

Page Denied

Next 10 Page(s) In Document Denied

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW



National
Foreign
Assessment
Center

Top Secret

25X1

The USSR and Libya: Collusion in the Middle East and Africa

An Intelligence Assessment

Top Secret

RP 79-10002C

January 1979

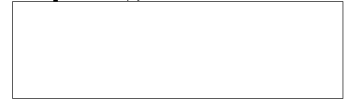
Copy 034

25X1

Page Denied

**National
Foreign
Assessment
Center**

Top Secret





The USSR and Libya: Collusion in the Middle East and Africa



25X1

An Intelligence Assessment

25X1

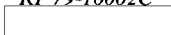
The author of this paper is  USSR
Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis.
Comments and queries are welcome and should be
directed to 

25X1



25X1



Top Secret
RP 79-10002C

January 1979

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

Contents

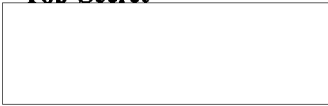
	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	1
The Nature of the Soviet-Libyan Relationship	3
Promotion of Instability: Case Studies	7
South Yemen and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO)	7
Background	7
Soviet Support for the PFLO	7
The Libyan Position	7
A Common Interest	8
Conclusions and Prospects	8
The Western Sahara	9
Background	9
Soviet Ambivalence	9
The Libyan Commitment	9
A Coincidence of Interests	9
The Pot Simmers	12
Conclusions and Prospects	13
Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)	13
The Soviet Dilemma	13
The Libyan Connection	13
The Crunch—June 1976	15
Conclusions and Prospects	16
The Sudan	17
Libyan Support for Coup	17
Aftermath of Coup Attempt	17
The Situation Is Defused	19
Conclusions and Prospects	20
Ethiopia	20
Soviets Seek Disguised Shift	22
Similar Libyan Shift	22
Collaboration	22
Soviet Support Becomes Apparent	23
The Eritrean Dilemma	24
Conclusions and Prospects	24
The Pattern of Collusion	25
Chad	25
Terrorism	26

Top Secret

January 1979

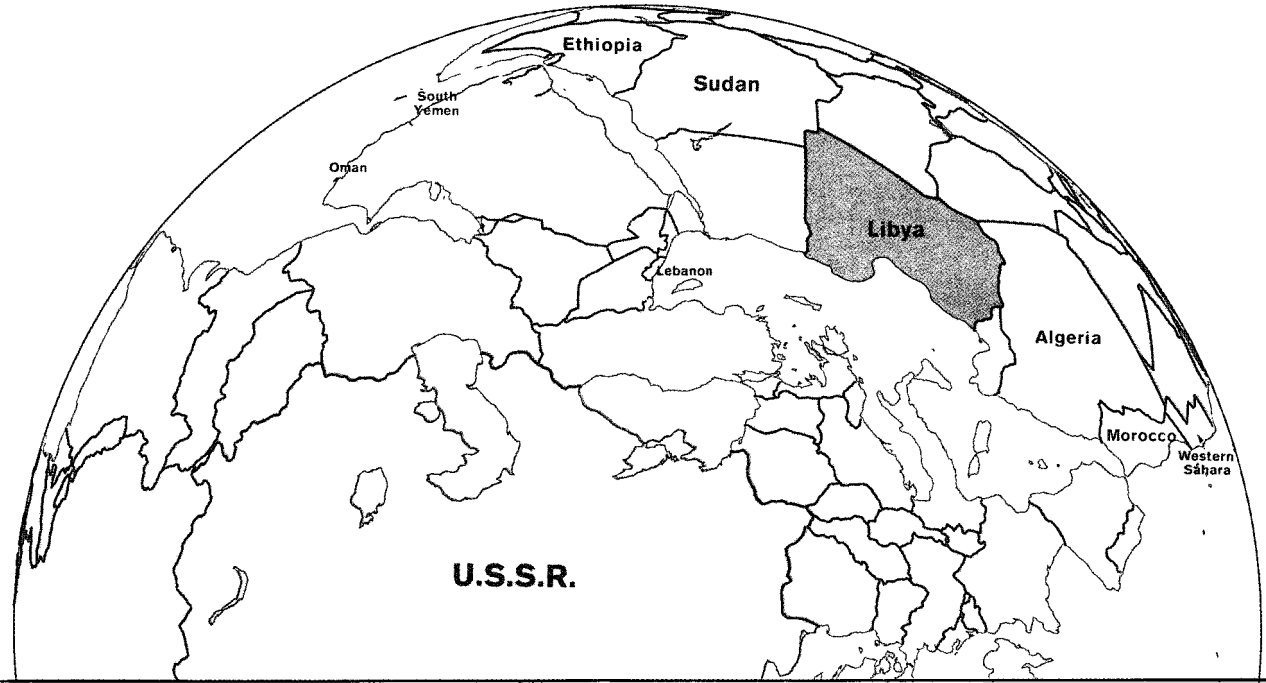
25X1

Top Secret



25X1

Areas of Soviet-Libyan Collusion



577961 12-78



25X1

25X1

Top Secret

January 1979



25X1

Top Secret



25X1

**The USSR and Libya:
Collusion in the
Middle East and Africa**



Key Judgments

In recent years, the Soviet Union and Libya have discovered and exploited a common interest in fostering radical elements in the Middle East and Africa. This mutual interest has proved compelling enough for them to submerge their philosophic and political differences and enter into a pragmatic partnership. In essence, the Libyans have acted as a conduit for Soviet arms, thus building their own image as a backer of "progressive" forces and allowing the Soviets to remain in the background.

The Soviet-Libyan partnership has functioned actively in a variety of areas:

- In *Oman*, where both Libya and the USSR backed the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) and its mentor, South Yemen, albeit with differing degrees of enthusiasm.
- In the *Sahara*, where the need felt by the Soviets to please Algeria by providing at least low-key support to the Polisario reinforced a Libyan passion to back the guerrilla force.
- In *Lebanon*, where Moscow's interest in supporting leftist and Palestinian forces without totally antagonizing Syria coincided with Libya's desire to ship arms to those forces.
- In the *Sudan*, where Qadhafi's compulsion to overthrow Numayri had Soviet sympathy and covert assistance.
- In *Ethiopia*, where the USSR's initial hope of disguising the extent of its military assistance to the Mengistu regime combined with Libya's willingness to provide open backing.

There is no question that the ultimate goals of the Soviets and Libyans are contradictory; the Soviets seek to expand the world's pro-Soviet Marxist community while the Libyans dream of a pan-Arab Islamic order. But both long-term goals are served by the disruption of regimes considered "traditionalist" and by the encouragement of so-called "progressive" elements wherever feasible. In addition, each nation considers Egypt under Sadat to be the main impediment to its own advancement in the region, and each therefore constantly operates with an eye toward undermining Sadat and his allies.

While they often agree on an immediate course of action (if not the ultimate destination), the USSR and Libya tend to take differing positions with respect to becoming directly involved in conflicts—a factor that provides the basic motivation for their partnership. Qadhafi's ambition to become a major leader in the area spurs him to seek an active supporting role in such situations, while the Soviets, for the most part, prefer to remain in the background.

There are a number of reasons for the Soviets' inclination to maintain a low profile:

- To be recognized as a respectable member of the international community, they must avoid the stigma of open association with extremist groups that might become involved in terrorist operations.
- They desire to avoid confrontations with the West and prevent setbacks in other areas of negotiation that might result from their participation in obviously disruptive activities.



Top Secret

January 1979

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

- They often wish to maintain relations with several different parties to a dispute.
- They know that the physical involvement of forces from a superpower can prove counterproductive in the Third World.
- An indirect role gives them flexibility should the cause suffer a setback or should the risks of continued involvement prove unacceptable. [Redacted]

25X1

The most prevalent mechanism of Soviet-Libyan collusion, the straightforward transfer by Libya of Soviet equipment, enables the Soviets to deny that they are supporting the ultimate recipient. They simply claim that they have no control over their equipment once they have sold it. In fact, the evidence strongly suggests that the Soviets try very hard, with considerable success, to retain control of the military equipment they supply their customers. [Redacted]

25X1

Other forms of Soviet-Libyan cooperation include Libyan financing of third party arms purchases from the USSR and parallel training of Third World insurgent forces. The Soviets have generally tried to avoid direct contacts with extreme, terrorist-oriented groups because they are formally on record in opposition to terrorism. The Libyans, on the other hand, have been willing to train such elements and encourage terrorist operations. There is no evidence that the Soviets have tried to dissuade them from doing so, and the Soviets may implicitly condone such tactics—as long as there is little risk that they themselves will be associated with the groups. [Redacted]

25X1

This acquiescence on the part of the Soviets is another aspect of the overall pattern of Soviet-Libyan collusion. Soviet silence amounts to tacit approval of Libyan actions. In addition to apparent Soviet acceptance of Libyan support for terrorist actions, the Soviets have appeared to condone the large-scale Libyan-backed effort to overthrow the Government of Chad as well as a variety of lesser plots against neighboring governments. [Redacted]

25X1

Currently the Soviets and Libyans are not actively engaged in major cooperative ventures in the Middle East or Africa. Qadhafi has retreated in Chad for the time being and appears to be trying to polish his tarnished reputation as a member of the international community. Passive collusion continues, however, and there is no evidence of a basic change in the thrust of Qadhafi's ambitions. He remains committed to fomenting change as do the Soviets. Thus, barring Qadhafi's removal from office, it is likely that, as time goes on, new situations will attract Soviet-Libyan attention. Now that an established pattern of collusion exists, coordination in each new situation presumably becomes easier. [Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

**The USSR and Libya:
Collusion in the
Middle East and Africa**

The Nature of the Soviet-Libyan Relationship

The Soviet Union and Libya have developed what might be termed a pragmatic partnership—an arrangement of convenience in which these very disparate states have contrived to ignore their basically incompatible ideologies and objectives in order to accommodate complementary short-term interests. It is totally unlike the Soviet-Cuban relationship, which is based on shared ideology, economic dependence, and common goals. But on a practical level, the Libyans have acted for the Soviets in the Third World in a manner similar to that of the Cubans.

In the past five years bilateral relations between the USSR and Libya have improved enormously despite the two nations' widely divergent world views and objectives. Qadhafi's fanatic religious conviction, which combines a profound anti-Communism and Arab nationalism with suspicion of superpower involvement in Arab affairs, inhibits the development of trust in Soviet intentions. Similarly, Soviet concern about Qadhafi's fanaticism and unpredictability would seem to impede close ties. The objectives of the two nations are correspondingly divergent. The Soviets seek to expand their influence and power as well as Marxist philosophy while Qadhafi considers it his duty to extend Libyan influence in order to promote Muslim political influence wherever possible.

There are also substantive political differences between the two states. Qadhafi advocates the elimination of the state of Israel and the return of the Palestinians to all of their homeland. He opposes the Soviet-backed Geneva peace conference as well as all other efforts to find a compromise solution in the area.

'Since the spring of 1974, major arms deals have been concluded and considerable quantities of sophisticated military equipment (including MIG-25s) have been delivered to Libya by the USSR. Economic and technical cooperation has expanded rapidly, and the Soviets have agreed to supply Libya with a nuclear power plant. The number of Soviet economic and military advisers now stationed in Libya has increased to about 1,500—almost double the number in mid-1977. The Soviets have gained access to Libyan port facilities for their



*Qadhafi and Brezhnev:
A Pragmatic Friendship*

This radical approach to the Middle East is reflected in Libya's position on the use of terror as an instrument of policy and its often blatant support for extremist groups. The Soviets, eager to play a leading role as a respected member of the international community, have formally rejected the use of terror and have no direct dealings with groups that espouse its use. Although the Soviets have apparently not tried to restrain Libya in its backing of such groups and may implicitly condone it, they are clearly more concerned than the Libyans about the potentially embarrassing and counterproductive aspects of such connections.

merchant ships. Visits by high-level officials (most recently, the visit of Qadhafi's deputy Jallud to the USSR in February 1978) have increased in frequency. And the public attitude demonstrated by each country toward the other has gradually shifted from suspicion and criticism to support and praise.

Top Secret

25X1

Top Secret

The existence of political divergence between Libya and the USSR has been vividly demonstrated recently by Libya's moves to expand its relations with China. In August, at the time of the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty, the Soviets intensified their propaganda against Peking. Reliable allies of the USSR such as Cuba did the same. In contrast, the Libyans chose this time to establish relations with China

arms to the Libyans for much-needed oil and hard currency, and they are presumably laying the groundwork for increased access to Libyan oil in the future. For its part, Libya has been able to purchase large quantities of sophisticated weaponry at an acceptable cost and to acquire economic and technical support.

Another area of Soviet-Libyan compatibility, the promotion of radical elements in the Middle East and Africa, has emerged gradually and somewhat tentatively—probably because the ultimate objectives of the two nations are so different. But their short-term interest in supporting such elements is clear.

These examples tend to highlight the fact that the Soviets must find their political dealings with the Libyans at times unsatisfactory and uncomfortable—as opposed to their fairly confident relations with the Cubans.

While the problems and differences existing between the USSR and Libya are deep-rooted and real, the dynamic cooperative relationship between the two states is no less real. It is based on compelling and, for the time being, dominant factors. First, the two nations are united in their antipathy for Egyptian President Sadat. The Soviets have cultivated their friendship with Libya to gain leverage over Egypt as well as to bolster their weakened position in the Middle East. Qadhafi, for his part, is emotionally committed to the union of Egypt and Libya and has tried to undermine Sadat since the latter vetoed the proposed merger in 1973. His friendship with the Soviet Union and his acquisition of modern arms denied to Egypt by the Soviets have increased his stature vis-a-vis Sadat, at least in his own mind, and have given him added influence by virtue of his ability to supply arms and other support to elements opposed to Sadat, both within and outside Egypt.

The Soviets have historically made their greatest political gains in the Third World in areas of instability. Their ideological commitment to revolution generally attracts them to the side of those advocating radical change in the established order, and their economic weakness vis-a-vis the West leads them to seek influence by supplying military equipment and services. Even in those nations of Africa and the Middle East where they have become aligned with the entrenched establishment, the Soviets continue to be best served by fluid situations in which their ability to supply military equipment and related support gives them special importance.

Qadhafi, a self-proclaimed revolutionary, is eager to participate in the overthrow of what he considers the "corrupt" old order, exemplified by the traditionalist Arab Gulf states, and to assist in the establishment of "radical socialist" regimes wherever possible. While his Arab nationalism dictates opposition to encroachment by any outside power into the Third World, in practice he has directed his opposition against the United States because his main adversaries in the Arab world (Egypt and Saudi Arabia) as well as Israel maintain close US ties, and his chosen allies and clients (the Palestinians, Algeria, Iraq) are closer to the USSR.

The USSR and Libya also agree on their rejection of Sadat's approach to a settlement in the Middle East—the Soviets because they do not want to be excluded from the negotiating process and the Libyans because they want to prevent any accommodation with Israel. By strengthening both their bilateral connections and the broader front of Arab states opposed to Sadat's moves, the Soviet Union and Libya seek to emphasize that their views must not be disregarded.

For both nations, the relationship is also defensible from a strictly economic point of view. The Soviets sell

A shared commitment by the USSR and Libya to the promotion of the forces of change was expressed in the joint communique issued after Qadhafi's visit to the USSR in December 1976. The two nations expressed their:

Top Secret

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

consistent support of the African peoples battling for political, economic, and social freedom. They confirmed aid and support of the African liberation movements, fighting for freedom and independence, and their solidarity with the struggles of the Zimbabwe and Namibian peoples as well as the African peoples in southern Africa. [Redacted]

25X1

The Soviets have frequently stated that they cannot control the disposition of their military equipment by their clients, a claim that enables them to dissociate themselves from the questionable use of this equipment. It is clear, however, that the Soviets can exercise such control. [Redacted]

25X1

25X1

Several months after Qadhafi's visit to Moscow, in March 1977, Cuban leader Castro visited Libya and spent 10 days there, apparently trying to patch up what had previously been a strained relationship. The Soviets clearly welcomed the meeting. TASS of 8 March said that Castro and Qadhafi were discussing international problems, including the:

combining of the efforts of the two friendly states in the cause of strengthening the common front of anti-imperialist forces, in the cause of rendering support to progressive national liberation movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. [Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted] There can be little doubt that if the USSR opposed Libyan transfers of equipment in any of the cases cited, they would have made their opposition known; there is no evidence that they have at any time complained to the Libyans about their arms transfer policy. [Redacted]

25X1

25X1

The Soviets have clearly tried to foster cooperation between Cuba and Libya. Although these two nations are ideologically and politically disparate, both can act for the Soviets as well as for each other in the Third World. While the Cubans supply training support and combat troops, their actions are an obvious extension of Soviet policy, and their involvement is limited to situations where the Soviets are willing to be clearly identified with the ultimate client. These are situations which:

- Are a result of a request by a "legitimate authority."
- Have strong moral or legal rationales.
- Have general Third World sympathy.

The Soviets are not always willing to become so directly connected with Third World causes. Thus, the Libyan ability to offer circumspect financial assistance and military equipment to radical elements is an obvious asset. [Redacted]

25X1

As the nature of the USSR's relationship with Cuba differs from its relationship with Libya, so too does its method of collusion with each. The Soviet-Cuban bond is relatively tight, and the two nations coordinate their activities closely to achieve a common objective. In contrast, the Soviet-Libyan connection is very loose, and there have undoubtedly been occasions when the Libyans acted without consulting the Soviets. In cases where cooperation has occurred, the two nations have simply exploited situations of mutual interest as they occurred. [Redacted]

25X1

While each such arrangement has been limited to a particular time and place, each has been easier to make than the last. The case studies that follow are examined chronologically, on the basis of the time when Soviet-Libyan cooperation began. These episodes, viewed cumulatively, reveal a pattern of increasingly facile cooperation. Thus, while the basic nature of the Soviet-Libyan relationship has not changed, the ability of each nation to justify and enter into collusion with the other has gradually eased, making theirs a dynamic as well as pragmatic partnership. [Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret



25X1

Soviet-Libyan Support for South Yemen and PFLO



577954 1278



25X1

25X1

Top Secret



Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

Promotion of Instability: Case Studies

South Yemen and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO)

The earliest, most tentative, and perhaps most ambiguous example of Soviet-Libyan political cooperation involved South Yemen and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman. Although collusion in this case was less clear-cut than in a number of subsequent instances, the interaction that did occur laid the groundwork for future collaboration. [Redacted]

their support constituted little loss for the Soviets. Finally, a lower profile approach complemented the USSR's efforts to present a benign image in the Gulf in the hope of fostering closer ties to the oil-rich Gulf states. [Redacted]

25X1

Background. With the Maxist regime in South Yemen as its primary backer, the PFLO has sought to overthrow the Sultan of Oman since 1969. Prior to 1974 the PFLO also had a wider commitment to subvert traditional Arab governments throughout the Gulf region and had an established network of groups dedicated to this end. Its decision to divest itself, at least formally, of this mission reflected a move by its mentor, South Yemen, to mend its relations with the conservative Gulf states in order to attract much-needed financial assistance. [Redacted]

The Soviets retained, however, their commitment to the guerrilla war in Oman. Following Iran's entry into the war in 1973, Moscow decided, in spite of the risk of jeopardizing its relations with Iran, to increase both propaganda support and military assistance to the rebels. In November 1975, as the PFLO faced a rout and South Yemen feared for its own security, the Soviets mounted an airlift of military equipment to South Yemen, thus asserting their intention to ensure South Yemen's survival as well as their underlying support for the PFLO. [Redacted]

25X1

The PFLO had some limited military success in Dhofar, Oman's southern province, in the early 1970s. But following Iran's decision to assist the Sultan in late 1973, the PFLO's fortunes declined. In 1975 the PFLO began to suffer serious defeats, and by late 1975 it had been pushed back across the border into South Yemen. [Redacted]

The Libyan Position. Since late 1973 the Libyans, angered by Iran's intervention in Oman, have backed the PFLO and supplied arms and equipment to the rebels through South Yemen. Their enthusiasm for the policies of South Yemen, however, has vacillated. Unlike the Soviets, the Libyans did not approve of the PFLO's decision in 1974 to seek closer ties to Saudi Arabia and limit subversive activities in the Gulf; and they expended considerable energy trying to get that decision reversed. In addition, during 1974 and 1975 the Libyans were reportedly critical of what they considered to be South Yemen's weak support for the PFLO's war in Oman. [Redacted]

25X1

Soviet Support for the PFLO. The USSR has given propaganda backing as well as arms aid and training to the PFLO through South Yemen since 1969, demonstrating its commitment to South Yemen as well as its more general sympathy for "national liberation" movements. The Soviets reportedly approved, however, South Yemen's decision in 1974 to seek rapprochement and money from its wealthy neighbors by restricting its support of subversion throughout the Gulf. With no presence in most of the traditional Gulf states, the Soviets probably hoped to benefit from the presence of the diplomatic missions that South Yemen would eventually establish in these nations. They also probably wished to be relieved of the responsibility for bolstering the impoverished South Yemeni economy. In addition, the branch PFLO groups in the Gulf had proved remarkably unsuccessful, and cutting back

[Large Redacted Block]

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

A Common Interest. There is no tangible evidence that the Soviets and Libyans coordinated their activities with respect to the PFLO during this period. Prime Minister Kosygin was in Libya in May 1975, however, at which time the two nations concluded an arms agreement, and it is likely that the situation was discussed. In any event, the policies of the two nations with respect to the PFLO subsequently meshed neatly. During the summer and fall, arms from both Libya and the USSR arrived in Aden for transfer to the PFLO. The equipment delivered by the Libyans was Soviet in origin, and presumably the Soviets agreed to its transfer. [Redacted]

25X1

While there is no confirmation that the Soviets were urging South Yemen to accept Libya's offers and advice, it is plausible. The USSR was not inclined to provide South Yemen with large-scale financial assistance, a primary reason for South Yemen's decision to seek closer ties to Saudi Arabia. The Soviets undoubtedly preferred Libyan to Saudi involvement in South Yemen. In addition, Libyan willingness to fund and support subversion in the Gulf states complemented Soviet policies without requiring direct Soviet involvement. [Redacted]

25X1

With the collapse of the PFLO's military efforts in late 1975 and early 1976, the situation was defused. South Yemen and Saudi Arabia reached agreement on rapprochement in March 1976, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Soviet and Libyan views were apparently compatible during this period as the USSR increasingly shared the Libyans' concern about Saudi influence in South Yemen. [Redacted]

25X1

In late 1977 the situation again changed as the Soviets shifted their policy in the Horn of Africa. With their expulsion from the port of Berbera in Somalia in November 1977, the Soviets turned to Aden for naval support. In addition, as they increased their assistance to Ethiopia, they needed Aden to facilitate their airlift

of equipment. The quid pro quo for South Yemen was increased financial and military support. These developments led to Saudi Arabia's abandonment of its efforts to woo Aden and returned the responsibility for supporting South Yemen to the USSR and the radical Arab states, including Libya. [Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1
25X1

It is logical to assume that the strengthening of radical, pro-Soviet forces in South Yemen that occurred in June 1978 has further strengthened South Yemen's ideological desire to pursue such a course. Whether or not political reality and the balance of forces in the area will permit them to do so remains to be seen. [Redacted]

25X1

25X1

Conclusions and Prospects. Despite differences of opinion with respect to the policies of South Yemen in 1974 and 1975, the Soviets and Libyans came together in support of the PFLO in 1975 when that organization was faced with a crushing defeat. While there is no evidence of formal coordination, both nations shipped arms and equipment, and Libya apparently supplied considerable financial assistance as well. Following the PFLO's military defeat, both countries continued to provide assistance to the inactive PFLO, and both opposed South Yemen's rapprochement with Saudi Arabia. [Redacted]

25X1
25X1

It is likely that the radical regime now in power in South Yemen will resume an active role in backing the PFLO and its nearly defunct branches throughout the Gulf. While the Soviets might condone such activities, they might also prefer not to be directly identified as supporting them. They might therefore

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret
[redacted]

25X1

approve South Yemeni and Libyan backing for such operations while they themselves maintain a respectable distance. [redacted]

The Western Sahara

Collaboration between the Soviet Union and Libya in support of Algeria and the Polisario is clear-cut and unambiguous. At the same time, this case provides an example of the differing intensity with which the Soviets and Libyans pursue their objectives. While the Soviets have wanted to preserve their options and minimize their risks with respect to the Sahara issue, the Libyans have been far more willing to take action. [redacted]

Background. On 14 November 1975 Morocco, Mauritania, and Spain signed the Madrid Tripartite Agreement, providing for a phased handover of the administration of the Spanish Sahara to the two African governments. Algeria, which favored self-determination for the Sahara (presumably under an administration amenable to its own interests) condemned the agreement and pressed for a UN-supervised referendum to determine the territory's fate. At the same time, Algeria increased its support to the Polisario, a guerrilla movement within the Sahara, and increased the deployment of its own troops to its southwest border area. During the end of 1975 and the first several months of 1976, tension between Morocco and Algeria was high and war seemed a possibility. [redacted]

Soviet Ambivalence. The Soviets were ambivalent about this situation. They were inclined to support the national liberation forces represented by the Polisario and backed by Algeria as well as a handful of Third World "progressive" elements. In addition, during the period from late October 1975 to January 1976, they were particularly anxious not to antagonize Algeria, which provided an important stop in their massive airlift to Angola. Yet they wanted to preserve relations with Morocco, an increasingly attractive trading partner, and prevent an Algerian-Moroccan war that might force them to side openly with Algeria. This combination of factors led the Soviets in the fall of 1975 to adopt a low-key policy of providing circum-spect support to Algeria while seeking to placate Morocco. [redacted]



Qadhafi Embraces Algerian President Boumediene

The Libyan Commitment. Isolated in the Arab world and pledged to support "national liberation" forces, Qadhafi sided with the Polisario and Algeria. Although relations between Libya and Algeria were not particularly close, Qadhafi clearly preferred a Sahara allied with the "progressive" regime of Boumediene to one ruled by the monarchy of Hassan. He may also have hoped for Algerian backing in his continuing dispute with Tunisia, which had rejected a proposed merger with Libya in 1974. And Qadhafi probably wished to demonstrate his leadership ability and display his country's enhanced power status resulting from its acquisition of Soviet arms. [redacted]

A Coincidence of Interests. As the situation in the Spanish Sahara came to a head in the early fall of 1975 with the "Green March" of Moroccan civilians into the Sahara, Soviet sympathy for the Algerian position was fairly clear. Although Soviet public statements blandly endorsed a peaceful solution to the dispute, some media coverage, particularly in Eastern Europe, was critical of the Green March. And, in early December, the USSR supported Algeria's motion in the United Nations calling for self-determination for the Sahara. [redacted]

Top Secret
[redacted]

25X1

Top Secret



25X1

Soviet-Libyan Backing for Algeria in Western Sahara



25X1

577955 12-78

Top Secret



25X1

Top Secret

25X1

During this period the Algerians particularly wanted rapid military assistance—which the Soviets did not want to provide openly. At this point, the coincidence of Soviet and Libyan interests became relevant. The Soviets sanctioned the transfer of weapons from Libyan stocks to Algeria for use in the Sahara and the border region.

[Redacted]

The rationale for this procedure was that there was no other way for the Soviets to meet Algeria's needs quickly; but it also suited the Soviets to remain one step removed from direct involvement. This approach enabled them to satisfy Algeria's requirements without making any dramatic and irrevocable commitment.²

The utility of such indirect support was demonstrated in early 1976 when, with a minimum of embarrassment, the Soviets were able to avoid being pulled into deeper involvement. In late January direct clashes occurred between Algerian/Polisario forces and Moroccan forces in the Sahara, and talk of war intensified. At this time the Libyans and Algerians apparently concluded that their arms transfer arrangement was not sufficient,

[Redacted]

The Soviets were apparently not totally responsive, although they may have agreed to

[Redacted]

supply more ammunition. [Redacted] it seems likely that the Soviets refused to commit themselves to a rapid military supply effort designed to give Algeria the immediate option of going to war with Morocco over the Sahara. [Redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

A number of factors would have justified such a Soviet decision. Most importantly, the Soviets did not want war between Morocco and Algeria and did not want to do anything that might precipitate war. Secondly, the Soviets wanted to avoid alienating the Moroccans, with whom they were trying to negotiate a major deal involving phosphate production—and the Moroccans had already delivered several clear indications of annoyance with Soviet policy.⁴ In addition, neither the Arab nor African nations were backing the Algerian position, and the Soviets did not want to be openly identified with an unpopular cause. Finally, the Soviet airlift to Angola was tapering off, and the Soviets could afford to risk offending Algeria.

25X1

25X1

The Soviets accompanied their refusal to resupply Algeria openly with an attempt to smooth Morocco's ruffled feathers. In late February they warmly received Moroccan Prime Minister Osman and assured him that the USSR would lend neither moral nor military aid to support an invasion of the Sahara by Algerian forces. They also indicated that they were urging restraint on Algeria.

[Redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

⁴ In mid-November Morocco had broken relations with East Germany because of the latter's criticism of the Green March, a clear signal to Moscow of its displeasure.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

Top Secret

early March, Morocco demonstrated its satisfaction with this show of evenhandedness by resuming relations with East Germany. [redacted]

While Morocco was pacified, both Algeria and Libya were displeased by the Soviet position. After his visit Boumediene was said to be uncertain about Soviet willingness to support him and dissatisfied by what he considered the high price of Soviet assistance. In early February, Algeria decided to lower the risk of war with Morocco by withdrawing troops from several towns in the Sahara—perhaps partially as a result of the lack of Soviet support. And in late February the Algerians summoned home their ambassador in Moscow before the Soviet Party Congress, possibly to demonstrate their annoyance with the USSR. Qadhafi, who had apparently been ready to move ahead in support of the Polisario, reportedly criticized Boumediene in February for being too dependent on the USSR and for “retreating” from the Spanish Sahara. [redacted]

The Pot Simmers. Since February 1976 the Saharan situation has continued to simmer. In that month, as the transition from Spanish to Moroccan and Mauritanian administration occurred, Algeria announced the formation of the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic (SDAR) in “liberated territory” within the Sahara. Libya is one of the few governments that have recognized the SDAR, while the USSR is not. Polisario continues to function as a guerrilla force within the Sahara and has grown significantly in the past two and a half years. It is currently a well-supplied military force of some 3,000 to 5,000 men. While not an immediate threat to control of the region, the force poses a constant drain on the resources of Morocco and Mauritania and is an embarrassment to them. [redacted]

The growth of Polisario is the result of direct support from Algeria, which has continued to receive encouragement and support from Libya. [redacted] Libya is both paying for Algerian arms purchases from the USSR and replacing Algerian equipment given to the Polisario. Direct Soviet involvement in the development of Polisario has been minimal. The Moroccans believe that the Soviets have been

involved, along with the Cubans, in training Polisario forces in southern Algeria [redacted] Whether or not this is so, the Soviets have supported Polisario indirectly by placing no limits on the transfer of weapons to the force by Algeria and Libya. [redacted]

In the meantime, the Soviets have continued to seek a balanced public position on the Saharan issue. They consistently argue that it is a matter for the states involved to resolve. And they have been restrained in their reactions to events in the region—even to the growing French involvement in support of Mauritania in late 1977.⁶ They have, however, generally repeated the Algerian version of events as they occur, and their substantive treatment of the issue continues to support self-determination for the Sahara and describes the Polisario as the generally recognized national liberation movement of the Sahara. [redacted]

This position is apparently muted enough for the Moroccans to tolerate. They have chosen to continue their increasingly significant economic dealings with Moscow, and agreements recently concluded would make Morocco the USSR’s largest African trading partner. A bilateral agreement signed in March 1978 provides for a \$2 billion Soviet investment in the development of the Moroccan phosphate industry, an operation that both nations have a vested interest in preserving. At the same time, continued Soviet approval and indirect backing for Algeria’s position in the Sahara as well as its importance as arms supplier has enabled the USSR to retain close ties with Algeria. [redacted]

⁶ A brief deviation from this restraint occurred in November 1977, when the Soviet Ambassador in Dakar was quoted as saying that the USSR would actively oppose foreign intervention in the Sahara. The French sought and got clarification from Moscow that the USSR was neutral, and the ambassador subsequently indicated that he had been misquoted. [redacted]

25X1
25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1
25X1

25X1

Top Secret

Top Secret

25X1

Conclusions and Prospects. In the case of the Western Sahara, Soviet-Libyan interests, while not identical, proved complementary. In late 1975, the Libyans wished to pass Soviet weapons to Algeria, and the Soviets were willing to replenish Libya's depleted stocks. The Soviet interest in maintaining a low profile was well served by this method of meeting Algeria's immediate needs. As tension in the region mounted in early 1976, the Soviets were able to draw back and play a restraining role, thus helping to prevent war. Their original detachment gave them the necessary flexibility to do so. While neither Libya nor Algeria was pleased with the Soviet decision, the USSR lost little as a result of it. [redacted]

The Soviets will presumably continue to condone Algerian and Libyan support for the Polisario. They have been able to pursue this course successfully without alienating either Algeria or Morocco, and there is little incentive for them to change. [redacted]

Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

As in the Western Sahara, the Soviets were motivated in Lebanon in 1976 by a desire to maintain relationships with opposing sides in the conflict and to prevent war. Once again, while the Libyans were willing to transfer arms discreetly, thus aiding Soviet objectives, the two countries differed in the intensity of their support for their clients. [redacted]

The Soviet Dilemma. As events unfolded in Lebanon during 1976, the USSR was torn between its desire to preserve close relations with Syria and its strong inclination to support the embattled Palestinians and leftists within Lebanon. Only gradually did the Soviets decide to back the latter and risk their relationship with Syria. While they made this preference increasingly clear both publicly and privately, they sought to maintain the semblance of balance (and thus limit the risk with respect to their relations with Syria) by supplying material support to the leftists only through third parties (for example, Libya). [redacted]

Throughout most of 1975, Soviet and Syrian objectives with respect to Lebanon had coincided. Both nations supported the Palestinian and leftist cause and favored a solution including concessions to these elements. The Soviets funneled assistance to the PLO through Syria; and the latter supplied much of the material assistance to Kamal Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), a leading leftist group with which the Soviets had also cultivated ties. [redacted]

As the fighting in Lebanon intensified in early 1976, however, Syria's role became both more important and more complex. Seeking to secure a cease-fire, Syria tried to dampen the conflict by interrupting the delivery of arms to leftist forces. The Soviets found this policy increasingly annoying. In addition, they were opposed to direct Syrian military intervention in Lebanon, which was a growing possibility; they feared that Syrian involvement might trigger an Israeli intervention, which in turn might produce a US-USSR confrontation. Thus, while they continued to back Syrian mediation efforts in the hope that this might lead to a peaceful solution, Soviet disenchantment with Syrian policies was mounting. [redacted]

The Libyan Connection. Qadhafi's goal in Lebanon has been the emergence of a radical Muslim government that would abandon coexistence with Israel and provide clear-cut support to the Palestinian cause. His policy has been one of consistent support for the Palestinians and leftists. [redacted]

In late 1975 and early 1976, as the Syrians moved to cut off arms deliveries to leftists in Lebanon, these elements began to seek other means of acquiring material support. [redacted]

Top Secret

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

Soviet-Libyan Cooperation in Lebanon



577956 12-78

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

25X1

The Crunch—June 1976. With the Syrian military intervention into Lebanon in June 1976, the USSR's efforts to balance its position virtually ended. A Soviet TASS statement of 9 June implicitly criticized the Syrian action, calling on all states to refrain from interfering in Lebanon and questioning Syrian intentions.

[Redacted]

They coupled this negative response to Syria with demonstrations of support for the PLO, receiving a permanent PLO representative in Moscow, an event they had postponed for two years, and announcing their intention to furnish food and medicine to national patriotic forces and the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon.

[Redacted]

In late July, the Lebanese Government protested the conduct of Soviet Ambassador Soldatov, stating that he had not met with any Lebanese official since December 1975, but was meeting continuously with leaders of the Palestinian resistance and opposition parties as if he were accredited with them. Soldatov's behavior strongly suggested Soviet involvement in a coordinating and advisory role with the leftist movement.

25X1
25X1

In early July 1976, the Soviets were apparently under pressure from both the PLO and Qadhafi to support the leftist cause more strongly

[Redacted]

They still feared a confrontation with the United States; they wanted to preserve their relations with Syria to the extent possible; and they probably hoped to encourage mediation of the growing conflict and did not want to undermine their ability to do so.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

In early August 1976, Syria and the PLO reached a temporary accord that the Soviets probably hoped would endure. For a brief period Soviet criticism and

25X1
25X1
25X1

[Redacted]

25X1
25X1

Top Secret

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

pressure on Syria eased. An 8 September "Observer" article in *Pravda* criticized extreme leftist elements as well as Damascus for the continuing tensions in Lebanon. With the late September Syrian offensive in Lebanon, the hiatus in harsh Soviet criticism ended, and the Soviets once again sided openly with the Palestinians and leftists.

Conclusions and Prospects. In mid-1976, faced with the decision of supporting Syria in its intervention into Lebanon or backing the Palestinians and Lebanese leftists, the Soviets decided for the latter but tried to do this without losing Syria as a client. They provided direct political and propaganda support for the leftists.

25X1

25X1

25X1

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Libya

served as the apparent arms supplier of the leftists, thus letting the Soviets remain in the background and avoid being drawn deeper into the conflict. It also permitted the Soviets to maintain a semblance of impartiality with respect to the Syrians, while preserving their credentials with leftist forces.

25X1

25X1

It should be noted, however, that as in the Western Sahara, the USSR's efforts to maintain its relations with two sides to a conflict, while limiting the damage that a one-sided policy might have caused, did not fully satisfy anyone. The Palestinians and leftists in Lebanon had hoped for more from the Soviets and were disappointed by Soviet manipulations. The Syrians, for their part, were angered by the Soviet policy.

25X1

The Soviets are not currently faced with a dilemma in Lebanon because the Syrians are not now in opposition to Palestinian and leftist elements. The Soviets continue, however, to avoid strong support of Syrian involvement there because they wish to avoid a Syrian-Israeli war. They presumably will continue to take such a cautious stance.

25X1

At the end of October 1976, the Riyadh Conference reached an agreement that tended to calm the situation in Lebanon temporarily. Soviet-Syrian relations remained strained, however, and it was not until Sadat's trip to Israel in November 1977 that a real improvement occurred. Soviet support for the PLO and Lebanese leftists has continued, but the situation no longer involves a direct conflict with Syrian interests, because the Syrians have become more concerned over their confrontations with the Christian militias.

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

Top Secret

25X1

25X1

The Sudan

The Sudan provides a striking example of converging Soviet and Libyan interests; both the USSR and Libya would applaud the demise of the Numayri regime, which they consider hostile to them and supportive of their shared bete noir, Sadat. The evidence of collusion in this case, while mostly circumstantial, is persuasive. [redacted]

Libyan Support for Coup. Libyan hostility toward the Numayri regime began with Numayri's rejection of the Libyan-proposed quadripartite federation of Libya, Egypt, Syria, and the Sudan in 1971. Qadhafi's feelings intensified as the Sudan moved closer to Cairo and Riyadh in 1974 and 1975. Criticizing Numayri for his alleged repression of the Ansar (Muslim) sect, located mostly in northern Sudan, Libya began supporting anti-Numayri exiles and assisting in planning a coup. [redacted]

Numayri was apparently convinced that the Soviets had masterminded the coup attempt. Originally supportive of Numayri, the Soviets had seen their position in the Sudan deteriorate since 1971 when the Sudanese Communist Party participated in a coup directed against Numayri. While there was no evidence to support Numayri's many accusations against the USSR, the rebels were armed with Soviet equipment supplied by the Libyans, and Soviet public praise for Libya at the time suggested acquiescence and approval. A Soviet official subsequently attempted to indicate Soviet lack of approval by claiming that the USSR could not be held responsible for the actions of states to which it supplied arms. There is no evidence, however, that the Soviets indicated their disapproval of Libyan arms transfers to the Ansar dissidents. While they may not have been fully informed of Libyan intentions, it is highly probable that they approved of the Libyan efforts. [redacted]

Aftermath of Coup Attempt. The effect of the Libyan-directed operation was to drive Numayri into an even more rigid anti-Libyan, anti-Soviet posture. He broke diplomatic relations with Libya and moved closer to Egypt, concluding two defense-related agreements with Egypt clearly directed against Libya. [redacted]



*Sudan's President Numayri:
Object of Soviet and Libyan Dislike*

Top Secret

25X1

Top Secret



Soviet-Libyan Collusion in Sudan



577957 12-78



25X1

Top Secret



Top Secret

25X1

Qadhafi remained committed to overthrowing Numayri, and during the fall of 1976 seems to have had active Soviet backing in his effort.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

25X1

In May 1977 Numayri expelled all Soviet military advisers and ordered a reduction in the size of the Soviet Embassy staff. In June he visited China, a trip obviously designed to balance his deteriorating relationship with the USSR. The visit resulted in several anti-Soviet statements and a Chinese agreement to supply the Sudan with some small arms and equipment. The Soviets responded by recalling their ambassador to the Sudan and issuing a TASS statement that warned the Sudan not to initiate hostilities against Ethiopia. The statement accused the Sudan and its "imperialist" backers of supporting the Eritrean insurgents in Ethiopia and of preparing an attack on Ethiopia's western border. Soviet press commentary accused NATO of seeking to use the Sudan to oppose "anti-imperialist" states such as Ethiopia and Libya.

25X1

25X1

The Situation Is Defused. In January 1977, convinced that the Libyans and Ethiopians, with Soviet backing, were plotting an attack against him, Numayri took the offensive. Sudanese troops were sent to the border region, and Numayri threatened to use military force or retaliate by equipping Eritrean rebels for operations against Ethiopia. He also publicly expressed his support for Eritrean self-determination for the first time.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

25X1

25X1

By this time, the Soviets had also become concerned about the Sudanese threat to Ethiopia. They were becoming increasingly committed to the Mengistu regime and wished to prevent another front from developing that might weaken Ethiopia.

[Redacted]

The Libyans were increasingly distracted, however, by the mounting tensions on their border with Egypt. They were therefore probably willing to postpone active efforts to overthrow Numayri. The Soviets and Ethiopians, as indicated, wished to avoid trouble on the Sudanese-Ethiopian border. And Numayri wanted to neutralize the coalition seeking his demise.

25X1

25X1

25X1

The Sudanese continued to believe that the USSR was actively plotting against them,

[Redacted]

Focusing his continuing public hostility on the Soviets, Numayri sought reconciliation with the opposition groups within the Sudan and tried with some success to improve relations with Libya and Ethiopia. By February 1978 the Sudan and Libya had agreed to resume diplomatic relations, which had been broken following the July 1976 coup attempt. During 1978 Numayri also moved to patch up relations with the USSR. While muting his public hostility toward the Soviets, Numayri has continued his criticism of the USSR, and real improvement in relations seems remote. Similarly,

25X1

Top Secret

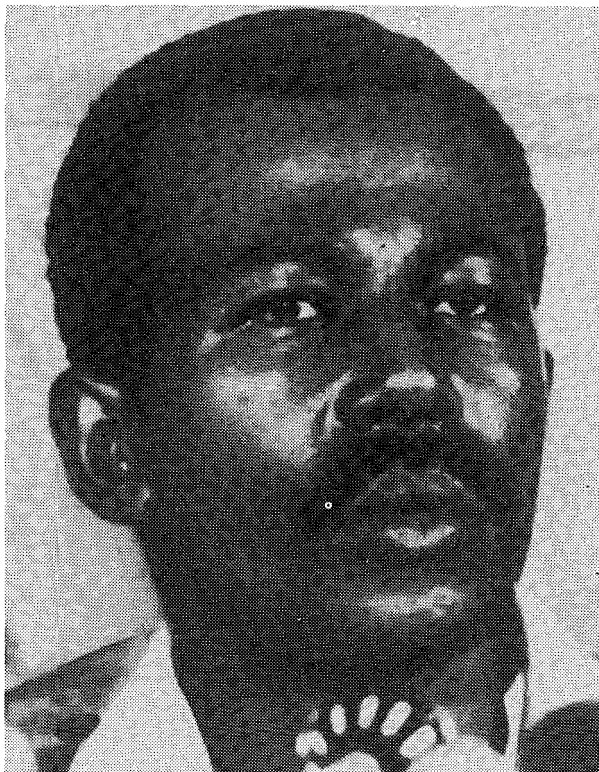
25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

it is likely that Sudanese-Libyan hostility will reappear at some point. [Redacted]

Conclusions and Prospects. Soviet-Libyan interests have coincided in the Sudan over the past several years, enabling them to pursue complementary policies. Both nations have favored the overthrow of Numayri, but the Soviets have clearly not wanted to be identified with plots against him; the Libyans in contrast appear to relish such involvement. Thus the Soviets have provided arms to the Libyans, who have transferred them to Sudanese dissidents. [Redacted]



*Ethiopian Leader Mengistu
Receives Soviet and Libyan Support*

During the past year Sudanese relations with both the USSR and Libya have improved somewhat as the Sudanese have sought to neutralize the pressures against them. Numayri remains strongly hostile toward both nations, however, and they to him. It is therefore probable that, should other sources of tension subside, the Sudan will at some point again face combined Soviet-Libyan activity against it. [Redacted]

Ethiopia

This final example of Soviet-Libyan collusion demonstrates the relative ease with which the two nations were able to collaborate by late 1976—even though their reasons for doing so in this case were very different. In backing Ethiopia, the Soviets were supporting an avowedly Marxist, increasingly pro-Soviet regime; the Libyans, for their part, were primarily interested in gaining Mengistu's cooperation in trying to overthrow Numayri in the Sudan. [Redacted]

Top Secret

[Redacted]

Top Secret

25X1

Soviet-Libyan Support for Ethiopia



577958 12-78

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1

Top Secret

Soviets Seek Disguised Shift. The Soviet interest in improving relations with Ethiopia began with the military takeover in that country in 1974 and intensified with the radicalization of the regime in 1975-76.¹⁰ But this interest was balanced by a desire not to endanger the close ties the USSR was developing with Ethiopia's hostile neighbor, Somalia, and particularly their access to the Somali port of Berbera.

cooperation in undermining the Numayri regime in neighboring Sudan.

By mid-1976 the USSR and Ethiopia had signed a cultural agreement, and the Soviet press was praising strongman Mengistu, who was now reportedly eager to acquire arms from the Soviets.

Similar Libyan Shift. Libya had been a longstanding supporter of the Eritrean separatist movement, viewing it primarily as a Muslim insurgency directed against a repressive Christian state. When the young Ethiopian officers came to power in 1974, Qadhafi was initially intrigued by their revolutionary fervor and reportedly suspended aid to the Eritrean separatists for a time. With the intensification of the Eritrean insurgency in early 1975, however, he resumed supplying arms to the Eritreans and continued to do so into 1976.

By the fall of 1976, Qadhafi was once again willing to switch his support to the Ethiopian Government at the expense of the Eritreans. His primary motivation appears to have been his desire for Ethiopian

¹⁰ Similarly, Soviet policy toward Eritrea shifted during this period. The longstanding Soviet position had been support for the liberation of the territory. But early in 1975 the Soviets began supporting the territorial integrity of Ethiopia rather than Eritrean separation.

it is clear that by December 1976 the USSR and Libya were prepared to act together in support of Ethiopia.

25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1
25X1

Top Secret

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

25X1

25X1

Soviet Support Becomes Apparent. Early in 1977, following Mengistu's consolidation of power in Ethiopia, the Soviets increased their commitment to his regime, and by spring their involvement was quite visible.

In the spring of 1977 Mengistu sought to strengthen his ties with the USSR even further, signaling his intentions by taking some anti-US measures. He was rewarded with a military aid package worth about \$500 million, negotiated during a visit in May to the USSR. This agreement represented a significant step by the Soviets; the deal totaled twice the amount of their commitment to Somalia and demonstrated how important Ethiopia had become to them.

25X1

25X1

[Redacted]

The following month Fidel Castro visited Ethiopia as well as Algeria, Libya, and South Yemen.

[Redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

[Redacted]

Top Secret

[Redacted]

25X1

Top Secret

[Redacted]

While the Soviets' efforts to mask their support of Ethiopia may have had considerable success in the beginning, by the spring of 1977 their involvement could not be hidden. As early as April Somali President Siad Barre had begun seeking alternative assistance. He also apparently decided to push for a victory in the Ogaden before Ethiopia was able to absorb the equipment it was receiving from the USSR. In June and July the Somali-backed insurgency in the Ogaden increased, and Somali regulars were seen there for the first time. By the end of July, the real battle was on in the Ogaden, and on 14 August a TASS statement on the situation formally and publicly announced the Soviet preference for Ethiopia. [Redacted]

By late August 1977 a steady, direct flow of Soviet arms to Ethiopia had begun, and in mid-September a new Ethiopian-Soviet military aid agreement was reached. During the same month, the Soviets reportedly stopped delivering strategic arms to Somalia. In November, Somalia unilaterally abrogated its friendship treaty with the USSR and expelled Soviet technical and military personnel from the country. Shortly thereafter the Soviet airlift of equipment to Ethiopia began. [Redacted]

The Eritrean Dilemma. In late 1977, as direct Soviet support to the Ethiopians was increasing, there were some indications that the Libyan position was again shifting.¹⁴ This was primarily reflected in a renewed opening to the Eritrean insurgents; [Redacted]

[Redacted] In February 1978, while in Moscow, Libyan leader Jallud publicly announced that Libya was "with the Eritreans up to independence." [Redacted]

¹⁴ During his December 1977 visit to Tripoli, Soviet Deputy Defense Minister Ogarkov reportedly weighed in heavily to keep Libya on a strong, pro-Ethiopian course. As of late December, Libya was still shipping arms to Ethiopia. And, in December, TASS reported that the leaders of Libya and Algeria, which Ogarkov had also visited, had reaffirmed their full support for the Ethiopian revolution and had expressed their readiness to give assistance to that country. [Redacted]

This move back toward the Eritreans was a logical one for Qadhafi, who had probably never been comfortable supporting a Christian government that was combating a Muslim insurgency. Other "progressive" Arab states (for example, Iraq and Syria) had continued to support the Eritrean cause, and Qadhafi probably did not wish to be seen as an antagonist of a "progressive" Muslim cause. In addition, preoccupied with his border problems with Egypt, Qadhafi was muting his antipathy for Numayri and was thus not so willing to appease the Mengistu regime. [Redacted]

It is very possible that the Soviets were not upset by Qadhafi's shift. The Soviets, too, have had a dilemma with respect to the Eritrean cause, because they have risked straining their relations with Iraq and Syria further by actively assisting the Ethiopians in crushing the insurgency. Their interests would therefore be best served by a negotiated settlement. [Redacted]

Moscow obviously hopes to preserve its influence with both Ethiopia and the radical Arab states and would probably prefer to broker a political solution without third-party participation. Short of this they might settle for Libyan mediation. [Redacted]

Conclusions and Prospects. In Ethiopia, Soviet and Libyan short-term objectives meshed at the appropriate time, although their actual interests were quite different. The Soviet decision to assist the Mengistu regime in mid-1976 was based on the perception that a leftist, pro-Soviet government in this strategically located nation would serve their long-term goals. The Libyans, on the other hand, wanted a temporary alliance with Ethiopia in exchange for its cooperation in undermining the Numayri regime in the Sudan. [Redacted]

Top Secret

[Redacted]

Top Secret

25X1

A Soviet desire to provide surreptitious assistance to Ethiopia to preserve its relations with Somalia was complemented by Libyan willingness to provide Soviet-made arms to Ethiopia and to finance Ethiopian purchases of such arms. Thus, in late 1976 and early 1977 the Libyans fulfilled the function of arms supplier for the Soviets, permitting the USSR to remain a step removed from direct involvement and prolong its ties to Somalia. By the spring of 1977 the deception was inadequate because the Soviets had stepped up their own role; relations between Somalia and the USSR deteriorated rapidly. [redacted]

As the utility of maintaining a facade of Soviet noninvolvement vanished, so, too, did the need for Soviet-Libyan collusion. This coincided with Libya's suspension of its subversive efforts against Numayri and its consequent need to court Mengistu. Since late 1977 the USSR and Libya have pursued separate policies with respect to Ethiopia—the Soviets remaining committed to the central government and the Libyans resuming their dialogue with the Eritrean separatists. [redacted]

Since both the Soviets and the Libyans appear to be seeking a negotiated solution to the Eritrean problem, their interests are not totally at odds, and some cooperation toward this end is conceivable. Short of this, the prospects for significant Soviet-Libyan collusion in Ethiopia are limited. The Soviets have no need for a middleman in their dealings with Mengistu, and the Libyans have no immediate reason to assist him. Should the Libyans once again turn their energies to overthrowing Numayri, however, some form of Soviet-Libyan-Ethiopian cooperation would again become feasible. [redacted]

The Pattern of Collusion

Since their cooperation in Ethiopia ended in 1977, there have been no comparable instances of active Soviet-Libyan collusion. There is another form of collusion, however, that does have a bearing on the overall pattern of Soviet-Libyan collaboration. This is the Soviet Union's silent acquiescence in Libya's uses of Soviet equipment. [redacted]

This acquiescence, which apparently enables the Libyans to transfer Soviet weapons to insurgent or extremist forces at will, amounts to tacit approval of such transfers by the Soviets. The Soviets' claim that they have no control over such transfers by their customers has only limited validity. Their trade agreements reportedly stipulate that the USSR approve sales (presumably gifts as well) of Soviet equipment to third parties. And while they obviously cannot prevent a client from making such transfers, they can respond when they do not approve. [redacted]

[redacted] There is no evidence that the Soviets have ever complained to the Libyans about their arms transfer policy. There are several obvious situations that illustrate this type of passive collusion. [redacted]

Chad

In mid-1977 Frolinat, a Libyan-backed Muslim rebel force, seized control of a large portion of northwestern Chad. In the following year the French became increasingly involved in supporting the Chad Government and the Libyans in supporting the rebels. By mid-1978 some Libyan military units had been moved into Chad; [redacted]

[redacted] By early fall the military situation was essentially stalemated, and in September Qadhafi decided to pull his troops out of Chad. [redacted]

There is no evidence that the Soviets were involved in the Chad civil war or that they encouraged the Libyans actively in any way.¹⁵ By the same token, there is no [redacted]

Top Secret

25X1

25X1

Top Secret

indication that they ever tried to discourage the Libyans from support of insurgency in Chad or expressed displeasure with the Libyan transfer of Soviet arms to the rebels. In this particular case the Soviets were obviously willing to sit back and see what the results would be. Their own interests were quite well served by the Libyan operation. Their relationship with the Chad Government was not a close one, and they probably assumed that its demise would work to their benefit. Thus, as long as they could not be blamed, the Soviets had nothing to lose and possibly something to gain from Libyan machinations. [redacted]

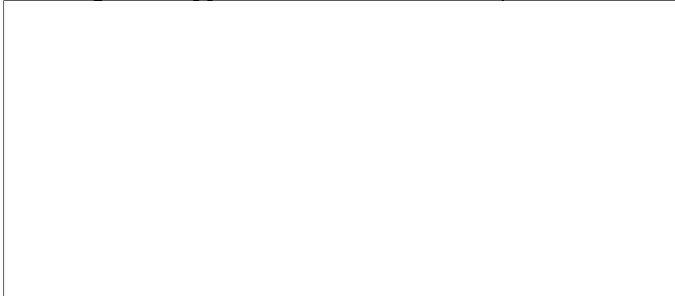
The Soviet Union's acquiescence in Libya's support for destabilizing elements in the Middle East and Africa reinforces the examples of active collaboration cited above. In combination, these cases reveal a widespread pattern of collusion, albeit of a pragmatic, frequently temporary, nature. It is highly probable that so long as Qadhafi remains in power and retains his revolutionary fervor, he and the Soviets will continue to perceive and exploit situations in which their short-term interests and assets are complementary. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Terrorism

Libyan support for extremist groups that engage in terrorist operations is well documented. The Libyans have provided weapons, training, financial assistance, and logistics support to a wide variety of organizations.



25X1

The formal Soviet position on the use of terrorism is straightforward condemnation. They disapprove its use and, in addition, have occasionally indicated that it may prove counterproductive. Once again, however, there is no indication that they have expressed opposition to the Libyans or requested that Soviet weapons and equipment sold to Libya not be diverted to this purpose. It seems highly probable that the Soviets tacitly approve the Libyan policy, believing that the disruption and instability that may result from terrorist operations could eventually work to their advantage. Thus, as long as they cannot be charged with backing such activities, the Soviets are willing to sit back and reap whatever benefits may accrue. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Top Secret