activity, his labour as a commodity. In conformity with the laws of dialectical and historical materialism, the proletariat would eventually effect the socialist revolution to make the reified world human.¹⁹

Whilst conceding that the arguments advanced by Marx and Lenin were tangible, it must be noted that they placed too much emphasis on the objective economic deterministic element. By doing that, they elevated class issues to a higher level over the state as the primary subject of the international system. Thus capitalist states were essentially programmed to wage wars of aggression whereas socialist states were supposed to be essentially peaceful. Simplistic as this may sound it dominated the agenda of Soviet leaders and international relations theorists for a considerable period of time.

It must also be pointed out that because of this rather narrow way of analyzing international relations phenomena, Africa and other colonized regions of the world were not focused on by Soviet leaders. This could be attributed to the fact that there were no really developed proletarian classes in the colonies and hence those regions were not of much importance in the Soviet ideological calculus. Besides, Africa's geo-strategic situation had no direct proximity with the Soviet Union.

¹⁹. Therborn, Goran. Western Marxism: A Critical Reader New Left Review. (Norfolk: 1977), p. 93.

Another danger associated with over-reliance on class interests and economic determinism as the driving force of international relations was the consequent neglect of the role of the subjective element in international relations. While conceding that Marxian categories like class, surplus value, reification, impoverishment of the proletariat, bourgeois domination and pauperization²⁰; were important objective elements in international relations, there are a number of very important subjective factors which could also propel the wheels of international politics.

Nationalism, ethnic and tribal affiliations and contradictions, mass culture and religious beliefs are some of the most important subjective factors. Here again, the ideology of Marxism-Leninism failed to have a clear perception of some of the factors which could influence the direction of politics in the Third World in general and Africa in particular.

It is hardly surprising that the absolute neglect of what Marxists term the subjective element in international politics caused Marxist-Leninist theoreticians to overlook the fact that classical immediate post-feudal capitalism could not be sustained and developed along those highly exploitative lines without subsequent infusion of massive dosages of welfarism. In the same vein the colonialists tried to introduce measures which would cloud or perhaps even soften

²⁰. Horkheimer, Marx. Soviet Marxism. (New York: Columbia Press, 1958), p. 218.

the drastic impact of colonialism. Policies like assimilation and indirect rule were put in place by the colonialists to buy off certain influential segments of the African elite. This new class of comprador bourgeois made up of some chiefs, business leaders and intellectuals managed to stall the advancement of the African anti-colonial struggle for a considerable period of time.

Marx's strong emphasis on economics as the foundation of domestic and international politics found strong echoes in the works of other 19th and 20th century political theorists, Marxists and non-Marxists alike. The most influential of the non-Marxists were those provided by Max Weber. The common denominator which runs through the works of all these scholars could be ascertained as the prevalence of economic determinism and capitalist rationalization.

Max Weber's thesis which derived its antecedence from Ferdinand Tonnies dissertation on "Community and Society" tried to show the distinction between the intermediate personal relations of family and neighbourhood in pre-industrial pre-capitalist societies and the evolution of that state of harmonious relationship into the form of impersonal contractual relations in capitalist societies. He concluded that the state of cold calculated and impersonal relations in capitalist society was inevitable given the functional

instruments of capitalism and the "spirit of capitalism".²¹

Once more, one could argue that the so-called exploited proletariat would first have to be willing to undertake the revolutionary role destined for it by Marxism-Leninism before it would effect the required "negation". The neglect of the subjective component steered Marx and Lenin towards failure to consider the fact that the ruling class in the capitalist world would put in place adequate safeguards including the manipulation of the mass media to influence the collective opinion of the proletariat.

Besides, Marxist-Leninist theorists failed to analyze the domestic political superstructural set-up of the capitalist states. If they had done that they would have realized that, as opposed to the communist political system of democratic centralism, there was much more democratic pluralism in the capitalist states. Thus there were always avenues for the proletariat to influence state policy domestically and externally without resorting to violence and other revolutionary methods of change.

It is scarcely surprising that during the African liberation struggle, proletarian and other democratic forces in the Western countries ended up as sympathetic allies of the African nationalist forces.

²¹. Therborn, Goran. Western Marxism: A Critical Reader New Left Review. (Norfolk: 1977), p. 93.

In contrast to Marx's illusory postulations about the international class struggle, Lenin adopted a more pragmatic posture. During the process of actualizing the tenets of Marxism, Lenin recognized the importance of the subjective element in international relations. After the October Socialist Revolution, the synthesis of theory with social praxis led Lenin to modify his thesis concerning the necessity of world revolution for the survival of socialism. He conceded the theoretical and practical possibility of "socialism in one country"²² even though he felt that was a temporary phase of the struggle.

The practical realities of international politics forced Lenin to concede to the concept of "peaceful cohabitation" with the capitalist world. Even though Lenin never spoke of "peaceful coexistence" or what the Russians term (mirnoe sosushestvovanie) at that time, he talked about the need for cohabitation (sozhitelstvo). He further argued that "we are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy (ie of cultivating state to state contacts with the capitalist world)."²³

In his closing speech to the Tenth All-Russian Party Congress in late May 1921, Lenin argued that a rough "equilibrium" prevailed between revolutionary Russia and the

²². Tucker, Robert C., ed. The Lenin Anthology. (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 635.

²³. Ibid., p. 635.

capitalist world.²⁴It is thus clear that even though initially Lenin had a rigid Marxist class-centred and economically deterministic approach towards the theory and practice of international relations, three years after the victory of the Bolshevik revolution social praxis and the realities of the international environment forced Lenin to set the premise for a more pragmatic international relations posture.

Lenin's focus was still essentially Eurocentric and more directed at ensuring the very survival of the Soviet state however some of the concepts that he enunciated including the rights of peoples to self-determination had an indirect bearing on the colonized peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It must however be pointed out that Lenin's ideas on self-determination emanated within the premise of weakening capitalism so as to further boost up the strength of the Soviet Union.

²⁴ See Tucker, p. 635

CHAPTER 1.2

Critique of the Conceptual Development of Soviet International Relations Theory From Josef Stalin to Nikita Khrushchev

Joseph Stalin took over the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party at a time when Lenin's theory of international relations had evolved from a strictly economic deterministic class-driven position to a pragmatic recognition of the relative importance of the state as a sub-unit in the international system.

Whereas in Lenin's time, international relations was perceived as a field in which the class struggle took place, Stalin added another dimension to the Leninist theory by elevating international relations as a subject around which the struggle for power raged. Thus controversial issues in the domestic environment were all to a greater or lesser extent reflections or derivatives of international development and relationships.²⁵

Based on his perceptions of international politics, Stalin consolidated and advanced the doctrine of "Socialism in one country". At the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in April 1925, he managed to cajole the Congress to endorse this doctrine. This was done against fierce

²⁵. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routeledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 125.

opposition by a section of the party leadership led by Leon Trotsky.²⁶ This group stuck to the primary Marxist-Leninist position as regards the theory of class-driven permanent global revolution.²⁷

Stalin's doctrinal position was certainly not in accordance with the tenets of orthodox Marxism. The doctrine of socialism in one country presupposed an infusion of the principle of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist states which encircle the Soviet Union. In practical terms, it meant that the dictatorship of the Soviet proletariat must not be consciously and radically aligned with the proletariat of the capitalist states to effect the historically predestined socialist revolution in those countries.

It is scarcely surprising that the principle of peaceful coexistence was never discussed in the works of Karl Marx and Engels.²⁸ Essentially, Marx and Engels thought that the dictatorship of the international proletariat would occur "all at once" and simultaneously in all the capitalist countries.²⁹ The Euro-centric nature of these theories did

²⁶. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routeledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 125.

²⁷. Ibid., p. 125.

²⁸. Tucker, Robert C., ed. The Lenin Anthology. (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 635.

²⁹. Kubalkova, V., and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routeledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 36.

not take into account the genuine aspirations of the colonized peoples of Africa.

After Lenin laid the basis for (sozhitelstvo) cohabitation, Stalin realized that pragmatically the international revolution would simply not occur for a long while. By propounding the doctrine of socialism in one country, Stalin envisaged that the capitalist states would abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of the young Soviet state. Also, Stalin believed that the capitalist states would refrain from waging wars against Soviet Russia. The calm in international relations would thus afford the young socialist state the chance of developing its economy and political institutions.

Thus Stalin advanced the doctrine of socialism in one country as a tactical phase in the international revolutionary process and one which also allowed Moscow to proceed with its industrialization plans as a first priority. Based on that premise he expounded the "two-camp doctrine" ie. the socialist bloc and the capitalist bloc as the two key players in international relations. His main intention was to take account of intra-imperialist contradictions and postpone war by "buying off the capitalists" until the Soviet economy gets well grounded.³⁰ In furtherance of that

³⁰. Stalin, Josef. Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1952), p. 296.

objective, Stalin entered into a number of treaties and pacts. For instance by 1939, the forms of collaboration between the capitalists and the Soviet Union had been extended to include the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, a pact which according to Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister was in "accordance with the principle of peaceful coexistence".³¹

Whereas one must concede that the pact failed to prevent Nazi Germany from attacking the Soviet Union during the Second World War, the principle of peaceful coexistence which the Soviets postulated at that time enabled them to have some level of credibility among the comity of nations. Thus the Western powers found it fit to align forces with the Soviet Union to defeat Nazi Germany.

During the period from 1931 to 1945, Stalin did not devote much attention to the colonized peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This could be attributed to the fact that the growing threats of Japanese and German fascism needed to be addressed. Thus Stalin had to cultivate closer ties with the colonial powers. In order to do that effectively, he became circumspect about Comintern activities in the British and French colonies.³²

³¹. Light, Margot. The Soviet Theory of International Relations. (Great Britain: Biddles Ltd., 1988), p. 35.

³². Rubinstein, Alvin Z. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II - Imperial and Global. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. Inc., 1981), p. 216.

The mid-forties witnessed a grave dichotomy in the actualization of the doctrine of socialism in one country. The over-reliance on Marxist-Leninist dogma without much regard for the subjective element caused a number of foreign policy blunders for the Soviet Union. It must be pointed out that subjectively the great Russian nationalism syndrome fused with Marxist-Leninist ideology pushed the Soviets to embark on an expansionist drive especially in Eastern Europe.

In his thesis on the "Aims and Problems of the Soviet Union", former U.S. National Security Advisor Dr. Brzezinski argued that the Soviet Union was the political expression of Russian nationalism. "The expansion of the Soviet imperial system was an organic imperative produced by the sense of territorial insecurity on the part of the system's national core".³³ According to Dr. Brzezinski, the Russians dominated the multinational Soviet Union populated by some 280 million people through the power and resources of the Union. They also dominated a cluster of geographically contiguous states numbering about 150 million people. In effect, about 135 million Russians took control over a political framework that virtually encompassed some 385 million people spread over much of the Eurasian continent.

For ages, the distinctive character of the Russian imperialist drive was derived from the interconnection between

³³. Flynn, Gregory. Soviet Military Doctrine and Western Policy. (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 44.

the militaristic organization of that society and the territorial imperative which defined its instinct for survival. Russian society expressed itself politically through a state that was mobilized and regimented along militaristic lines with the security dimension serving as the central organizing impulse.

The absence of any clearly definable national boundaries made territorial expansion the obvious way of ensuring national security. Those expansionist overtures generated new conflicts, new threats and other negative instincts. A relentless historical cycle was thus set in motion, insecurity generated expansionism even as expansionism bred insecurity. That negative cycle kept on repeating itself.³⁴

Increasingly, an imperial consciousness was formed which became part of the broad Russian national psyche. This consciousness was fuelled by the constant need for power, control and prestige and served as the basis for Soviet Russia's expansionist forays in Eastern Europe after the Second World War. The negative repercussions of these machinations were that the international strategic environment became radically tensed up and that constituted one of the significant causal factors for the initiation of the cold war.

If Stalin had stuck to the doctrine of socialism in one

³⁴. Jacobson, Carl G. Soviet Strategic Initiatives - Challenge and Response. (New York: Praeger, 1979), p. 44.

country, he would have been able to actualize effectively the principle of peaceful coexistence. However, the expansionist drive to install puppet communist regimes in Eastern Europe and build buffer states around the Soviet Union for strategic reasons pushed the capitalist states to adopt a hostile stance. It is scarcely surprising that George Kennan's thesis on "the containment of communism" became the centrepiece of U.S. foreign policy from 1947 until the end of the cold war.³⁵ It must however be pointed out that ab initio, militarily, the U.S. had a lead over the Soviet Union immediately after the war.

Soviet theory and practice of international relations started evolving in a more reactive way from the initiation of the cold war. Due to the fact that Europe happened to be the terrain of essential contention between the two superpowers, Africa as a region was considered of little or virtually no importance to Soviet foreign policy makers during the mid-forties. Stalin concentrated exclusively on his European policy during the period under consideration.

For instance, when the U.S. led capitalist bloc worked out the Marshall Plan to salvage the war-ravaged capitalist

³⁵. Kegley, Charles W., and Eugene R. Wittkopf. World Politics - Trend and Transformation 4th Edition. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 93-94.

economies,³⁶ Stalin expounded a new concept of "Socialist internationalism". Under this new concept, the Soviet Union sought to integrate its economy with the other young socialist states in Eastern Europe. Stalin argued that the fate and interests of the proletariat in all those countries were identical, ie. the building of a classless socialist society as a first step towards the construction of a communist society. He therefore formed the Socialist Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.³⁷

Besides, when the U.S. and its allies formed the NATO military alliance in 1949, Stalin formed the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact to counterbalance the Western states. The Warsaw Pact had the task of providing collective defense of socialism.

The tricky issue about this concept was that it gave the Soviet Union the self-proclaimed authority to intervene in the internal affairs of other socialist states. As the prominent Soviet publicist Granov stated: "The Soviet state's internal interests, economics above all, coincide with those of the overwhelming majority of mankind, ie. its working masses are likewise trying to get rid of all forms of exploitation and oppression, poverty and the threat of war. The vital interests of the victorious Russian proletariat in its own country

³⁶. Kegley, Charles W., and Eugene R. Wittkopf. World Politics - Trend and Transformation 4th Edition. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 93-94.

³⁷ See Kegley and Wittkopf, p.117

coincide with the mature requirements of world historical development, for socialism and communism embody the future of the entire planet.³⁸

Besides, under the concept of Socialist Internationalism, the primacy of a state's territory and sovereignty was relegated to the background. A socialist state was merely regarded as a collective entity or repository of the interests and aspirations of the proletariat which were in turn harmonious with the class interests and aspirations of the Soviet proletariat.

At that historical juncture, the socialist state was perceived as having surpassed the class struggle. The dictatorship of the proletariat was supposed to be the vanguard of the state hence its primary external relations function was to align with other proletarian controlled states and be a bulwark against capitalism.

Logically with this orthodox Marxist way of thinking, the colonised regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America simply had no place on the Soviet foreign policy agenda. This could be attributed to the fact that there were no proletarian classes in the colonized regions at that time. Similar to the foreign policy postulations enunciated under Lenin, Stalin's primary focus remained essentially Eurocentric.

³⁸. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routeledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 227.

It must also be pointed out that the tendency to over-rely on the so-called Marxist objective laws of historical and dialectical materialism drove Stalin to completely disregard the role of the subjective element in the actualization of the concept of socialist internationalism. For instance in Rumania, Stalin ordered his hand-picked puppet Dr. Petru Groza to promulgate a constitution in 1948 which was virtually a carbon copy of the Soviet Constitution of 1936.³⁹ This constitution made the Rumanian Communist Party the only organ which had the mandate to enact laws, interpret the constitution and other laws as well as be the overseer of legal functionalism. Meanwhile, the general population resented communism greatly.

Basically, the majority of ethnic Rumanians never saw themselves as Slavs, they preferred to stress Rumania's ethnic heritage arguing that over 60 per cent of the morphology and syntax of the Rumanian language is from Latin. Thus they perceived communism as an alien ideology more acceptable to their Slavic neighbours but totally alien to Rumanian tradition and culture. Stalin used hard military muscle to actualize this concept in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria among others.

By Stalin's death in 1953, the doctrine of "Socialism in one country" coupled with the attendant principle of peaceful

³⁹. Starr, Richard and Lee Williams. Soviet Military Policy Since World War II. (U.S.A.: Hoover Press, 1986), p. 155.

coexistence which were supposed to be the theoretical basis for the two-camp doctrine, had been radically altered. The class-oriented Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theoretical basis along with the Russian Nationalism Syndrome and to an extent the dictates of the international strategic environment prompted Stalin to enunciate the doctrine of Socialist internationalism. This new theory became the basis for the post World War II formulation and implementation of Soviet foreign policy towards the states in Eastern Europe until the demise of the Soviet Union. With regard to the capitalist states, Stalin's theory of international relations constituted the first enduring coexistence theory.⁴⁰

It is therefore clear that Soviet foreign policy under both Lenin and Stalin had next to nothing to do with the continent of Africa. The focus of Soviet international relations theorists under those two leaders was essentially geared towards the states of Eastern Europe and the other industrialized western democracies.

Whereas one could understand the need for the young Soviet state to consolidate and advance its interests first and foremost, one wonders why despite all the professions of "solidarity" with the oppressed peoples of the world virtually no serious attempts were made by Soviet leaders to

⁴⁰. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 227.

assist the oppressed peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The doctrines enunciated by both Lenin and Stalin including the "Two-camp" approach, "Socialist Internationalism" and "Peaceful Coexistence" were all worked out essentially for the sole purpose of advancing Soviet interests. If Soviet international relations theorists had been politically altruistic they would have extended at least a hand of friendship to the oppressed and colonized peoples of Africa.

Incidentally, ideological, economic and security concerns constituted the most significant core underlying the formulation and implementation of Soviet foreign policy. Even though as far back as 1920 at the Second Comintern Congress, Lenin had exalted the colonies to throw off their "foreign oppression"⁴¹, political opportunism and cold calculated shrewdness kept Lenin from providing any serious political and material assistance to the colonized peoples of Africa. With his "two-camp" international relations doctrine, Stalin advanced the position that there would be conflicts among the capitalist powers themselves due to the diminishing opportunities for colonial exploitation and the struggle for world markets but he failed to look at Africa.

⁴¹. For Lenin's theoretical position on the anti-imperialist struggle, see: Fedenko, Panas. Krushchev's New History of the Soviet Communist Party. (Munich: Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R., December, 1983), p. 76-93.

CHAPTER 2 Nikita Khrushchev and the Ideological Penetration of Africa

A Critical Appraisal

Nikita Khrushchev's "secret speech" denouncing Stalin's crimes against the party at the 20th Communist Party Congress was perceived by most observers both Soviet and Western as a critical turning point in Soviet thinking on international relations.⁴² Khrushchev was the first Soviet leader to expand on the two-camp approach to Soviet international relations theory.⁴³ He projected the sub-unit of the developing countries into the international relations agenda by developing a new "triangular international relations model" consisting of the socialist camp, the capitalist camp and the so-called third world camp.⁴⁴

As regards the capitalist world, Khrushchev stated that "there are only two ways - either peaceful coexistence or the most destructive war in history. There is no third way".⁴⁵ Based on that premise, he enunciated five main

⁴². Zimmerman, William. Soviet Perspectives on International Relations 1956-1967. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 34.

⁴³. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 193.

⁴⁴. Ibid., p. 194.

⁴⁵. Khrushchev, Nikita S. Special Reports to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. (New York: The New York Leader, 1956), p. 37.

principles which served as the pillars of peaceful coexistence. These were, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states; non-aggression; non-interference in the internal affairs of states; equality and cooperation and finally all round cooperation to strengthen peace and improve living conditions.⁴⁶

In as much as these principles were in direct conformity with the jus cogens principles enshrined in Article 2 of the United Nations charter, one wonders whether they were developed due to political altruism or opportunism. It must be noted that in 1956 when Krushchev enunciated these principles, the international strategic environment was still very tense. Qualitatively more potent and offensive strategic weapons had been introduced into the warfare arsenal of both the capitalist and socialist states.

A number of influential Western statesmen including U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles as well as generals and intellectuals like Stuart Symington, and James Forrestal were arguing for the need for NATO to engage the Soviets in what they termed "preventive war" in order to force them to either pull out of Eastern Europe and open their bases for international inspection or have their nuclear installations

⁴⁶. Krushchev, Nikita S. Special Reports to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. (New York: The New York Leader, 1956), p. 37.

knocked out.⁴⁷ Thus Khrushchev needed to "buy time" by trumpeting on the concept of peaceful coexistence.

The Khrushchev leadership still clung to Marxist-Leninist dogma in international relations. Even with the introduction of weapons of mass destruction, Khrushchev still believed that in accordance with the laws of dialectical and historical materialism, the Soviet-led communists would eventually triumph over the capitalist bloc.

As empirical evidence one could cite the fact that between 1956 and 1966, Soviet defence policy which was an integral component of external relations started to place much more emphasis on the concept of the "offensive". While the U.S. sought to develop tactical nuclear weapons, the Soviets on their part developed methods such as "strategic defence", "holding operations" and "strategic withdrawal". Much emphasis was placed on "surprise" and the Soviets radically stepped up reliance on their Air Defence Forces to counter stationing of tactical nuclear weapons in regions close to the U.S.S.R. A major feature of Soviet strategy of that period was not only war fighting but war winning⁴⁸ in order to fulfil the historic role destined by the Marxist-Leninist laws of dialectical and historical materialism.

⁴⁷. Hairspring, Dale R. and Robin F. Laird. The Soviet Union and Strategic Arms. (U.S.A.: Praeger Publishers, 1984), p. 10.

⁴⁸. Catudal, Honore M. Soviet Nuclear Strategy from Stalin to Gorbachev. (Berlin, 1988), p. 82.

In furtherance of this objective, potent nuclear weapons including the series and other types of ballistic missiles were deployed as well as tactical missiles to support 2.8 million ground troops. A new unit known as the Strategic Rocket Forces was created, surface to air missiles and high-speed all-weather interceptor aircrafts were introduced as well as long range strategic bombers like the T.U. 20 Bear and the Mya 4 Bison⁴⁹. These missiles could have been effectively deployed against bomber bases and missile sites in the U.S. as well as a wide range of military and industrial targets throughout Western Europe and the Far East in the event of conflict.⁵⁰

The second vertex in Khrushchev's triangular model of international relations rested on the concept of socialist internationalism. That concept was specifically designed for the state-units in the socialist bloc. Socialist internationalism is a concept which had strong roots in Marxism-Leninism.

In addition to embracing the five points enunciated in the concept of peaceful coexistence, socialist internationalism was said to contain "something else". As Kubalkova and Cruikshank rightly noted that "something else" was defined at the 1957 Communist Summit as "fraternal mutual

⁴⁹. Catudal, Honore M. Soviet Nuclear Strategy from Stalin to Gorbachev. (Berlin, 1988), p. 82.

⁵⁰. Ibid., p. 83.

assistance and mutual support".⁵¹ Incidentally, even though the other five principles placed much emphasis on the primacy of the state as the principal subject in international relations, the principle of "fraternal mutual assistance and support" was a complete Marxist-Leninist tool which defeated the primacy of the state. It rather focused on class interests.

Thus the addition of "fraternal and mutual aid" not only changed the meaning of the other principles that socialist internationalism shared with peaceful coexistence, but added a moral and legal right for states in the socialist bloc to protect their unity and mutually assist one another in the struggle against capitalism. Also it provided the basis for socialist states to "cooperate and mutually assist one another in building socialism and communism in a comradely manner."⁵²

This position placed Krushchev at the head of the world communist movement. Under the terms of socialist internationalism, Khrushchev and his associates in the communist party meddled in the internal affairs of other states in Eastern Europe with impunity. For instance in 1956, the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary to suppress the Hungarian

⁵¹. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routedledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 212.

⁵². Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routedledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 213.

Revolution.⁵³ That action was self-defeatist of the class-oriented approach to the conduct of international relations. Because the Marxist-Leninist premise presupposed that there would be no contradictions between socialist states.

Khrushchev's concept of socialist internationalism was repudiated by most of the socialist states. The principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity were more important for the socialist states. For instance Yugoslavia simply refused to abide by that concept. In July 1957, the Rumanian leader Gheorghiu Dej openly denounced this concept and proclaimed the concept of "Rumanian Road to Socialism".⁵⁴

In the late fifties, the primacy of the political superstructure over the economic base started becoming the primary element in Soviet theory of international relations. During the dispute between China and the United States over the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, the Chinese leader Chairman Mao in accordance with the principles of "socialist internationalism" asked Khrushchev to place Soviet nuclear forces at the disposal of China.

The Soviet leadership decided that the national interests of the Soviet Union superseded the nominal class solidarity it

⁵³. Pethybridge, R.W. A History of Postwar Russia. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.).

⁵⁴. Zimmerman, William. Soviet Perspectives on International Relations 1956-1967. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 23.

had with the Chinese communists, therefore it refused to honour that request. Khrushchev argued that due to the qualitative advancement in warfare weaponry, the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war would have nullified any gains made over the defeat of capitalism.⁵⁵

This position was one of the principal causes of the Sino-Soviet split in the late fifties. The tense relations which developed during that period between the two communist giants brought out a number of essential points.

Firstly, in contrast to the Marxist-Leninist position of mechanic economic determinism, the independent political superstructure can determine the conduct of international relations. This presupposes that as opposed to Stalin's "two camp doctrine", there could be wars between two socialist states.

Secondly, the notion of class as a mono-explanatory causal factor in the conduct of external relations was simply untenable. External relations could only be analyzed constructively if other factors are brought into the analytical framework. Thirdly, the behavioral predisposition and empirical beliefs of the leaders constituted an important element in the conduct of international relations. Fourthly, qualitative advancement in science and technology does impose

⁵⁵. Lynch, Allen. The Soviet Study of International Relations. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 141.

much restraint on how far any actor could go to advance a particular ideology in the international system. It is scarcely surprising that after a series of foreign policy fiascos including the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Khrushchev made a shift in his stance on the inevitability of war with capitalism.⁵⁶

The third vertex of Nikita Khrushchev's triangular international relations theory was the principle of "proletarian internationalism". As opposed to Stalin's two-camp approach to the conduct of international relations, Khrushchev's theory of proletarian internationalism added another dimension to Soviet international relations theory.

Proletarian internationalism was based on the tenets of the communist manifesto - "workers of all lands unite". It could be defined as the provision of aid and other forms of assistance to workers of capitalist countries and oppressed peoples in the colonies and dependent countries in the struggle against the yoke of colonialism and imperialism.⁵⁷

Peaceful coexistence was perceived as a classless and therefore exclusively horizontal inter-state principle addressed to member states of the capitalist world and therefore had no application to socialist states and the

⁵⁶. Light, Margot. The Soviet Theory of International Relations. (Great Britain: Biddles Ltd., 1988), p. 70.

⁵⁷. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routedledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 205.

developing countries including the newly independent states of Africa. It presupposed that all controversial problems that arise between countries with different social systems must be solved by peaceful means, it acted to prevent an outbreak of nuclear war.⁵⁸ However, it must be noted that strict adherence to that principle does defeat the essential anti-status quo premise of the Marxist-Leninist theory of international relations.

Hence, the principle of proletarian internationalism was infused into Soviet theory of international relations to balance that dichotomy. Under this principle, the Soviet Union provided material and other forms of support to "progressive forces" in the capitalist countries irrespective of the formal or informal relations it had with the respective states at the governmental level. For instance, the Soviets gave massive support to the I.R.A. in Northern Ireland under the tenets of this principle.⁵⁹

As regards the "peoples of the third world", conscious efforts were made to strengthen contacts with the national liberation movements.⁶⁰ Under Khrushchev's triangular international relations model, the continent of Africa was for

⁵⁸. See Kubalkova and Cruikshank, p. 207.

⁵⁹. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 206.

⁶⁰. Light, Morgot. The Soviet Theory of International Relations. (Great Britain: Biddle Ltd., 1988), p. 11.

the very first time accorded prominence on the Soviet international relations agenda. Conscious and systematic foreign policy overtures were advanced by Moscow to court the anti-colonial movements in Africa.

In the pre-World War II period, Western ideas and culture influenced the African elite greatly. For a long period of time, the most influential Western ideas were those which promoted conformity with the imperial order and acceptance of the colonial status quo. Among Africans ruled by France, an intense pride in French language and culture as well as the basic historical traditions of France were engendered by the French colonialists.⁶¹

Under its policy of assimilation, the French colonialists managed to virtually buy off the elite in the African Francophone countries. With the Anglophone countries, the British, through the policy of indirect rule managed to engender an unquestioning loyalty to the British monarchy by the African elite.

Despite the cultivation of the African elite as a compradour class ally of the colonial bourgeoisie, a section of the elite developed fascination for Marxism as an important school of Western dissent. Incidentally, fascination with the Communist parties of Western Europe influenced the growth of the leftist movement in the colonial countries. As Professor

⁶¹.Mazrui, Ali. Africa's International Relations. (U.S.A.: Westview Press Inc., 1977), p. 175.

Ali Mazrui rightly noted, for instance, the large size of the French Communist Party at home, the philosophical tradition of the French educational system, the policy of cultural assimilation pursued by the imperial power, the policy of political integration which facilitated participation by colonial peoples in national institutions in Paris and the influence of left wing French intellectuals made Marxism attractive to Francophone Africans.

It is scarcely surprising that the French Communist Party (P.C.F.) aided the formation of the leftist inclined Rassemblement Democratique Africain (R.D.A.) in the then French territories.⁶² This attraction to Marxism generated a lot of interest in the Soviet example.

Through Comintern-sponsored organizations like the French Communist Trade Union - the Confederation Generale du Travail, nationalist leaders in French Africa were courted to advance communism via trade union politics. On its part, the R.D.A. precipitated the formation of the Parti Democratique de Guinee in Guinea, the Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire in Ivory Coast, the Unions des Populations de Cameroun in Cameroon and the Parti Democratique Soudanais in the Sudan.⁶³

In terms of structure, operational concepts and

⁶². Morisson, David. The U.S.S.R and Africa 1945 - 1963. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 4.

⁶³. Wilson, Edward. Russia and Black Africa Before World War II. (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 293.

functions, the R.D.A. was modeled after the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.). Its founder Gabriel d'Arboussie was an avowed Marxist and staunch admirer of Soviet political structure and culture.⁶⁴ Therefore, he adopted the P.C.F. and C.P.S.U.'s elitist leadership concepts and centralized authoritarian control.

In line with communist leadership concepts, the R.D.A. established sub-committees in villages and districts, coordinating bodies on the territorial level, and a powerful politburo to direct the work of the party. On the whole, the R.D.A. virtually adopted not only the structure, functional tendencies and political culture, but the operational philosophy of the C.P.S.U. as well.

Due to the reliance of Marxist-Leninist dogma on the central tenets of dialectical and historical materialism, the so-called proletariat which would usher in the proletarian revolution was needed in order to overthrow the capitalist class. Thus even though the colonial question was of significant importance during the pre-World War II period, Soviet foreign policy makers concentrated their energies on cultivating the workers of Western Europe. This was the prevalent position of the Soviet Government under Stalin's "two camp" doctrine.

After Stalin's death in 1953, a more flexible doctrinal

⁶⁴. See Wilson, p. 293.

approach and strategy emerged in Moscow. During this period, new political movements, radical, moderate and nationalist began taking roots in the African continent. Despite the different orientations of these movements, the common denominator underlying their formation was the intense desire to end colonialism in the different colonies.

Within the context of the struggle between the ideology of Marxism-Leninism on one hand and Western liberal politics on the other, the Soviet Union rightly deemed it necessary to disrupt the political and economic systems established by the Western European powers in Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This move was intended to deny the colonialists of their sources of raw materials, markets as well as other economic, strategic and political benefits of the colonial status quo.

From the African perspective, an alliance emerged between the indigenous radical leftist elite and other black people outside the continent. In the 1950s, the blacks in the diaspora notably W.E.B. DuBois, George Padmore and C.L.R. James teamed up with African intellectual giants like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Dr. Nnandi Azikiwe of Nigeria to develop an intensely anti-colonial Pan-Africanist movement. It must be noted that whereas some of the leaders of the Pan-Africanist movement like George Padmore openly flirted with communism and sought to find ways of Africanizing communism, others like

Dr. Nnandi Azikiwe were more Afrocentric in their orientation.⁶⁵ The Nkrumah-Azikiwe school of thought in the African anti-colonial movement was eventually geared more towards non-alignment whereas Padmore in his thesis on "Pan-Africanism or Communism" even envisaged a profound arrangement between a form of international communism with an external leadership in Moscow on one hand and a commitment to the principle of unified African autonomy on the other.⁶⁶

In the wake of the political realities of that period, Soviet foreign policy theorists had to seriously address the issue of the emergent tangible third world political entity and Stalin's rigid "two camp" doctrine. This dichotomy in Soviet theory of international relations was addressed by Khrushchev at the 20th Party Congress in February 1956. Addressing the delegates to the Congress, Khrushchev stated that "the awakening of the peoples of Africa has begun".⁶⁷

He elaborated on "a vast zone of peace" embracing "both socialist and non socialist peace-loving states of Europe and Asia". A principal task of Soviet foreign policy he stressed, was to reinforce indefatigably the bond of friendship and

⁶⁵. Morrison, David. The Africa's International Relations. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 3.

⁶⁶. Mazrui, Ali. Africa's International Relations. (U.S.A.: Westview Press Inc., 1977), p. 177.

⁶⁷. Morrison, David. The Africa's International Relations. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 8.

cooperation with the non-aligned states and to support countries that refused to be involved in military blocs. Thus began the enunciation of Khrushchev's "triangular international relations model" consisting of the socialist camp, the capitalist camp and the so-called third world camp.⁶⁸

It must be noted that even though from the Soviet perspective, the keys to African liberation could be found in Marxism-Leninism, the African peoples themselves must take the most credit for engendering their own liberation. Hitler's imperialistic ambitions which precipitated the second World War eventually created the ripe conditions for the anti-colonial movement in Africa.

This was due to the fact that the defeat of France during the war reduced part of the mystique of the imperial power and revealed that the great colonial powers themselves were not invincible after all. Even though Britain was not defeated, the enormous amount of resources spent on the war affected Britain's political determination and made her more vulnerable to colonial pressures.⁶⁹

Besides, the myth surrounding the "colonial masters" was

⁶⁸. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 194.

⁶⁹. Mazrui, Ali. Africa's International Relations. (U.S.A.: Westview Press Inc., 1977), p. 177.

shattered by the African soldiers themselves. The hitherto aloofness and arrogance which the colonialists displayed towards the Africans had to be cast aside for effective fighting in the trenches. There, the colonialists displayed fear, pain and other human frailties. This boosted the confidence and self-esteem of the African soldiers and in turn fostered a militant self-rule consciousness among the masses.

The Soviets supported the African liberation movement because a blow against imperialism at the highest stage of capitalism would be consistent with Leninism. Meanwhile, the United States and other Western powers adamantly fought against the African independence movements. When Ghana's first president Dr. Kwame Nkrumah wrote his thesis on "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism" to expose the workings of international monopoly capital in Africa in order to show the meaninglessness of political freedom without economic independence, the United States reacted negatively to the publication.⁷⁰

In addition to an Aide Memoire protest by the State Department, the U.S. Government refused to honour a \$3.5 million aid to Ghana. The New York Tribune Herald of Wednesday, 24th November, 1965 declared: "Ghana Bites U.S. Hand So Feeding Is Halted".⁷¹ Such hostile acts by the

⁷⁰. Nkrumah, Kwame. Africa Must Unite. (London: Heineman, 1963), p. 310.

⁷¹. Ibid., p. 310.

Western powers ended up driving new nationalist regimes and movements into the arms of the Soviet Union.

A number of factors made alliance with the Soviet Union possible. Firstly, after independence, most African states had identical problems on the national level. It therefore became imperative that since the problems to be resolved were normally: mass illiteracy, health care and economic backwardness as a result of centuries of rabid colonial exploitation, there was no need for pluralist Western-style systems. Rather, many African states opted for the one-party system of government. This act in itself was perceived by the West as a shift towards the Soviet Union.

Secondly, after years of colonial pilage, the African nations gained their independence at a time when there weren't well-defined classes and the attendant class antagonisms. Contrary to ridiculous arguments about the divisive nature of Africans advanced by some Soviet as well as Western writers, the sense of communality and co-operation among Africans was very high. Thus there was a considerable level of homogeneity in tackling the common problems of nation building after independence. Even though the absence of well-defined classes was not in accordance with Marxist-Leninist dogma, the Soviets made a doctrinaire change with Khrushchev's triangular international relations model to accommodate the emergent states of Africa.

This doctrinaire change came about because technically, Africa as a political entity and its class landscape wouldn't have had a place in Soviet ideological thinking especially under Stalin's "two-camp" doctrine. It must be noted that despite professions of one-party rule and African socialism by prominent African leaders like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, President Nyerere of Tanzania and Sekou Toure of Guinea, the African people were wary of being dominated by the Soviet Union.

Clearly, political opportunism more than altruism motivated Khrushchev to make that doctrinaire change. By the late fifties, a number of African states were on the threshold of independence, thus one could understand why Khrushchev moved swiftly to cultivate the friendship of the African states.

It must be noted also that during this period, Khrushchev was facing some problems on several fronts. Firstly, within Eastern Europe itself, there were contradictions on the communist front. For instance, after Stalin's death in 1953, Rumania's leader Gheorghiu Dej had decided to change course from the communization of Rumania to what was termed the Rumanian road to socialism.⁷²

⁷². For further reading on the internal contradictions in the communist bloc, please refer to: Pettybridge, R.W. A History of Postwar Russia. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966). p. 157-218.

Besides, the Sino-Soviet split in the late fifties was a source of discomfort for the Soviet leadership. This split occurred primarily due to the personal struggle between Khrushchev and China's Chairman Mao and the ideological clash between the former's reformism and the latter's communist fanaticism.⁷³ The Soviet leadership felt that the Chinese would attempt to make inroads into Africa. By moving in faster, the Soviets intended to block any privileges the Chinese wanted.⁷⁴

Also, during this period Moscow was overtly uncomfortable with the rise of Arab nationalism in the Middle East.⁷⁵ These factors therefore prompted Moscow to step beyond Marxist-Leninist dogma and cultivate the friendship of the new African states. After all, the newly won friendship could enable the Soviets to have a greater leverage against its opponents in the realm of global politics especially at the United Nations.⁷⁶

Before 1960, the Soviet Union did not have any well-defined African policy in place. In addition to some of the

⁷³. Hoffman, Erik P. and Robbin F. Laird. Soviet Foreign Policy: Classic and Contemporary Issues. (New York: Aldine de Grueter Inc., 1984), p. 672.

⁷⁴. McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 8.

⁷⁵. Rubinstein, Alvin. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II. (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1972), p. 199.

⁷⁶. McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 8.

factors outlined earlier on, there were two other important factors. Firstly, from the ideological perspective, Stalin's "two-camp" doctrine did not take into account the interests and aspirations of the African people. Secondly, there were very few independent African states. For instance there were only five independent states in all of Africa south of the Sahara: Ethiopia from ancient times, Liberia from the 19th century, Sudan (1956), Ghana (1957) and Guinea (1958). Khrushchev's triangular international relations model therefore served as the doctrinal premise for the establishment of diplomatic contacts with the emergent African states.

It must be pointed out that the self-interest and rigid adherence to Marxist-Leninist dogma was always prevalent in the development of relations with the African states. For instance, the concept of Pan-Africanism which radical leaders like Ghana's President Nkrumah adhered to was tolerated by the Soviets. Based on that, the Ghana and Guinea union of 1958 was applauded by the Soviets as a progressive first step towards building a United States of Africa.⁷⁷ However, the concept of Negritude which was developed by Senegal's Leopold Senghor was immediately condemned by Moscow. Based on the premise that Negritude is a reactionary anti-Marxist concept, the Soviets condemned the Senegal-Mali Federation of that

⁷⁷. Young, Crawford. The African State in Comparative Perspective. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

same period.⁷⁸ The double standards implied here were quite obvious. Both concepts were developed by African intellectuals, both were African-oriented, anti-colonial and both sought to liberate, unite and advance the interests of the broader mass of the African people. However, because of Senegalese leader Leopold Senghor's close attachment to France, Moscow perceived him as a bourgeois nationalistic leader who would certainly toe the line of reaction.

On the other hand, even though Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah still had British aides and ties, his constant profession of socialism was seen as progressive. The evolution in Soviet thinking under Khrushchev's triangular model had some rather complex appendages to it. During the period of Stalin's "two-camp" doctrine approach to international relations in the 1950's, Soviet hostility to African nationalism was more pronounced. Emphasis was rather placed on courting the proletariat of the Western world. Incidentally, his counterparts in the West, Eisenhower and Foster Dulles also had a corresponding paternalistic, Euro-centric and NATO-centered approach towards the formulation and implementation of foreign and defence policies.⁷⁹

In the early 1960's however, Khrushchev was confronted with a more pragmatic internationalist U.S. President Kennedy

⁷⁸. Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁹. Young, Crawford. The African State in Comparative Perspective. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

and his New Frontier policy which sought to cultivate meaningful relations with the new African states.⁸⁰ This posed an acute challenge to Moscow. At the same time, the Sino\Soviet split had occurred. The Chinese communists had mustered much courage and self-confidence. Therefore they also sought to spread their influence to Africa. Clearly, the realities of the period precipitated Khrushchev's new doctrinaire approach. It is scarcely surprising that the monumental Volta Dam as well as the Aswan Dam were built in Ghana and Egypt by Kennedy and Khrushchev respectively⁸¹, within the same period of time.

The early 1960's witnessed acute ideological confrontations between the superpowers. This intense struggle turned Africa into one of the main theatres of competition and confrontation.

Under what Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere called the Second Scramble for Africa, the superpowers waged a fierce struggle for the wealth, hearts and minds of the African people. By the time of Khrushchev's ouster many African nations had won their independence from the colonialists in most cases with overt or covert Soviet material, moral, political and diplomatic support. Socialist, democratic and other mass parties with sympathies for the Soviet Union had

⁸⁰. Ibid., p. 256.

⁸¹. Mazrui, Ali. Africa's International Relations. (U.S.A.: Westview Press Inc., 1977), p. 182.

either taken over the political control of their respective African states or were considered very influential on the domestic political scene.

For instance in Algeria, the National Liberation Front (F.L.N.) had managed to assert itself as the most potent political force by June 1962. It basically had an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist orientation and was friendly towards Moscow. In Angola, the liberation struggle was then being led by two mass political parties - the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.) and the Angola People's Union (U.P.A.).

The M.P.L.A. was perceived as socialist. It had ties with some of the radical leftist-oriented African states like Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Algeria. It was fiercely anti-colonial and wanted immediate independence for Angola. On the other hand, the U.P.A. was a petty-bourgeois party without any clear-cut programme. It maintained close contacts with the United States.⁸²

In Burundi and Rwanda, the Russians had much influence as well. Having established diplomatic relations with both countries at the end of 1963, cultural, political and economic contacts were maintained between Moscow and the two states

⁸². Morrison, David. The U.S.S.R and Africa 1945 - 1963. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 78.

albeit at a low level.⁸³

Whereas in the Central African Republic, Moscow couldn't assert its influence significantly, on the leadership in the Congo (Brazzaville) the political situation was different. Under Alphonse Massamba-Debat's Mouvement Revolutionnaire (MNR) regime, relations between Moscow and the Congo warmed up considerably. The interesting feature about the Congo was that, on that terrain, the Russians had to compete with the Chinese for influence. This was due to the fact that Peking established diplomatic relations with the Congo before Russia did. More importantly, Chinese aid and grants to the Congo were twice as much as the Russians were offering.⁸⁴

As regards Congo (Leopoldville) the Mouvement National Congolais (M.N.C.) founded by Patrice Lumumba on 10 October 1958 was Marxist-oriented. Other mass parties including the Parti Solidaire African formed in 1959 and the Centre Regroupement African were also strongly anti-colonial in orientation. However, Western influence was prevalent in some circles, these included the pro-separatist ABAKO. The crisis precipitated by the clash of ideologies and superpower rivalries contributed immensely to the infamous Congo crisis

⁸³. McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 17.

⁸⁴ See McClane p.31

in the early 1960's.⁸⁵

Whereas in countries like Dahomey, Ethiopia and French Somaliland, both Moscow and the Western powers competed for influence, in the Gabon and Gambia, the Soviets under Khrushchev were not able to make any serious ideological or political penetration.⁸⁶ In Ghana, under the leadership of the Socialist-oriented Convention People's Party and its dynamic Leader Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the country became independent of British rule on March 6, 1957.⁸⁷ The C.P.P. was strongly anti-colonialist, thus in less than no time, Khrushchev established a very strong relationship with Nkrumah. Also, inter-party ties were established between the C.P.S.U. and the C.P.P. as well as women and youth groups in the two countries. An ideological institute was established at Winneba in Ghana to teach cadres the tenets of Nkrumahism and Marxism-Leninism. Moscow's influence in Ghana was therefore very high.

With regard to Egypt, one of the most important states in both the African continent and the Middle East region, Moscow managed to court the friendship of the Egyptian leadership

⁸⁵. Morrison, David. The U.S.S.R and Africa 1945 - 1963. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 85.

⁸⁶ See Morrison, p.89

⁸⁷. Nkrumah, Kwame. Africa Must Unite. (London: Heineman, 1963), p. 120.

through an arms agreement as far back as 1951.⁸⁸Hence, later Khrushchev offered to build the giant Aswan Dam for Egypt to further advance Soviet/Egyptian ties.⁸⁹Incidentally, Egyptian President Nasser's, strong personality and leadership enabled the Egyptians to moderate Moscow's influence.

Even though Ethiopia was under feudal rule, Khrushchev received Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie in Moscow in 1959. That made Haile Selassie the first African head of state to visit the Soviet Union.⁹⁰Although ideologically, Moscow's influence on Ethiopia was barely noticeable during the early 1960's, political and diplomatic contacts between the two states were very strong.

Guinea, after attaining its independence from France in 1958 became the first African state south of the Sahara to conclude a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. Under its socialist leader Sekou Toure, Guinea departed from the French Franc zone, nationalized French concerns and hosted the second congress of the pro-Soviet Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) in 1961.⁹¹Thus Moscow's influence in Guinea surpassed that of the West, however the Chinese also

⁸⁸. Pethybridge, R.W. A History of Postwar Russia. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), p. 204.

⁸⁹. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 17.

⁹⁰. McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 42.

⁹¹. Ibid., p. 62.

sought to assert their influence.⁹²

The Parti Democratique de la Cote D'Ivoire (P.D.C.I.) under Houphouet-Boigny was very pro-capitalist and therefore did not give Khrushchev a chance in the Ivory Coast. In Kenya however, Moscow managed to gain a foothold after an intense ideological struggle with the British. This struggle took place through two national proxy parties, the pro-socialist Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the pro-bourgeois Kenya African Democratic Union (KANU).⁹³

Liberia's True Whig Party under the leadership of President Tubman did not give Khrushchev much chance to penetrate Liberia. Being very conservative, the True Whig Party which was essentially dominated by Americo-Liberians preferred to be under the continuous patronage of the United States.⁹⁴ Madagascar's independence in 1961 and Malawi's in 1964 did not offer much political and ideological gains for the Russians. Both nations' leaderships were strongly pro-capitalist, hence Moscow could not make any significant ideological penetration.⁹⁵

⁹². McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 62.

⁹³. Stevens, Christopher. The Soviet Union and Black Africa. (London: McMillan Press Ltd., 1976), p. 154.

⁹⁴. Morrison, David. The U.S.S.R and Africa 1945 - 1963. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 95.

⁹⁵. McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 84.

Mali's ruling party adopted "scientific socialism" as its official ideology in 1961. Mali's President Modibo Keita joined Ghana's Nkrumah and Guinea's Sekou Toure as Khrushchev's closest allies in sub-Saharan Africa. Mauritania on the other hand had very sour relations with the Soviet Union. This was due to the fact that Moscow backed Morocco in its claim over the former French territory following its independence in November 1960.⁹⁶

Nigeria, being one of the largest and richest countries in Africa was also actively courted by Khrushchev. Interestingly enough, some of Nigeria's nationalist leaders like Dr. Nnandi Azikiwe were perceived as progressive by the Soviets. After Nigeria's independence, Khrushchev sought to establish relations immediately. However, due to the strong influence of Britain, Moscow was not able to obtain leverage over post-independence Nigeria.⁹⁷

Khrushchev actively sought to ideologically penetrate all the nations of the continent. Russia's activities were not only restricted to the newly independent states like Somalia and Senegal, but they were also directed at colonized states like Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe among others. To a greater extent, Khrushchev's "triangular model" of international

⁹⁶. McClane, Charles. Soviet-African Relations. (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), p. 97.

⁹⁷. Stevens, Christopher. The Soviet Union and Black Africa. (London: McMillan Press Ltd., 1976), p. 154.

relations was highly successful in projecting Soviet foreign policy in Africa. Considering the fact that Africa had been under Western colonial bondage for ages, the ideological gains made by Khrushchev were remarkable.

However, a number of factors facilitated that success. Firstly, the Africans themselves wanted an alternative path of development. After being under the colonial yoke for so long, nationalist sentiments and the sense of identity engendered an anti-Western posture. This attitude sought to do away not only with colonialism, but with its attendant political structures, socio-economic and political philosophy, values and belief systems. Thus, socialism with all its professions of equality, respect for the dignity of man and centralized economic planning concepts appealed more to the African people.

It must be pointed out that during the colonial era, a conscious attempt was made by the colonialists to divide the indigenous African people in every conceivable way. Thus divisions were drawn along ethnic, regional, cultural, racial and religious lines. The tenets of socialism therefore appeared attractive as a panacea to heal those divisive wounds.

However, the Soviets could not achieve their paramount goal of eventually communizing the continent because they failed to analyze the peculiarities of the continent.

Firstly, after being dominated by the Western powers for so long, it was simply untenable to think that after bitter

struggles for independence, individual African states would turn around and sell themselves hook, line and sinker to the Soviet Union. Secondly, no matter the element of elasticity one injected into the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, it still remained essentially a dogma. The peculiarities of Africa simply made the actualization of some of the concepts of Marxism-Leninism untenable.

For instance, whereas in Marxism-Leninism, the concept of class struggle remained the determinant factor in the acquisition of political power, in Africa other determinants were more important. No matter how wealthy a capitalist landlord or how poor a particular worker, that worker would most certainly rise to the defence of that capitalist as long as they both shared identical language or ethnic relations.

From the perspective of classical Marxist-Leninist dogma, there wasn't any developed proletariat in post-independence Africa. This was due to the fact that colonialism was structured in such a way that Africa basically served as a source of raw materials for Western industries. Therefore, with the exception of the gold, diamond, copper and bauxite mines, most of the able-bodied people were deployed to work on the farms. Without any developed industrial base, there could not be any developed industrial proletariat to wrestle political power away from the bourgeoisie.

Another feature which militated against the propagation

of socialism on the African continent was the multi-tribal set-up of Africans. Having been artificially and arbitrarily amalgamated inappropriately by the colonialists, the Soviets either due to political opportunism or naivete thought they could radically build on the perceived homogeneity of the new states to project the interests of the people from ethnic and socio-cultural concerns towards ideological concerns.

Furthermore, the Soviets underestimated the political shrewdness of the Western powers. Even though the anti-colonial movement forced the Western powers to grant independence to the African states, the colonial metropolis did its best to tie itself to the economies of the new states. Manipulating those peripheral economies was one of the means the West used to retain its influence. Other measures included massive propaganda, cultivation of an elite pro-Western national compradour bourgeoisie class to take over the reins of government and naked bribery, assassination and blackmail of nationalist leaders.

In light of the factors mentioned above, Khrushchev's ideological investments in Africa were not as successful as the Soviets wanted.

CHAPTER 3.1 SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY SHIFTS IN THE POST-KHRUSHCHEV ERA.

After Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, the new Soviet leadership under Leonid Brezhnev decided to analyze the African situation more critically in order to work out a more constructive framework for Soviet foreign policy overtures towards Africa.⁹⁸

Brezhnev developed the Africa Institute under the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. This institute had over five hundred researchers working on Soviet relations with Africa, the so called non-capitalist path of development, various economic and socio-political problems, the phenomenon of neocolonialism and the effects of the Chinese influence on the Third World.⁹⁹ Thus Brezhnev shifted from Khrushchev's naive assessment of the African situation. Whereas the main determinant of policy during the Khrushchev era was predicated by Marxism-Leninism, under Brezhnev, the emphasis was placed on how applicable, workable and beneficial Soviet policies towards Africa would be.¹⁰⁰

This became necessary because Soviet prescriptions based

⁹⁸. Cohn, Helen. Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Black Africa. (U.S.A.: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 259.

⁹⁹. Staar, Richard. Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991), p. 37.

¹⁰⁰. Cohn, Helen. Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Black Africa. (U.S.A.: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 260.

on the Bolshevik experience were simply unworkable in Africa. For instance as far as nation-building was concerned, the features of the Soviet national integration pattern were totally different from the African experience. In the Soviet Union, constitutional principles like the role of the vanguard party, ideology, the dominance of party over state, centralized economic planning and totalitarian control were clearly established.¹⁰¹ Thus the Communist Party was able to adopt and implement policy options based on the dictates of Marxism-Leninism.

The historical context within which the Bolsheviks seized control of the state apparatus were totally different from the context within which independence was attained in Africa. In establishing a strong political framework and single-party system, the Bolsheviks were aided by the prevalent chaos, weak central authority and what Dr. Cohn termed the atomization of the Russian revolution, control over the Soviets, the influential factory labour organizations, and the discontentment of most segments of the population with landlessness, hunger and war.¹⁰²

In Africa the situation was different. States attained independence after very powerful and ruthless colonial powers abdicated with their powerful armies and

¹⁰¹ See Cohn, p. 260

¹⁰² Ibid.

economies intact. The possibility of staging intervention was therefore very high. Unlike the Bolsheviks which overthrew a corrupt tangible domestic political group, African states were dealing with powerful external forces. Also, the long struggle of the Bolsheviks before the attainment of power clearly presupposed the establishment of well-defined structures and political programmes for nation-building and governance.

In the African context, the anti-colonial movement was more often than not a mass movement which thrived on spontaneity and guerrilla warfare operations as opposed to clearly defined tactics, operational functions and rules of engagement.

Furthermore, the Soviet Communist Party captured the reins of government with all the coercive arms of government virtually intact. That would certainly have been of immense benefit in the process of nation-building and development of communist ideals since any opposing group could easily be dealt with. In the African situation, this was not the case.

The various coercive arms of government which the colonialists used were designed to serve colonial interests. After independence, most of those stable machineries had to be totally overhauled and revamped to serve national interests. Thus, the political groups which took over power could not use those organs to advance the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

The Russian conception of power, power relations and power concentration and distribution was totally different from the African conception of power. From historical times, Russia had been used to the political control of a strong central political figure - in most cases the Tsars. Under communist rule and its attendant method of democratic centralism, the leader of the Communist Party became the leader of the state. He had very extensive powers just like the Tsars had. Whereas the Tsars ruled by "ukaz" that is order from above which cannot be challenged by subordinates, the communists ruled by "Prikaz" which was operationally the same concept.

In the African context even up till now, the rulers, chiefs, kings or queens have limits. Methods of enthroning the ruler are very complex and thus the ruler scarcely has extensive powers. The leader must always subordinate his beliefs, hopes and aspirations to the collective wisdom of the so-called Council of Elders who are chosen by the people. Thus after independence, this political culture remained prevalent.

In practical reality, charismatic socialist-oriented leaders like Ghana's Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and Guinea's Sekou Toure failed to actualize the Marxist-Leninist developmental patterns which Khrushchev wanted. This was due to the fact that even though those leaders flirted with the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, there were other influential power centres

in their respective states who were totally opposed to that ideology. The ethnically diverse nature of the African people also militated against the holistic adoption of Marxist-Leninist ideology. In the Soviet Union, the communists had Russia to rely on to push forward its programmes. In the African situation, there were so many ethnic groupings which were fairly equal in terms of economic resources, population and land mass, thus even though the Soviets courted ruling elites in different states, those they courted could not simply push the ideology on the other regions.

In Ghana for instance, whereas the post-independence nationalist leader Dr. Nkrumah embraced socialism together with his Nzema tribe, some ethnic and cultural groups notably the Ashantis who dominated the middle half of the country fiercely resisted that ideology. It is hardly surprising that the Ashantis led the coup d'etat that overthrew Nkrumah.

Cultural practices also served as an enabling factor for the success or otherwise of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Whereas some tribes like the Nzemas placed much priority on the development of the collective as the prerequisite for the development of the individual, the Ashantis always placed much emphasis on the development and responsibility of the individual first before the collective.

The immense role of chiefs and religious leaders in the

community was also a factor that militated against Soviet ideological influence in Africa. Marxism-Leninism had no place for feudal lords and religious leaders. It's anti-feudal and atheistic connotations therefore alienated the aforementioned figures. Incidentally, during the pre-colonial and colonial era, the chiefs and religious figures were perceived as the embodiment of the culture, hopes and aspirations of the people. They normally exercised control over the people, adjudicated both civil and criminal cases and led their people in war. Thus the power, prestige and influence of those two figures cannot be underestimated. In a rather dogmatic fashion, the Soviets under Khrushchev wanted to impose Marxism-Leninism on the African people without taking into account the role of those figures in Africa's political culture. It is hardly surprising that the most vociferous and vehement opposers of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Africa were the chiefs and the religious figures. With their immense popularity and mass following, seeds of anti-Russian sentiments and anti-Sovietism were easily sown in the mindset of many Africans.

Thus clearly, Soviet ideological penetration of Africa couldn't be as successful as its principal architect Khrushchev wanted it to be. The political, historico-cultural as well as other peculiar conditions of Africa and the African people militated against the maximization of returns on Soviet ideological investments in Africa.

It must be noted that contrary to Soviet claims,

ideological overtures to Africa and its material appendages were not advanced primarily from a politically altruistic position. If anything, political opportunism and communist self-advancement were the primary motives which precipitated those overtures.

Within the context of the Cold War which raged on between the East and the West, Africa emerged as a politically fertile arena for the ideological struggle between the superpowers. In some cases, convergence of political interests emerged between the anti-colonial nationalist movements and the Soviet Union, hence the African liberation forces rightly took advantage of the benefits of those situations.

Nevertheless, the overall picture was such that the tactics and strategies for the penetration and dissemination of communist ideology on the continent were never worked out with the necessary focus on the African people, hence their genuine interests, hopes and aspirations were never adequately addressed. The paternalistic and patronizing attitudes of the Soviets were obvious in most cases.

If Khrushchev had provided any form of assistance to the anti-colonial liberation movements without demands for ideological "pay-backs", the liberation of the continent and the processes of post-independence nation-building would have been accomplished at a faster pace. Incidentally, this was never the case. Soviet overtures towards the African

indigenous nationalistic movements were all carried out within the framework of the advancement of the ideology of communism and hence as an extension of the struggle against capitalism.

As opposed to Khrushchev's blind opportunism and extreme ideological optimism, the Brezhnev-led regime adopted a more pragmatic stance. Instead of the over-reliance on politico-ideological considerations and the usage of economic aid as a foreign policy tool, the Brezhnev leadership adopted the option of employing military aid as the most prominent foreign policy tool.

Soviet policy during the period lasting from the mid 1960's until the early 1980's was designed primarily to advance the economic and strategic interests of the Soviet Union as a global power. The main motivating factors that drove the wheels of Soviet foreign policy in order of importance were: (1) the actual or potential strategic importance of a country or region for the security interests of the Soviet Union; (2) the possibility of disrupting influence patterns of the Western states, particularly the United States or of China in a particular region; (3) support for the position of the Soviet Union as the major Marxist-Leninist revolutionary power; and (4) the significance of a country as a potential market for Soviet manufactured goods and as a source of raw materials or of relatively inexpensive consumer goods and

imports.¹⁰³

Whereas the principle of collective leadership became more pronounced after Khrushchev's ouster, due to the communist principle of democratic centralism, Leonid Brezhnev's views on Soviet theory of international relations reigned supreme.

Brezhnev's posture on Soviet international relations policy was as dogmatic and rigid as his predecessors. Even though he was most instrumental in Khrushchev's ouster, he stuck to his predecessor's triangular international relations model. In 1968 for instance, he ordered the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia under the tenets of what became known as the Brezhnev Doctrine. This doctrine stated explicitly that the Soviet Union had the right to intervene to preserve communist party rule in any state within the Soviet bloc.¹⁰⁴

Whereas Marxism-Leninism predicted the eventual conflict and war between the capitalist camp and the socialist bloc, Soviet theory of international relations never accounted for the contradictions between socialist states. If taken into account, the intra-socialist bloc conflicts between the Soviet Union and Hungary in 1956, the Sino-Soviet dispute in the late

¹⁰³. Cited: Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 17.

¹⁰⁴. Kegley, Charles W. and Eugene Weitkopf. World Politics - Trend and Transformation 4th Ed.. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 576.

1950's and Czechoslovakia in 1968, it would clearly underline Dr. Brzezinski's position that Marxism-Leninism is rich in guidelines with coping with enemies but it offers very little scope for resolving conflicts and organizing relations among communist states.¹⁰⁵

The internal contradictions inherent in the Marxist-Leninist concept of socialist internationalism were most evident. Soviet adherence to the class approach defeated itself completely. Whereas the concept of socialist internationalism was supposed to be the basis for Soviet external relations with the Socialist countries, after the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev was forced to call for "normalization of relations with communist China based on the tenets of peaceful coexistence."¹⁰⁶

Even though theoretically, the principle of peaceful coexistence was primarily designed for relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world, Brezhnev was forced to make a radical theoretical shift. The posture recognized the polycentric nature of international relations among even the Socialist states as well as third world states. It marked what Kubalkova and Cruikshank termed the replacement of

¹⁰⁵. Brzezinski, Zbigniew. The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 76.

¹⁰⁶. Kubalkova, V. and A.A. Cruikshank. Marxism-Leninism and the Theory of International Relations. (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1980), p. 214.

Khrushchev's "triangular international relations model" with Brezhnev's "quadrilateral model".¹⁰⁷ Thus once more when the Soviet leadership was confronted with a dichotomy, a new theoretical framework was introduced.

The attendant result of that posture was that Africa witnessed very aggressive regional struggles not only between the Soviet Union and its Western adversaries in places like the Horn of Africa but also intense struggle for dominance against communist China in Southern Africa for instance.

It must be noted at this stage that throughout the evolution of Soviet international relations theory from its initial Marxist-Leninist base to Stalin's two-camp doctrine through to Khrushchev's triangular model to Brezhnev's quadrilateral model, a fundamental element of class-oriented continuity remained pervasive. Even though predicated on Marxist-Leninist dogma, Soviet international relations theory kept on expanding its parameters to accommodate the fluid practical changes in the international strategic environment.

Due to qualitative development in weapons of mass destruction, Brezhnev's posture was predicated on a strategic position described as "speak softly while you carry a big stick".¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷. Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁰⁸. Catudal, Honore M. Soviet Nuclear Strategy from Stalin to Gorbachev: A Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking. (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press

In contrast to Khrushchev's flamboyance and ebullient international behaviour which led to fiascos like the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brezhnev and his team adopted a rather cautiously pragmatic posture. Soviet defensive and offensive military capabilities were beefed up considerably. Between 1965 and 1970, the Soviet defence budget was increased by 40 per cent.¹⁰⁹ A new program was put in place to boost up not only strategic nuclear forces but conventional forces as well. Since communist China was also perceived as a threat, considerable weaponry and personnel were deployed along the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East. Besides, massive resources were used to re-equip the Soviet Army in eastern Russia and central Europe. A new tactical air force and "Blue Water" navy were also created.¹¹⁰

As a result of these developments, Soviet foreign policy towards Africa shifted from Khrushchev's politico-ideological focus to a higher self-serving strategic and economic premise.

The interesting feature about the period under review was that, owing to the development of extensive weapons of mass destruction by both the Communists and the West, war as an instrument of politics became an irrational tool. At the same

International, 1989), p. 46.

¹⁰⁹. Scott, Harriet Fast and William Scott. Soviet Military Doctrine: Continuity Formulation and Dissemination. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 163.

¹¹⁰. Ibid.

time, the principle of peaceful coexistence between the two blocs presupposed the acceptance of the status quo including the domination and exploitation of Africa by the West.

Incidentally, this premise in its turn presupposed a source of added disadvantage for the Soviet Union in its competition with the other adversarial powers. Hence Moscow undertook extreme and radical measures to realize its strategic and economic interests in the different regions of Africa using different tactics and methods.

Based on the peculiarities of a region or a country, Soviet policy makers engaged in different maneuvers in the Horn of Africa, North Africa, the southern region of Africa and West Africa using any means available and changing tactics, methods and techniques in an opportunistically reactive way depending on the material conditions at stake.

CHAPTER 3.2

Soviet Policy in the Horn of Africa under Brezhnev

The Horn of Africa is an entity without very clear physical or political boundaries. It is more often than not talked about metaphorically rather than as a political or geographical entity.

Even though it has no precise boundaries, it is often thought to comprise Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. The unique feature about this region is that it has proximity to the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹¹

The Middle East by all standards is one of the most important regions of the world. However from the ethnic, religious, political and economic perspective, the Middle East is the most complex region on earth. It has Sunni and Shia Moslems, Greek Orthodox, Maronite, Coptic, Catholic, Protestants, Jews, Kurds, Arabs and Armenians.

Political instability in the Middle East is considerable. The area has been characterized by constant fighting between Lebanese Christians and Moslems, Arabs and Israelis, Iraqis and Kurds, Palestinians and Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians and North and South Yemenis. Besides, western-style democracies, feudal monarchies and

¹¹¹. Patman, Robert. The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 25.

"Arab Socialist" military dictatorships are all present along with other types of government. Adding to the complexities of the region are its numerous types of economic systems which have ranged from free enterprise capitalism to state socialism.¹¹²

The interesting feature about the Middle East is that even though it possesses the world's most extensive concentration of oil deposits, policy planners could scarcely predict the direction of politics in that region. Thus there had been a constant struggle by the superpowers and other great powers to have dominance over the region. The general perception was that such dominance would guarantee the patron state constant oil supplies at affordable rates.

On the part of western countries especially, dominance over the region would guarantee capital and industrial investments especially in the area of oil drilling. In addition to the exploitation of oil deposits, control over the region would enable the patron state to have "safe" markets for domestic products and services from the metropolis thereby boosting the economy and the overall gross national product of the patron state.

Besides, control over the client states in the region would enable the patron state to influence the direction of

¹¹². Cited: Freedman, Robert O. Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970. (New York: Praeger, 1978), p. 2.

expenditure of monetary resources. In addition to all that, the Middle East has close proximity to some of the world's most important strategic maritime routes such as the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Gulf of Oman and the Mediterranean Sea among others.¹¹³ These factors made the Middle East a region of immense importance on the strategic agenda of the superpowers.

On the other hand, the sub-Saharan region encompasses the African states south of the Sahara all the way to the southern part. It encompasses countries like Ghana, Burkina Faso (formerly known as Upper Volta), Burundi, Congo, Cameroon, Benin (formerly known as Dahomey), Togo and Uganda among others. The overwhelming natural resources of these countries made it an attractive region for superpower interests.

In its turn, the southern part of Africa which included countries like uranium-rich South Africa, copper-rich Zambia, diamond-rich Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and others also had much attraction for superpower interests. In addition to the mineral resources of the region, control over the region would enable the patron state to have control over extensive maritime communication routes including the strategic Cape of Good Hope.

¹¹³. See: Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 34-53 and Nation R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: Health and Co., 1984), p. 147-165.

In light of the factors outlined above, one could confidently conclude that in terms of the strategic importance of Africa in superpower calculations, the Horn of Africa was of utmost importance as a sub-unit because of its geo-strategic location. In addition to serving as a bridge between the oil-rich but politically complex and volatile Middle East and the politically fertile sub-Saharan and the southern regions of Africa, its proximity to Egypt in particular and North Africa in general could be described as a factor of significant importance.¹¹⁴

A foothold in the Horn of Africa would certainly guarantee the patron state unimpeded access to the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. A direct link from the Horn of Africa through the Cape of Good Hope in the southern part of Africa would facilitate maritime communications to North America. On the other hand, the Horn of Africa would easily facilitate a maritime link between the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. While the former route could facilitate extensive trade between the United States and the countries of the Middle East, the latter would be of more benefit to the European powers.¹¹⁵

The strategic, commercial and political importance of the

114. See: Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 34-52 and Nation R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: Heath and Co., 1984), p. 147-194.

115. Ibid.

Horn of Africa was therefore most important in the calculations of Soviet foreign policy makers especially in the post-Khrushchev period.

It must be noted that in the early to mid 1960's, Moscow opted for the expansion of its "blue water" navy for the purposes of projecting its power and influence.¹¹⁶ Therefore the Brezhnev regime sought forms of local logistical support that would ease the logistical problems of maintaining its naval forces in waters surrounding Africa.¹¹⁷

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, political events in the Horn opened up the possibilities for Moscow to penetrate the region more effectively. The first major political event came with the coup d'etat carried out in 1969 in Somalia by General Mohammed Siad Barre the army's commander in chief.¹¹⁸

Although there had been allegations of Soviet involvement in that particular coup d'etat, there hadn't been any concrete evidence to back that assertion up. It must however be noted that the coup enabled the Soviets to penetrate the political realm of the country more than, at any other time. Upon assumption of office, Siad Barre abrogated the

¹¹⁶ See Albright, p.52

¹¹⁷. Ibid.

¹¹⁸. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 172.

constitution, outlawed all political parties and did away with all other vestiges of western style democratic institutions. In order to provide an ideological justification for those moves, Barre adopted the ideology of scientific socialism and further turned to the Soviet Union for assistance in all spheres of Somalia's political set-up.¹¹⁹ The new Soviet-Somali relationship brought about a higher degree of superpower rivalry into the Horn because around this period i.e. the late 1960's, the United States and other Western countries were allies of Somalia's arch enemy Ethiopia.

The Soviets ensured that Somalia would have a bigger and better equipped army. It is scarcely surprising that between 1970 and 1977, the Somali army build-up expanded from 12,000 to 30,000 men.¹²⁰ In addition to the provision of 1,000 Soviet military advisors, arms supplies to the tune of about \$1 billion were provided to the Somalia by Soviets during the period under review.¹²¹

Moscow's maneuvers during this period were extremely opportunistic. Whilst professing friendship and cooperation with the Somali people, the main reasons for Moscow's presence were to further advance its strategic naval policy and influence in that region.

¹¹⁹ See Craig and Kauppi, p.172

¹²⁰ Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 173.

¹²¹ Ibid.

In addition to the factors outlined earlier about the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa, the Soviets managed to gain access to the facilities of the strategic Port of Berbera where they developed and used docking, communication and support facilities.¹²² Besides promoting naval activities in the Indian Ocean, the Port of Berbera lies close to the strategic Strait of Bab el Mandeb. To exit from the Red Sea, all vessels must pass through that narrow passageway. Therefore, any state that militarily dominated the Seas near the Strait would possess massive influence in the Red Sea littoral.

That state would thus be able to affect political developments in the Horn of Africa as well as other Middle Eastern states close to that region.¹²³ It is therefore scarcely surprising that the Soviets did all they could to secure a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Somalia in 1974.¹²⁴

Whilst undertaking these ventures, the Americans on the other hand got very alarmed especially after a 1975 intelligence report which indicated that massive expansion of

¹²². Katz, Mark, ed. The U.S.S.R. and Marxism Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 85.

¹²³. Albright, David E., ed. Africa and International Communism. (U.S.A.: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 52.

¹²⁴. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 172.

Soviet installations at Berbera was taking place particularly the building of missile-handling facilities.¹²⁵ The U.S. thus sought to increase its involvement in the Horn.

Soviet opportunism in this scenario was most evident. Even though there is a legal provision of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that post-colonial borders of sovereign African states should be preserved, and even though the Soviets had always affirmed their support for the OAU¹²⁶, Siad Barre, with Soviet military backing sought to use force to alter Somalia's borders with Ethiopia and Kenya among others.¹²⁷

Incidentally, in 1974, another critical event occurred in the Horn - an event which further opened more avenues of penetration for the Soviets - the overthrow of America's staunch ally, Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie.¹²⁸

Hitherto, Moscow had exploited Somalia's fear and resentment against its more populous neighbour to further its own strategic interests in the Horn.

¹²⁵. Ibid., p. 173.

¹²⁶. Morrisn, David. The U.S.S.R. and Africa 1945 - 1963. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 57.

¹²⁷. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 36.

¹²⁸. Katz, Mark, ed. The U.S.S.R. and Marxism Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 85.

The military committee, "The Derg" which overthrew Haile Selassie embarked on a radical socio-economic reform programme.¹²⁹ Certainly, for ideological reasons, the political pursuits of the new regime were not viewed favourably by the United States. However, because of the strategic correlation of forces in the region, dissolution of ties with the Ethiopian regime meant another open avenue for the Soviet Union to expand and consolidate its position and influence in the Horn. Thus the U.S. sought to maintain its ties with the regime.¹³⁰

Increasingly, the Derg's avowed aim of transforming Ethiopia from a pro-western country dominated by a conservative right-wing Amharic ruling class to a single party socialist state became more pronounced. Whether spurred by the Soviets or by their own ideological inclinations, the leading radical members of Ethiopia's new regime cut down drastically the state's ties with the United States.¹³¹

Incidentally, whilst cutting down on its ties with the United States, the regime sought to boost up its ties with Moscow. As early as 1975, the Ethiopian leadership created a

¹²⁹. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 173.

¹³⁰. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 173.

¹³¹. Katz, Mark, ed. The U.S.S.R. and Marxism Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 85.

Politburo to establish a mass political party. By April 1976, it had adopted a programme for a "national democratic revolution" thus further alienating the U.S.¹³²

It must be noted that Ethiopia during this period had its own share of internal contradictions. Guerrilla groups including the Eritrean Liberation Front saw the mid 1970's weaknesses in the central political power as an opportunity to wage a full-scale war for independence. It is scarcely surprising that due to Ethiopia's weakness at that time, by May 1976, 50 per cent of Eritrea had been brought under the control of the Eritrean Liberation Front.¹³³ In addition to the Eritrean problem, Siad Barre also sought to press his claims for control of Ethiopia's Ogaden region.¹³⁴

Faced with these numerous problems, the Ethiopian leadership turned to the Brezhnev regime for assistance. Whether due to sincere political inclinations or sheer political opportunism, the Derg radically reorganized itself along Marxist-Leninist principles - this paved the way for a secret arms deal with Moscow worth over \$100 million in

132. Ibid.

133. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 41.

134. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 177.

December 1976.¹³⁵ Furthermore, between 1976 and 1978, the Soviets committed an arms build-up of \$1 billion to Ethiopia.¹³⁶

Once again the opportunism and naivete here could be described as mind-boggling. One wonders why the Soviets would turn themselves into arms suppliers of Ethiopia, an arch enemy of its staunchest ally in the Horn-Somalia.

Certainly, the fact that Ethiopia is a more populous and therefore a more influential state was a motivating factor for the Brezhnev-led regime. Access to the first-class ports of the strategic Gulf of Aden was also a factor of considerable importance.¹³⁷

Incidentally either due to communist political myopia or sheer naivete, the Brezhnev-led regime thought it could project the leaderships of the various states in the region from their respective national concerns and objectives to a more ideological focus. In furtherance of this communist utopian objective, Fidel Castro and later Soviet leading politician Nikolai Podgorny were dispatched to both Ethiopia and Somalia to peddle a plan for a federation of Marxist

¹³⁵. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 41.

¹³⁶. Ibid., p. 43.

¹³⁷. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 45.

countries that would include Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti.¹³⁸ The African parties involved rejected the plan. As a result of Soviet involvement with Ethiopia, General Siad Barre unilaterally abrogated the Soviet/Somalia Treaty of Friendship in November 1977 and ousted the Soviets from Somalia.¹³⁹ As soon as this move was made, the United States started courting Somalia through the provision of extensive military aid.¹⁴⁰

Thus clearly, both superpowers were operating purely from their respective self-serving premises. It is scarcely surprising that the massive weaponry provided to Ethiopians and Somalia were used to wage the worst wars ever witnessed in Africa at that time.¹⁴¹

Once again the evidence suggests that Soviet intervention in the Horn was purely an opportunistic move. In addition to seeking facilities to support its "forward" naval policy especially in the Indian Ocean, a substantial Soviet presence in the Horn enabled Moscow to influence political developments in the region.

¹³⁸. Ibid., p. 41.

¹³⁹. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 180.

¹⁴⁰ See Craig and Kauppi, p. 180

¹⁴¹. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 41.

It must however be pointed out that despite the overwhelming power of the Soviet Union, the African states in many instances managed to stall and avert Brezhnev's plans for domination. A classic example was Somalia's refusal to accept the Brezhnev plan for the Federation of Marxist States in the Horn. Once again, communist naivete and opportunism was apparent. Even though the Soviets knew of Somalia's long-standing dispute with Ethiopia over the Ogaden, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, Brezhnev attempted to forge a mechanical unity between two historically opposed arch enemies under a Marxist facade.

In a typical overzealous way, the so-called objective laws of dialectical and historical materialism were radically put in motion without paying attention to the subjective factors. If that had been done, the Soviets would have realized that the majority of the Somalis were staunch Moslems hence it would simply be impossible to project the atheistic communist doctrine on the country.

Another factor of importance in this particular scenario was that in addition to countering the Americans in that region, Brezhnev sought to counter Arab influence as well. The perception was that a stronger presence in the Horn would enable Moscow to assert its influence in the oil-rich but politically complex and volatile Middle East. Since Pan-Arabism goes hand-in-hand with Islam, a religious doctrine which in its turn had a strong anti-communist orientation, Moscow

always had a very wary position against Arab influence.

Besides, the powerful Arab states in the region especially Saudi Arabia, had very strong ties with Washington, hence Saudi success or influence in any region indirectly meant Washington's presence and influence in that region-an issue that Moscow found most unacceptable not only because of politico-ideological reasons but for strategic and economic reasons as well.

In addition to promoting its strategic objectives and undermining Western and Arab influence in that region, Moscow was also very wary of China. The latter had very strong relations with some of the states near the Horn especially with Tanzania and the Central African states. Since Moscow had been locked up in ideological combat with Peking from the late 1950's, every conceivable effort was made by the Brezhnev leadership to prevent the Chinese from spreading their influence to the strategically important Horn.

The importance of the Horn as a potential bridge to the southern and sub-Saharan regions as well as north Africa also constituted an important factor in the calculus of the Brezhnev leadership.

CHAPTER 3.3

Soviet Policy Towards North Africa Under Brezhnev

Soviet policy in North Africa was virtually intertwined with Soviet policy in the Arab world. Basically, Egypt because of its size strategic location and influence over the other Arab states in the region was the centrepiece of Soviet overtures in the region.¹⁴²

It must be noted that Moscow used an arms deal, concluded in 1955 with President Nasser to penetrate the region.¹⁴³ Egypt's importance to the Soviets was so pronounced that even when President Nasser started persecuting Egyptian communists, the interests of the latter group was subordinated to the friendship with Nasser.¹⁴⁴

The Soviets perceived that the northern-tier states of Egypt Libya Algeria and Sudan were very important for strategic reasons. The northern rim borders the Mediterranean the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.¹⁴⁵

Due to the complex nature of the Middle East scenario as

¹⁴². Kemet, Roger, ed. The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries. (U.S.A.: John Hopkins Press, 1974), p. 160

¹⁴³. Rubinstein, Alvin Z. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II. (Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1972), p. 240.

¹⁴⁴. Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and the Third World.

¹⁴⁵. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 42.

outlined earlier, the northern African region was also a region of immense contention during the cold war period. In addition to the strategic advantages which Moscow wanted, the economic gains in that region were enormous. The states in the region, Egypt especially, were deeply entangled in the Arab/Israeli dispute therefore they provided good markets for Soviet arms exports. Libya's fanatical leader, Colonel Gaddafi also had an expansionist agenda, hence he needed a constant supply of weapons. Since Libya has enormous amounts of oil, it was considered a very good customer.

The supply of arms, in addition to yielding economic returns to Moscow also had political benefits attached. Firstly, arms supplies to those states drastically reduced Western influence over the region. Also, it denied the West the monetary returns it could have made on those sales.

Besides, the perception was that by using military supplies as a tool, Moscow's presence in the Middle East would be readily asserted. This in its turn would enhance the credibility of the Soviets as a superpower and possibly as a reliable ally which could project power expeditiously. Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism were issues that the Soviets were wary of. A credible presence in the region would most probably be an effective instrument in the curtailment of those two ideological and religious doctrines. This task was extremely important to the Soviets especially from the ideological perspective primarily because both doctrines

perceived communism as an unacceptable atheistic foreign ideology. Furthermore, a leverage over the region could enable Moscow to establish socialist states in the region.

As a result of these considerations, Egypt, the key player in the region was provided with about \$21 billion in Russian arms between 1955 and 1975 including the most sophisticated weapons exported outside the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁶

One of the negative traits of Soviet foreign policy, i.e. the festering of conflicts to advance strategic and political interests, manifested itself clearly in the North African/Middle East political arena. In the spring of 1969, the Brezhnev regime had uncertainties about its client regime in Syria. In order to rally support for its client, it spread false intelligence reports of an impending Israeli attack.

Nasser, who had signed a defence pact with Syria in 1966, mobilized his troops and dismissed the United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF) from Sinai (the UNEF had kept the Egyptians and Israelis apart since 1957).¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, he announced the closure of the Straits of Tiran thus blocking Israel's access to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, and moved his troops into position for the invasion of Israel.¹⁴⁸ As a

¹⁴⁶. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 92.

¹⁴⁷. Rubinstein, Alvin Z. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II. (Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1972), p. 243.

¹⁴⁸ See Rubinstein, p. 243

result of this posture, Israel launched its own campaign promptly from June 5 to 10. Its superior air force and army routed the Egyptians in Gaza and Sinai, the Jordanians in Jerusalem and on the West Bank, and the Syrians on the Golan Heights.¹⁴⁹

The implications of this scenario were many. Certainly it is evident that the whole war started with a Soviet lie designed as a ploy to tick off Nasser. Exploiting the strong wave of anti-Zionist sentiments in the Arab world paved the way for the war. In its turn, the war whilst damaging the domestic economic military capabilities of the Arab states also rendered those states vulnerable for penetration. At the same time, it served as a tool for further expansion of the wedge between Israel and its allies - the United States and other western backers on one hand and the Arab states on the other. Thus Soviet post-war investments in the region boosted its image as a credible "ally".

It is scarcely surprising that between 1967 and 1969, the Soviets invested between \$3 and \$4 billion in Egypt.¹⁵⁰ The Egyptian army and air force had to be revamped, likewise its economy. By assisting Egypt in that direction, Moscow managed

¹⁴⁹. Rubinstein, Alvin Z. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II. (Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1972), p. 243.

¹⁵⁰. Ibid., p. 243.

to create a new dependency cycle between itself and Egypt.¹⁵¹

As a result of this new situation, facilities which were hitherto denied the Soviets were granted. For instance, Moscow secured naval privileges at the Mediterranean ports of Alexandria, Port Said, Mersa Matruh and Sollum and at Berenice on the Red Sea.¹⁵² In addition to that, the Brezhnev leadership managed to secure exclusive jurisdiction over sections of seven airfields and a free hand in deploying missile and air defense forces. About 20,000 Russian military advisors, technicians and combat troops were also deployed in Egypt representing the first commitment of Soviet operational forces outside the communist world.¹⁵³

It must be pointed out that the naval-support facilities enabled the Soviet Union to enlarge its Mediterranean squadron to more than 50 ships and extend deployments. Thus, during the period from 1972 to 1976, the number of Soviet ship-days in the Mediterranean actually exceeded that registered by the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Egyptian airfields were also used to support Soviet aerial surveillance and fleet-and-air defence operations in the Mediterranean area by IL-38 maritime

¹⁵¹. Kemet, Roger, ed. The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries. (U.S.A.: John Hopkins Press, 1974).

¹⁵². Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 92.

¹⁵³. Ibid., p. 93.

patrolcraft, TU-16 reconnaissance and anti-ship missile planes, and possibly AN-12 electronic-surveillance aircraft.¹⁵⁴

In order to further consolidate its position in the region, Moscow managed to secure a Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation on May 27, 1971.¹⁵⁵ Article 7 of the Treaty stated that "in the event of the development of situations creating, in the opinion of both sides, a danger to peace or violation of peace, they will contact each other without delay in order to co-ordinate their positions with a view to removing the threat that has arisen or re-establishing peace."¹⁵⁶ Thus for the first time, the U.S.S.R. entered into a military commitment with a third world state. This later served as a model for the conclusion of other treaties with Somalia in 1974, Angola in 1976 and Ethiopia in 1978 among others.¹⁵⁷

Incidentally, after Nasser's death in 1970, Sadat who took over the presidency veered more towards the United States. After a rather tumultuous relationship, Sadat unilaterally abrogated the treaty on March 15, 1976.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ See Weinstein and Henrikssen, p. 92

¹⁵⁵. Rubinstein, Alvin Z. Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II. (Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1972), p. 245.

¹⁵⁶. Ibid., p. 244.

¹⁵⁷. Ibid.

¹⁵⁸. Ibid.

A critical assessment of Soviet-Egyptian relations during the period under review presents some interesting lessons. The events that precipitated the 1967 Arab/Israeli War clearly shows that the Soviets were prepared to use any form of communist inferior tactics to advance their foreign policy objectives. The notion of either precipitating or prolonging a war to realize economic and politico-strategic gains were used several times in many regions in Africa.

Another element was the preparedness of the Soviets to sacrifice ideological concerns for strategic and economic gains. For instance, Moscow stood by idly whilst Egyptian local communists were suppressed by Nasser without effective protests. Thus whether one would characterize the position as opportunism or cautious pragmatism, the evidence clearly indicated that Soviet primary security and economic interests remained the most important core of foreign policy formulation and implementation.

On the other hand, Sadat's unilateral action also showed that indigenous African people also had their own independent minds and interests. Thus whenever the client state's interests converge with the patron state, the two parties could conduct business, however in the event of divergence of interests and objectives, African states can stand their grounds and do away with the patron state.

With respect to Algeria, the Soviet Union recognized the

FLN-dominated provisional government as far back as 1960.¹⁵⁹ In the mid 1960's, the Algerian Communist Party received much support from the Soviet Union. Its leader, Ben Bella was even officially declared "hero of the Soviet Union".¹⁶⁰ Thus as opposed to other countries, Moscow used the ideological tool to open the domestic Algerian arena for penetration.

It must however be pointed out that because of the predominance of Islam in Algeria, Marxism-Leninism as an ideology was greatly resented by the broader mass of the Algerian people.

Besides, after the rather long and bitter struggle waged by the Algerian people against the French colonialists, most Algerians were very suspicious of another group of foreigners with an alien ideology. Thus Moscow's efforts at establishing its influence in Algeria were not as successful as anticipated.

Under the Brezhnev administration, taking into account the regional instability in that zone including Algeria's sour relations with Morocco, military aid was used as a tool to establish presence in Algeria. This was due to the fact that despite its domestic contradictions, Algeria by virtue of its proximity to the Mediterranean had a strategic value for the

¹⁵⁹. Saivetz, Carol R. and Sylvia Woodby. Soviet-Third World Relations. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 35.

¹⁶⁰. Kemet, Roger, ed. The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries. (U.S.A.: John Hopkins Press, 1974), p. 39.

Soviet Union. Besides, the United States had access to military facilities in neighbouring Morocco, thus within a short period of time, Moscow pumped about \$1 billion worth of arms into Algeria.¹⁶¹ As returns for its investments, Moscow obtained access to naval-support facilities for its Mediterranean fleet at the Port of Anaba on the northeastern coast.¹⁶² These facilities were later used as staging facilities for the Soviet military airlift to Angola in 1975 to 1976 and continued to provide logistical support for the Soviet-Cuban military operations on the continent for many years.¹⁶³

In this particular scenario, the Soviet Union once more demonstrated its shrewdness and tactical flexibility. Whereas initially ideology as a tool was used to penetrate Algeria, when that tool became blunt, Brezhnev promptly used the military aid option.

Exploiting the regional differences and political instability in that part of Africa, Moscow, propelled by the swift winds of communist opportunism, seized advantage of the situation and pumped in military aid. If the Soviets were not

¹⁶¹ Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 95.

¹⁶² See Weinstein and Henrikssen, p. 95

¹⁶³ Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 95.

out to seek their own objectives, they would have focused more on economic aid since the Algerian economy by courtesy of the French colonialists was not in good shape. As usual, self-serving strategic objectives, in this context to have access to the north-eastern Port of Anaba and to counterbalance the U.S. military access to Moroccan naval facilities were the motives behind Moscow's policies.

Libya's oil riches and its proximity to the Mediterranean and the Middle East also made it a state with some strategic importance. Under the previous leadership of King Idris, Moscow could not establish any significant presence in the country. However, after the 1969 coup led by the leftist radical Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Brezhnev leadership had its chance to get closer to Tripoli.

It must be noted however that ideologically, Brezhnev and Libyan strongman Gaddafi were simply strange bedfellows. Gaddafi's ideas about socialist transformation in third world states are contained in the so-called Green Book. The Green Book which rejects both communism and capitalism, derived its antecedence from Muslim fundamentalism.¹⁶⁴

In fact, Gaddafi is as militantly anti-capitalist as he is anti-communist. Despite his openly-stated ideological credentials, Moscow sought to court him. The motives which prompted that move were numerous. In the Libyan scenario, in

¹⁶⁴ See Craig and Kauppi, p.25

addition to the state's strategic location, its size and economic resources were also issues of importance. Libya had enormous amounts of oil, hence it provided a very good opportunity for Moscow's military exports. The material evidence shows that between 1961 and 1969, Libya acquired only about \$58 million in military equipment mostly from France, the United States and the United Kingdom.¹⁶⁵ However after Gadaffi's coup, Libya's arms purchases escalated considerably. According to intelligence reports, between 1970 and 1977, Libya purchased land armaments, jet fighters, bombers, missiles and other military materials to the tune of about \$2.5 billion. This represented 13 per cent of Moscow's military supplies to the third world during the period under review.¹⁶⁶

Unlike some third world countries where Moscow received payments for its military supplies through barter deals, in the case of Libya, because of its enormous wealth, all deliveries were paid for in hard currency.¹⁶⁷ Thus in addition to having a foothold in the area, Moscow derived substantial economic benefits from its relations with Tripoli.

¹⁶⁵. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 95.

¹⁶⁶. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 95.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Once more, one sees a clear instance of communist opportunism. Even though Colonel Gaddafi is an avowed anti communist, because of his radical pro-Arab and anti-Zionist and anti-Western stance, Moscow found it fit to court his regime.

Ostensibly, there were other factors involved as well. Gaddafi's militant revolutionary stance as outlined in the Green Book presupposed that he would certainly be waging struggles to overthrow the right-wing conservative monarchies and moderate pro-western regimes not only in Africa, but in the Middle East as well. This would eventually serve Soviet political interests since Gaddafi's actions would certainly undermine global capitalism.

Besides, Libya's militant anti-Zionist stance could be exploited in the pro-Palestinian struggle against Israel, the leading U.S. ally in the region. Also of significance was the access to Libyan military facilities which the new military ties presented. No wonder Libya permitted Soviet aircraft to operate from its bases especially during the massive airlift to Ethiopia in 1977 and 1978.¹⁶⁸

Thus in the Libyan context, just like what happened during Nasser's reign in Egypt, one could clearly see that Moscow was prepared at any given point and time to tactically sacrifice Marxist-Leninist ideology to secure long-term

¹⁶⁸. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 95.

politico-strategic and economic advantages.

As regards the Sudan, its pivotal geopolitical position between the Middle East and black Africa made it a target state of strategic importance for Moscow just like Egypt, Algeria and Libya.¹⁶⁹In addition to its proximity to the Red Sea, it was used to provide a buffer against pre-revolutionary Ethiopia which was then a U.S. ally and to encourage separatism in the Ethiopian province of Eritrea.¹⁷⁰The Brezhnev regime actively courted the Sudanese leadership. However, after a communist inspired abortive coup, relations between the two leaderships soured considerably.¹⁷¹In its efforts to maintain some reasonable level of contacts with the Sudanese regime, Jaafar Nimeiri's execution of Sudanese communists and the destruction of the Sudanese Communist Party in the 1970's were not condemned very much by the Soviet Union.¹⁷²

In the Sudanese scenario, just like Egypt under Nasser and Libya under Gaddafi, one encounters once more a clear example of the elevation of the U.S.S.R.'s strategic interests over communist ideology and class solidarity.

¹⁶⁹ See Saivetz and Woodby, p. 70-78

¹⁷⁰ See Weinstein and Henrikssen, p. 96

¹⁷¹. Saivetz, Carol R. and Sylvia Woodby. Soviet-Third World Relations. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 75.

¹⁷². Kemet, Roger, ed. The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries. (U.S.A.: John Hopkins Press, 1974), p. 168.

CHAPTER 3.4

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA UNDER BREZHNEV-CASE STUDIES OF THE ANGOLAN AND MOZAMBIKAN SCENARIOS

As outlined earlier, Moscow's policies during the Brezhnev period were crafted with a less ideologically based premise, but primarily to fulfil the Soviet Union's strategic objectives, to undermine western influence as well as the influence of the Chinese. Another significant element which was projected into Soviet foreign policy during the period under review was the use of Cuba as a proxy fighter in the African liberation struggle.

The southern region of Africa in addition to its strategic importance for normal operations possessed perhaps the richest concentration of mineral deposits in the world. The region is made up of Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa among others.

Angola:

Angola, a very rich country was under Portuguese domination for a very long time. Through the influence of the Portuguese Communist Party, Moscow managed to court one of the leading liberation movements in the country - Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.) under the leadership of Augustino Neto. Whilst this courtship was going on, two other prominent liberation movements, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (F.N.L.A.) and the Unicio Nacional para

a Independencia Total de Angola (U.N.I.T.A.)¹⁷³ were being sponsored by the Chinese and the United States respectively.

After a long struggle for independence, the three liberation movements signed the so-called Alvor Accords which marked an end to Portuguese domination in November 1975.¹⁷⁴ Incidentally, after concluding the Accords, fighting broke out between the three movements.

Owing to the importance of Angola in the region, and owing to the fact that the Chinese and Americans were both competing for dominance in that state, the Brezhnev-led regime decided to throw its weight fully behind the M.P.L.A. Since the F.N.L.A. and U.N.I.T.A. groups were both receiving massive military supplies from China and the United States respectively, the Soviets decided to step up their military aid to the M.P.L.A.

Between April and October 1975, the Soviets carried out a sealoft involving 27 ships and a massive airlift involving 30 to 40 An-22's supplying T-34 and T-54 tanks, armoured personnel carriers and BM-21 rocket launchers as well as small arms and ammunition.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 65.

¹⁷⁴. Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 83.

¹⁷⁵. Ibid., p. 83.

Due to Soviet support, the M.P.L.A. managed to gain control over Luanda and 11 of the 15 provincial capitals. However, in less than no time with the backing of Zairian and South African forces, the F.N.L.A. and U.N.I.T.A. managed to stage a massive counteroffensive by October of that same year.¹⁷⁶ The Soviets together with Cuban surrogate fighters intervened on the side of the M.P.L.A. The first batch of Cuban troops arrived in Angola in October; by mid-November there were about 2,000 and by the end of the year, the number had risen to 6,000.¹⁷⁷

Initially, the Cubans were assigned the task of operating the Soviet-supplied equipment and training the Angolans. However, after a major South African intervention in late October, the Cubans assumed a more active combat role.¹⁷⁸

Meanwhile, the Soviets increased the arms supplies. Between November 1975 and March 1976, another 19 shiploads and 70 planeloads of Soviet arms arrived in Angola. In early December 1975, the South African offensive was stopped 150 miles short of the capital, Luanda and within a month the South African forces had withdrawn. The Chinese-backed F.N.L.A. retreated into Zaire and the U.S.-backed U.N.I.T.A. faded

¹⁷⁶. Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 83.

¹⁷⁷. Ibid.

¹⁷⁸. Ibid.

into the southern countryside.¹⁷⁹ In March 1976, the M.P.L.A. was recognized by the international community as the victor and admitted into the United Nations.¹⁸⁰

Even though Soviet and Cuban backing for the M.P.L.A. played a significant role in the latter's "victory" in the Angolan civil war, the motives that drove the Soviets to embark upon that course of action were not altruistic. Firstly, following the immediate aftermath of the Angolan civil war, skirmishes and raids organized by U.S.-backed U.N.I.T.A. rebels resumed on a full scale from the countryside and are occurring even up till now.

As a result of that, huge sections of Angola's population have either been killed or had their limbs blown away by landmines. Despite this sad situation, Moscow and Cuba prodded the M.P.L.A. not to enter into effective negotiations and power-sharing arrangements with the other liberation movements especially U.N.I.T.A.

Moscow's reasons for this were numerous. Firstly, by maintaining the M.P.L.A.'s hold on power, the Soviet-version of communist ideology would be firmly established in Angola. A strong and permanent foothold in the country would provide the basis for ideological expansion and influence in the

¹⁷⁹ See Weinstein and Henrikssen, p. 65

¹⁸⁰ Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 83.

region.

In addition to the perceived politico-ideological advantage, Angola's deep-water ports at Luanda and Lobito constituted a great advantage for the Soviet Union because combined with its facilities in Guinea and the People's Republic of Congo, the Soviet Union could easily threaten the West's oil route from the Persian Gulf.¹⁸¹

Besides, an M.P.L.A. hold on power presupposed that Chinese influence in the region would be curtailed. Since the F.N.L.A. was then being sponsored by the Chinese, a conscious attempt was made to crush the F.N.L.A. as well as the U.S. backed U.N.I.T.A. This scenario also raises interesting questions about the Soviets' commitment towards the establishment of scientific socialism in Angola.

If the M.P.L.A. was supposed to be Marxist-oriented which presupposed that it was committed to the principle of democratic centralism, centralized economic planning, socialist internationalism and all the other nuances associated with Marxist dialectical and historical materialism, why did the Soviets and their Cuban proxies not foster unity between the M.P.L.A. and the socialist F.N.L.A.? Clearly, the objective of the Brezhnev leadership was not primarily to build socialism in Angola hence the exclusion of

¹⁸¹. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 65.

the Chinese backed F.N.L.A.

Economic interest constituted another significant motive. In addition to Angola's legendary fisheries resources, the country's oil deposits, gold, diamonds and other precious minerals were sources of attraction for the Soviet Union. It is scarcely surprising that the Soviets always insisted for payment for its goods and services in either valuable Angolan commodities or convertible currency instead of the Angolan Kwanzaa currency.¹⁸²

Furthermore, because of South Africa's then racist policies, it was an object of much hatred and resentment by the rest of Africa. Thus the Soviets figured that by establishing a strong presence and influence in Angola, it could serve as the bulwark against South Africa's expansionist raids and overtures in the region. In that context, it would emerge as the "true" friend of Africa thereby further undermining and possibly isolating the United States which always backed and supported South Africa despite the latter's racist policies. Thus political and diplomatic points would be scored in that direction.

Soviet aspirations to be recognized as a global superpower and reliable ally is also a factor worth citing. By intervening decisively in Angola, Moscow hoped to send a

¹⁸². Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 67.

message to other fledgling national liberation movements in the region that it could be relied upon as a bulwark against imperialism anytime need be.

As regards the use of Cuban troops as a proxy fighting force, the Soviets found a way of expanding its influence to distant lands without necessarily risking Russian lives. At the same time, for racial and linguistic purposes, the use of Cuba proved most beneficial.

It must also be noted that this intervention further helped strengthen the ties between the Brezhnev regime and Castro's regime. Whereas the Soviets had been pumping in massive amounts of military and economic aid to the latter, there had not been any concrete material returns for several years especially after the Cuban Missile Crisis. Hence, the Southern African intervention served as a way of deriving concrete returns from the political investments in Cuba.

On Cuba's part, the Angola intervention served to boost up its relations and ties to Moscow. Besides, the whole exercise was an ego booster for Fidel Castro and his Cuban communist cronies. Castro always wanted to be admired and feared in the third world. Thus this opportunity served a dual purpose of boosting up his stature especially among the comity of third world leaders as well as his position in the Cuban communist party.

Furthermore, Cuba's activist foreign policy in Angola

opened up possibilities of economic, technical and political cooperation with most of the African states which otherwise had little or next to nothing to do with Cuba.

Hence clearly, the Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola was more beneficial to those two states than to the broader mass of the Angolan people. The evidence is clearly there - presently Angola's economy is in disarray as a result of huge payment for those external military missions. Angola's natural resources especially its fisheries resource were shamelessly exploited by the Soviets. In terms of its human resource base, Angola has more amputees per capita than any other country in the world.

MOZAMBIQUE:

Mozambique, another key Lusophone state in the Southern African region also had ties with the Soviets. Incidentally, the National Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO)¹⁸³, the vanguard political group in that country had always tried to maintain an independent stance.

Unlike its counterpart vanguard party in Angola (the M.P.L.A.), FRELIMO was formed as a nationalist front thus it

¹⁸³. Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 42.

had very little connection to the Portuguese Communist Party.¹⁸⁴In that same vein, it was independent of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Unlike the M.P.L.A., FRELIMO derived its political inspiration from the Chinese, Algeria, Egypt, Tanzania and even Israel.¹⁸⁵Since China's aid was more considerable than other powers, it had much more influence over the Mozambican leadership. As Samora Machel, the leader of FRELIMO once stated, Africans must use Marxism but Marxism must not be allowed to use Africans.¹⁸⁶

In this connection, FRELIMO fused various socialist ideas with its own militant nationalist ideology. In terms of its ideological and organizational orientation, Maoism served as the ideological premise. FRELIMO's collective leadership style as well as the involvement of the broader masses in local decision-making were all based on Maoism.¹⁸⁷

Combined with its militant nationalistic orientation and political ideas from a variety of sources and because of the heterogeneous nature of the Mozambican people, socialism in Mozambique had its distinct characteristics. Marina Ottaway

¹⁸⁴. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 61.

¹⁸⁵. Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸⁶ See Zaki, Laidi. The Soviet Union and the Third World p.24

¹⁸⁷ See Weinstein and Henrikssen p.62

rightly argued that "Socialism in Mozambique was not simply the transplant of a foreign ideology. It reflected a complex process political and economic change shaped not only by ideological choices, but also by power struggles and hard economic necessity."¹⁸⁸

In terms of its strategic importance, Mozambique could provide the Soviets with naval facilities and access into the Indian Ocean as well as facilities for air reconnaissance, communication systems and logistical support systems.¹⁸⁹ In terms of its economic assets, Mozambique had extensive supplies of coal¹⁹⁰, however it is not as rich as Angola.

Incidentally, just like Angola, Mozambique had an internal resistance movement - the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO)¹⁹¹ which waged a consistent war against the FRELIMO leadership. RENAMO had active backing from South Africa.

It must however be noted that even though the Brezhnev regime concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation

¹⁸⁸. Cited: Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 113.

¹⁸⁹. Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁹⁰. Cited: Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 63.

¹⁹¹. Saivetz, Carol R. and Sylvia Woodby. Soviet-Third World Relations. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 159.

with Mozambique on March 31, 1977¹⁹², it did not actively support FRELIMO in its fight against the RENAMO as it did in the Angolan situation.

The reasons for the Soviets' double-faced policy in the Angolan and Mozambican situations were many. Firstly, unlike Angola with its massive oil resources, Mozambique did not have the capital to underwrite Soviet assistance thus the latter was not enthusiastic to offer help.¹⁹³

Another reason for the Soviet conduct in Mozambique could be attributed to the fact that unlike the politically fertile situation in Angola, in Mozambique the Chinese and other African states had more clout with the FRELIMO leadership. Besides, the FRELIMO leadership was more oriented towards its own brand of nationalism. Thus the Soviets were not granted military bases and other facilities they wanted. Meanwhile, whereas the United States actively funded the U.N.I.T.A. bandits in Angola, with RENAMO, the external assistance was not considerable. Hence, there was not much United States/Soviet competition in the Mozambican scenario.

Another factor which might have forced the Soviets to be more circumspect about ties with Mozambique was the latter's

¹⁹². Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 63.

¹⁹³. Saivetz, Carol R. and Sylvia Woodby. Soviet-Third World Relations. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).

close proximity to the racist but powerful U.S.-backed regime in South Africa. Unlike Angola, Mozambique shared a common border with South Africa. In light of the massive military arsenal which South Africa possessed, most probably the Brezhnev leadership in the spirit of cautious pragmatism did not want to be directly embroiled in a struggle against South Africa.

Because of the factors outlined above, it is scarcely surprising that even though the FRELIMO leadership had openly declared its socialist orientation, Mozambique's request to join the Moscow-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) was turned down in 1981 because the Soviets were not prepared to aid Mozambique's ailing economy.¹⁹⁴

The argument advanced above does debunk Moscow's assertions of consistent friendship and assistance to African states. Certainly, if those assistance programmes had no politico-strategic gains and economic strings attached, Mozambique would have benefited just like Angola.

Incidentally, because there were no clear significant ideological, economic or strategic gains to be made, Mozambique was not accorded much attention in the Soviet foreign policy calculus.

¹⁹⁴. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 142.

CHAPTER 3.5 Brezhnev and West Africa

As regards West Africa or Black Africa as some people term it, the Brezhnev leadership continued with its pragmatic approach. Stressing the primacy of Soviet political, economic and geostrategic interests, the new approach once again de-emphasized the ideological criteria which the Khrushchev leadership relied on.¹⁹⁵

Whereas the previous leadership focused on the usage of economic aid and large prestigious development projects to court the favour of the countries in the region, the new leadership concentrated on military assistance relationships. As outlined in the previous sub-sections of this chapter, these ventures, in addition to providing extensive political influence and strategic benefits also produced economic returns.¹⁹⁶

Soviet military aid towards the sub-region consisted of arms, artillery, armoured personnel carriers, artillery fighters, aircraft and anti-aircraft missiles. Whereas during the 1960's, the U.S.S.R. ranked fourth behind the Western powers as a source of arms, during the 1970's, Moscow became the leading arms supplier in the region. Between 1975 and 1979, it shipped more arms to the region than all the other supplier

¹⁹⁵. Saivetz, Carol R. and Sylvia Woodby. Soviet-Third World Relations. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 151.

¹⁹⁶. Ibid., p. 151.

countries combined.¹⁹⁷

The factors which precipitated the policy change were numerous. In addition to external factors which included sabotage of African economies by the U.S. and her allies, the Brezhnev leadership was confronted with states having grave internal contradictions and economic problems. Thus in less than no time, dynamic and charismatic Socialist-oriented leaders like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah were overthrown by right-wing military elements.

It must be noted that under Khrushchev, radical African leaders like Nkrumah and Modibo Keita of Mali were invited to Moscow and awarded the Soviet Union's highest award—the Lenin Peace Prize in 1962 and 1963 respectively.¹⁹⁸ However, a few years after that, both were overthrown.

In order not to completely lose those states, the Soviets launched a diplomatic offensive to establish contacts and maintain ties with all states in the sub-region irrespective of their political persuasion. High-level diplomatic relations were therefore maintained with such "non-progressive states" such as Morocco, Zaire (Congo-Kinshasa), Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Nigeria and the Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) among

¹⁹⁷. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 136.

¹⁹⁸. Kemet, Roger, ed. The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries. (U.S.A.: John Hopkins Press, 1974), p. 57.

others.¹⁹⁹

The shrewd implementation of Soviet foreign policy was apparent in this context. From the Marxist-Leninist standpoint, a constant struggle must be waged to overthrow the bourgeois classes in those countries because they were all linked to the international imperialist chain. Thus cooperation with those regimes would be tantamount to assisting in the maintenance of the status quo. This in its turn was a negation of Marxist Leninist doctrine. However, the evidence clearly shows that when the need arose, Marxist ideology was sidelined for other cogent interests.

Another factor which might have precipitated the policy change under Brezhnev was the desire to focus more on the domestic interests of the Soviet Union. At the twenty-third Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in March and April 1966, it was concluded that the most important task for the U.S.S.R. was to build up its own economy so that it could then aid the world revolutionary struggle.²⁰⁰ Thus the Brezhnev leadership decided to scale down Soviet economic aid to Africa. The emphasis shifted to mutually beneficial programmes, especially ventures which would be more beneficial to Moscow.

It is also important to note that the post-Khrushchev

¹⁹⁹. Kemet, Roger, ed. The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries. (U.S.A.: John Hopkins Press, 1974), p. 59.

²⁰⁰. Ibid., p. 59.

leadership had to justify its actions. If Khrushchev as the leader of the Communist Party was pursuing programmes consonant to the dictates of Marxism-Leninism, then why was he overthrown? Certainly, the shift in Soviet third world policy was used as one of the reasons for justifying that overthrow. The perception at that time was that Khrushchev was squandering the country's resources without tangible and reasonable material returns.

The wave of military coups that swept across the Western African states also influenced the policy shifts of the Brezhnev leadership. Hitherto, under Khrushchev, states like Ghana and Mali were classified as ideologically sound socialist oriented states. In that connection, the Soviets had invested a considerable amount of resources into the development of Marxist-Leninist institutions and structures in those states. However, in the late 1960s those institutions couldn't withstand the onslaught of the military.

For instance in Ghana, when the military struck on February 24, 1966, it managed to seize control over the state machinery within a few hours. Similar scenarios occurred in other West African states including "progressive" Modibo Keita's Mali.

The lessons learned from these experiences goaded Brezhnev on his quest for more pragmatic and beneficial policies. Contrary to the dictates of Marxist dogma, Moscow

began to shift emphasis from courting mass organizations towards courting the military establishment in the West African sub-region. Thus, the Soviet Union started boosting up its military aid to these states.

The aggressive foreign policy posture of the Brezhnev regime must be noted in this context. As indicated earlier, initially, the Western states notably France, Britain, Belgium and the United States were the traditional arms suppliers of the African states in the region. This could be attributed to historical ties from the period of colonialism as well as the desire of the colonial powers to maintain control over the military in the peripheral states.

An analysis of the scenario clearly points out that through sheer aggressive policies, the Soviets managed to upstage the western states. If one examines the scenario from an African perspective using Robert Harkey's threefold typology of arms acquisitions styles, the military ties of West African states can be classified as either sole-supplier relationships; predominant-supplier relationships, that is dependence on a single source for at least one-half of the client's arms imports; or multiple-supplier relationships in which no source provides more than one-half of the client's military materials.²⁰¹

²⁰¹. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, eds. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 86.

These complex patterns arose most probably out of Africa's history. Whereas some African countries like Ghana and Nigeria were under the domination of single colonial power for a long time, some states like Cameroon and Togo were under multiple colonial powers. Hence, whereas some states would be operating within the sole-supplier relationship framework of arms acquisitions, because of their historic ties to the single colonial metropolis, others would be in the multiple-supplier relationship due to historical reasons.

Incidentally, because of the nature of the anti-colonial struggle, most African states found themselves in the multiple-supplier framework of arms acquisitions. This could be attributed to the fact that during the liberation struggle, most national liberation movements had to look for alternative sources for arms to overthrow the colonialists. Thus, the Soviets and the Chinese as well as independent arms merchants came into the picture.

Taking cognizance of this scenario, the Brezhnev leadership waged an aggressive campaign to compete most effectively against the other principal states. Here again one encounters Soviet opportunism at its best because by all standards, the West African states needed more assistance to build their domestic economies and infrastructure and not weapons of destruction.

However, as usual, aid was used as an instrument of foreign

policy primarily for Moscow's political, economic and strategic interests. In the West African scenario as in the other regions outlined earlier, Moscow's strategy was designed to firstly, establish and extend Soviet foreign presence, political access and influence particularly in states of importance to certain global, regional or specific issues, and in states which control strategic resources, territory, facilities or lines of communication; secondly, to undermine or neutralize enemy strategic interests and alliances; thirdly, to break Western arms-supply monopolies and prevent the introduction of Western military power; fourthly, to extend the Soviet defence perimeter and the capacity to project power afar in support of global interests.²⁰²

Besides, it was crafted to enhance the internal security, defense capability and regime stability of allies and clients as well as to support diplomatic efforts in conflicts by maintaining or tipping local military balances.²⁰³ Also, it provided the means for supporting insurgencies that were consistent with Soviet ideological objectives. Furthermore, it promoted Soviet leadership in the communist world as well as pre-empting or

²⁰². Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 79.

²⁰³. Ibid.

reducing the influence of the Chinese in the region.²⁰⁴

It is scarcely surprising that forces deployed off the coast of sub-Saharan Africa performed extensive politico-military missions ranging from the protection of Soviet national security interests including the over one hundred Soviet civilian vessels which daily plied the Indian Ocean to the implementation of other Soviet foreign policy objectives in the third world.²⁰⁵

Another benefit that sub-Saharan African local ports offered the Soviets was the ability to conduct repair, crew rest and logistic support for Soviet vessels. This in its turn enabled the Soviet navy to support forward-deployed combatants with fewer support vessels and prolong combatant deployment significantly²⁰⁶, a factor which served as a great opportunity for the Soviets to cut back on naval operating costs. The usage of West African facilities also enabled the U.S.S.R. to carry out surveillance of U.S. naval forces over the Atlantic Ocean as well as to help the Soviet navy prepare for a major war.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴. Weinstein, Warren and Thomas Henriksen, des. Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations. (New York: Praedger Publishers, 1980), p. 86.

²⁰⁵. Nation, R. Craig and Mark V. Kauppi. The Soviet Impact in Africa. (U.S.A.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1984), p. 148.

²⁰⁶. Ibid., p. 199.

²⁰⁷. Ibid.

Clearly, these were the principal motives which precipitated Brezhnev's overtures to Black Africa. It is scarcely surprising that Moscow therefore courted most of the regimes in the sub-region including the incorrigible Amin of Uganda. After all, in addition to the strategic benefits, diplomatic support from the regional bloc could also be gained.

Another significant motive for Brezhnev's foreign policy maneuvers was the economic issue. Moscow, being the world's largest manufacturer of conventional weapons stood to gain an immense amount of material returns in either commodities or hard currency by using military aid as a tool to penetrate these countries.

Political objectives were also realized through these policies. After all, many military officers had to travel to the Soviet Union for training purposes. Thus that served as a reliable way of penetrating the region's armies. Since in the regional context, coup d'etats as opposed to Marxist-Leninist led violent mass revolutions became the means of acquiring political power, these investments were perceived as reliable means of eventually effecting socialist revolutions in the West African states.

CHAPTER 4

GORBACHEV'S "NEW POLITICAL THINKING" AND AFRICA

After Brezhnev's death in 1983, two leaders, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko presided over the Soviet Union for a brief period of time. Incidentally, both leaders stuck to Brezhnev's quadrilateral international relations model. Both were orthodox communists and thus there wasn't any significant change in Soviet external relations conduct towards Africa.

When Mikhail Gorbachev took over power in March 1985²⁰⁸, the Soviet Union had virtually dissipated its resources as a result of its ceaseless competition with the West and China. Coupled with the unnecessary military expenditure was a stagnant economy which was virtually coming apart at the seams because of over-centralization.

In order to save the Soviet Union from imminent collapse, Gorbachev launched the twin policies of "glasnost" [openness] and "perestroika" [restructuring].²⁰⁹ These twin policies were worked out to eliminate the economic stagnation and overwhelming inertia which had permeated the total fabric of Soviet socio-economic and political life.

With regards to international relations, Gorbachev

²⁰⁸. Duncan, Raymond W. and Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl. Moscow and the Third World Under Gorbachev. (U.S.A.: Westview Press, 1990), p. 1.

²⁰⁹. Kegley, Charles W. and Eugene Weitkopf. World Politics - Trend and Transformation 4th Ed.. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

launched what became known as the concept of "New Thinking" (novoe mishleniya) in international relations.²¹⁰ The concept was applied to an integrated set of ideological concepts about global politics. It dealt with the role of the Soviet Union in global politics, the relations between capitalism and socialism and the inadmissibility of war as an instrument of resolving political conflicts.²¹¹

Under the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, there was bound to be an eventual clash between the oppressor bourgeoisie class personified by the Western capitalist states and the international proletariat led by the Soviet Union. According to the "sacred" laws of communist historical and dialectical materialism, this clash would effect the negation which would usher in socialism and eventually global communism.

Even though this position defies conventional logic, successive Soviet leaders from Lenin to Chernenko stuck to it. The factors that motivated Gorbachev to adopt the "new thinking" posture were numerous. Firstly, a deep sense of political shrewdness and pragmatism might have moved Gorbachev to finally repudiate that notion especially since the scientific and technological advancements in the field of

²¹⁰. Gorbachev, Mikhail. Perestroika - New Thinking For Our Country and the World. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987), p. 139.

²¹¹. Mlynar, Zdenek (translated by Marian Sling and Ruth Tosek). Can Gorbachev Change the Soviet Union?. (U.S.A.: Westview Press, 1990), p. 114.

nuclear science had changed the nature of global politics and conflict resolution.

Secondly, economic realism might have clearly indicated to Gorbachev that the Soviet Union could no longer continue with the senseless arms race. Thirdly, the increasing prosperity of global capitalism could have affected the Soviet policy-making elite. Whereas the Soviet Union was the only credible force to reckon with among the socialist comity of states, as regards the capitalist states, the scenario was different.

In addition to the United States whose superpower status in both economic and military terms remained unchallenged, Japan and West Germany both emerged as economic superpowers in the mid 1980's, thus they became potent forces to reckon with. As regards the East, China was also a very potent force, hence the Soviet Union could not continue maintaining that "one against all" rigid offensive military posture.

Another factor which might have precipitated Gorbachev's ideological shift was that he led the revolution that overthrew the communist gerontocrats.²¹² As the leader of a relatively younger and better educated elite group, Gorbachev was able to break with communist orthodoxy and sycophancy.

A very witty Russian joke, well-paraphrased by Vladimir Solovyev and Elena Klepikova illustrates the last argument

²¹². Solovyov, Vladimir and Elena Klepikova (translated by David Gurevich). Boris Yeltsin - A Political Biography. (New York: P. P. Putnam's Sons, 1992), p. 27.

very well. Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev are riding the same train. Suddenly the tracks end. What to do (yto gelatb)?

Lenin: "Declare another working day and have workers and peasants lay down more rails."

Stalin: "Shoot every peasant in sight, then bring in the prisoners from the camp and have them build a railroad."

Khrushchev: "Take the rails from behind the train and lay them out in front."

Brezhnev: "Close the curtains in the car and rock it back and forth" (to create the illusion of motion).

Gorbachev: "Get everybody out of the train and yell, "No rails! No rails!"²¹³

This joke epitomizes the various personality and character traits of the various leaders. Gorbachev's pragmatic personal disposition was also a factor which prompted the adoption of the concept of "new thinking" in international relations.

With regard to Moscow's external policies toward the third world in general and Africa in particular, in the mid 1980s, there were two schools of thought—the orthodox

²¹³. Solovyov, Vladimir and Elena Klepikova (translated by David Gurevich). Boris Yeltsin - A Political Biography. (New York: P. P. Putnam's Sons, 1992), p. 27.

conservative and the modernist sophisticated schools.²¹⁴The orthodox conservative favoured the Marxist-Leninist "class" approach with all its appendages.²¹⁵The other approach favoured minimalist Soviet external relations approach towards the developing countries.²¹⁶

Gorbachev's political inclinations prompted him to side with the second school of thought. As opposed to his predecessors' emphasis on military capability and competition, Gorbachev's "new thinking" concept expounded the notion that it is the civilian, scientific, technological and agricultural sectors that would provide the essential base on which security and global influence ultimately depend.²¹⁷

In a speech at the 27th Soviet Communist Party Congress in February 1986, he called for the need for the global community to shift from the doctrine of deterrence towards what he termed "a world security system".²¹⁸This new system would effect the total renunciation of war, establish confidence building measures, a new international economic

214. Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 135.

215. Katz, Mark. The U.S.S.R. and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 135.

216. Ibid.

217. Duncan, Raymond W. and Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl. Moscow and the Third World Under Gorbachev. (U.S.A.: Westview Press, 1990), p. 49.

218. Ibid.

order and eliminate such atrocities as genocide and apartheid.²¹⁹The new leadership also stressed the need to adopt a stance of "reasonable sufficiency" in military policy i.e. maintaining sufficient military means to defend against external attack but not enough to wage aggressive wars.²²⁰Thus from the hitherto militarily aggressive and offensive defense posture that prevailed especially under Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, Gorbachev opted for a more defensive defense posture.

In its turn, this new posture meant that the excessive projection of power abroad had to be curtailed.Hence Soviet strategic objectives in Africa had to be drastically limited since the Soviet Blue Water Navy especially would not have its hitherto expanded responsibilities. Accordingly, maintenance of most of the naval facilities were no longer necessary.

Coupled with the fact that most African states were seeking alternate means of development,the Soviet Union had to take a second look at its African policies.Stripped of its politico-strategic and economic benefits,Moscow withdrew its support for most of its client states in Africa especially in the Horn and the Southern African regions.

²¹⁹ See Duncan and Ekedahl, p. 50

²²⁰. Cited: Duncan, Raymond W. and Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl. Moscow and the Third World Under Gorbachev. (U.S.A.: Westview Press, 1990), p. 50.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that the Soviet pattern of conduct towards Africa emanated from a self-serving premise without due cognizance to the interests of Africans. Throughout the period under perusal, a negative pattern of communist opportunism pervaded Soviet foreign policy towards Africa.

Under Lenin, elegant phraseologies were uttered but no material assistance was provided by the Soviets. This inaction could be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) at that time most certainly focused its attention on the construction of the necessary domestic political superstructure. Hence, even though the tenets of Marxism-Leninism placed an obligation on the CPSU to link up with oppressed people all over the world, that ideological commitment was conveniently sidelined.

Secondly, political shrewdness might have prompted Lenin to veer off issues and situations which might have provoked Western response. Thus, African colonies were totally left at the pleasure of the colonizers.

In terms of economic and strategic considerations, Africa was not perceived as an attractive bride worth courting by Moscow. After all, in terms of proximity, Africa was far away from the Soviet Union. Due to the global scientific and technological backwardness of that period, militarily, Africa was not of much benefit to the Soviet Union.

Under Stalin and the so-called "two-camp" approach towards international relations, that negative pattern continued. Stalin's arrogance and preoccupation with security issues prompted him to conveniently disregard Africa as a subject of international relations.

Perhaps this posture could be attributed to the fact that Stalin was more bent on re-building the communist infrastructure in the country especially after the Second World War. It could also be argued that due to security concerns, Stalin needed to direct his attention towards the "satellization" of Eastern Europe in order to have buffer states around the Soviet Union.

However, if one views the satellization of Eastern Europe as a move to spread the Marxist-Leninist ideology, then a clear dichotomy emerges. If Marxism-Leninism was perceived to be the most potent liberation ideology of the twentieth century, why was the oppressed continent of Africa not assisted by Stalin? Certainly, altruistic considerations were not on the minds of Soviet foreign policy makers throughout that era.

Under Khrushchev, the self-serving pattern of Soviet international behaviour continued albeit at a different level. As soon as it became apparent that the African liberation struggle was gaining momentum, Moscow moved swiftly to court the liberation forces. Under the so-called "triangular international" relations model, Africa was projected onto the

Soviet external relations agenda for the first time since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Once again, the need to advance communist politico-economic and strategic interests were the factors which prompted that move. It is scarcely surprising that in places like East Africa which witnessed a greater degree of Chinese influence, Moscow never bothered seriously about the material requirements of the liberation forces. If Khrushchev was sincere in his overtures towards the continent, Soviet assistance to the liberation movements would have been unconditional.

After all, the most important issue at stake was the liberation of the continent from the shackles of colonialism. In contrast to the postures of his predecessors, Khrushchev's stance revealed that Moscow had no well-defined and structured pattern of conduct. Rather, foreign policy formulation and implementation can be very flexible.

The mandatory premise was that whichever policy the CPSU formulated and implemented must serve the Soviet Union's long-term politico-economic and strategic objectives. The dogmatic Marxist-Leninist ideology had enough internal elasticity which could be stretched whichever way Moscow wanted in order to formulate the necessary tactics at the appropriate time. Hence whereas Stalin advanced the notion of the "two-camp" doctrine, "socialism in one country" and other elegant communist

doctrines, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, Khrushchev came out with the "triangular international relations model". If it had not been Moscow's ambition to compete with the West especially the United States in all fields and places, one wonders whether this new model would have been created.

Another interesting feature about the Khrushchev era was the tactical usage of ideological and economic tools to penetrate Africa. Through the cultivation of strong ties with nationalist leaders and the erection of prestige projects like the Aswan Dam, Moscow managed to spread its influence in Africa.

Under Brezhnev, Moscow exhibited its mastery at the game of tactical flexibility once more. Whereas the dictates of Marxism-Leninism did not address the possibility of intra communist bloc contradictions, Moscow's differences with China generated a tactical amendment of Khrushchev's model. Even though initially, the concept of peaceful coexistence (mirnoe sosushestvovanie) was enunciated to cater for relations between the communists and the capitalists, the Brezhnev regime had to make an adaptation to cater for its sour relations with communist China. Thus the "quadrilateral international relations model" was adopted.

The intense struggle against the capitalist bloc on one hand and China on the other was carried over to Africa. The

Brezhnev regime exhibited self-serving tactical shrewdness by shifting completely from the usage of ideological and economic tools of penetration to the military aid option. The interesting feature about this move was that it had manifold returns for the Soviet Union. Firstly, it provided an avenue for the Soviets to dispose of its obsolete conventional armaments. Secondly, it provided very substantial economic returns either in hard convertible cash or in precious primary commodities.

There were places, Angola for instance, where Moscow had extensive fishing rights in part reimbursement for its military supplies. Besides, Moscow had immense benefits for its strategic objectives. Access to deep water facilities like the ports of Luanda, Lobito and Berbera among others provided invaluable material opportunities for the Soviet Blue Water Navy as well as aerial surveillance and communications.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the flames of war were fanned and supported by Moscow in several instances so as to maintain the cycle of dependency which had been created.

The self-serving pattern of conduct continued through the brief eras of Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko. With the ascension of Mikhail Gorbachev and the adoption of the twin policies of perestroika (restructuring) and glassnost (openness) on the domestic front and the policy of novoe

mishlenia(new thinking)in international relations, Africa's interests were once again sidelined.

The evidence for this assertion lies in the fact that firstly, those policies were formulated to improve the economy and primary national interests of the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviets made a radical break with some of its African allies without considering how the newly-created power-vacuum would be handled. This could be attributed to the fact that, with the adoption of the concept of "new thinking", the new "defensive defense" posture presupposed a reduction in defense spending. The new posture required that the "offensive defense" and the "forward posture" of the Soviet armed forces had to be altered.

In its turn, this meant that the importance of Africa's strategic maritime regimes was reduced considerably. Hence, with the erosion of Africa's strategic importance especially for Soviet naval forces, Moscow promptly turned inwards.

Secondly, by courtesy of superpower involvement, the economies of many African states were in gross disarray. Hence, Moscow wouldn't derive much economic benefits from Africa anymore. Thirdly, politically, socialism as an ideology had been considerably discredited during the mid to late 1980s. Incidentally, free market economies seemed to have taken the winds out of the sails of the communists. Hence, even hard core socialist states like Angola and Mozambique were

beginning to look at alternative methods of economic development. Thus clearly, when it suited Moscow, it abandoned Africa and turned inwards. No serious efforts were ever made by the Soviets to complete some projects which had already been started.

Presently, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia had emerged as the pre-eminent state. With the current disarray in the Russian domestic economy, the African continent will most probably not be an important item on the Russian foreign policy-making agenda.

A brief analysis of the Russian domestic political scenario shows that there are three main groups contending for political power. Russia's attitude and conduct towards Africa will depend on which group finally dominates the political scene.

Firstly, there is the centrist political group being led by Boris Yeltsin and lately Yegor Gaider. This group which claims to be democratic wants to completely dismantle the command economy, institute comprehensive reforms and establish a market economy in Russia. A domestic market economy oriented political regime presupposes an attendant democratic political superstructure. This in its turn will enhance non-antagonistic external relations posture, with the relative calm in the international environment, Russia will certainly not engage in expansionist overtures.

However, it will most likely wish to be perceived at least as a regional power. Hence, whilst the Southern and Sub-Saharan regions of Africa will most likely not be of much strategic importance to Moscow, the Northern region in general and Egypt in particular will rank high on Moscow's agenda. This is due to the fact that Russia would not want to completely disinvest itself from the Middle East. After all, in addition to the region's economic and strategic importance, its relative proximity to Russia will be a factor of importance. Since Egypt has always been an important player in the Middle East, Moscow will most likely go to great lengths to maintain some reasonably high level contacts with the leadership in Cairo.

The second political group in Russia is the leftist group which wants to maintain substantial elements of the socialist status quo. With its ideological posture, if this group ever manages to emerge as the dominant force, then one can envisage a more militant anti-Western and hostile external relations posture.

With the return to the old way of external conduct will be an increase in defense spending and an "offensively forward" posture of Russia's armed forces. Once more, Africa's strategic maritime facilities will most probably be needed to enhance the material basis for this posture. It would not be far-fetched to speculate that there would then be a resumption of the cold war and the re-scrabble for Africa especially the continent's most important strategic regions like the Horn,

North Africa and the southern regions.

The third group which is more to the extreme right of the political spectrum is made up of ultra-nationalists. Led by the radical Moscow lawyer Vladimir Zhirinovsky, this right-wing anti-Western group will want to advance Russian Nationalism, pride and prestige by any means necessary. With a shattered economy but a powerful military arsenal, if this group should ever emerge dominant, one can envisage a very hostile external relations posture.

Once more, with this posture comes an increase in defense spending and an offensive posture. As chilling as one might find it, the objective truth is that if the right-wing takes over, Africa's plight will most likely be similar to the scenario outlined in the previous paragraph.

There is an African proverb which states that "when elephants fight, the grass suffers". This expose had attempted to show that throughout the period of intense struggles by the superpowers for global hegemony, whereas the elephants (superpowers) were fighting, the poor grass (Africa) suffered and suffered. Perhaps it is time for the "grass" to breathe. Hopefully, Africa shall bleed no more!

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