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NIE 11-10-71

THE USES OF SOVIET MILITARY
POWER IN DISTANT AREAS

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THE USES OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER IN DISTANT AREAS

NOTE

This Estimate assesses present and prospective Soviet capabilities and intentions with respect to using military forces in areas distant from the USSR. It is concerned with situations short of general war and with the Soviets' use of these capabilities to enlarge the sphere of their global operations and to expand their influence among the non-aligned countries of the underdeveloped world. Accordingly, North Korea and North Vietnam are largely excluded from the analysis. They are, however, occasionally referenced since the substantial involvement in both has had implications for the subject of this paper. However, it is impossible not to refer to another Communist state, Cuba, because it has been a central factor in the USSR's unfolding role in Latin America and is an indispensable prop to its naval operations in the Caribbean.

While the Estimate alludes where appropriate to the military implications for the US, NATO, and China of the USSR's military involvement in the Third World, it does not address Soviet strategic or general purpose forces as such, which are the subjects of other Estimates. And the emphasis is as much on the USSR's political purposes as on military purposes since it is clear that Soviet forces, advisors and assistance in distant areas serve both purposes, and as often as not the former are more important.

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A word of caution is in order concerning the use of some terms. Soviet involvement in Third World areas has different aspects in different cases; a frequent manifestation is military aid, usually accompanied by some training or technical assistance to the recipient country. This form of aid is an important part of the total Soviet effort in the countries concerned; it does not, however, amount to a "military presence" or "distant military capabilities". The latter terms are reserved for cases where Soviet combat forces or personnel are present or may be deployed in some numbers with some military capability of their own. A military presence, in turn, is not limited to Third World countries; the most extensive military presence in distant areas is on ships at sea.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Despite setbacks and frustrations, the USSR has made impressive progress in the last decade and a half in developing political influence in the Third World. It clearly assigns great importance to its position in certain parts of the Third World; is prepared to accept high costs and some risks to defend and advance this position; and has significantly increased the size and flexibility of its military forces which are capable of conducting distant operations.

B. There have been several instances of direct Soviet military intervention in Third World countries (most notably, and currently, in Egypt). But Moscow has generally preferred to use diplomatic instruments and economic and military aid programs to promote its interests. It has, of course, been greatly helped by intense anti-Western sentiments in many areas and by the existence here and there of the kinds of trouble and conflict which create eager customers for Soviet assistance (e.g., Egypt and India).

C. The Soviets must feel that, over the past 15 years, they have accomplished a great deal in the Third World. They have broken the ring of containment built by the West and opened many areas to their own influence. They have seen a number of states—e.g., Egypt, Syria, and Iraq—become largely or almost totally dependent on Soviet military equipment and support. They have exposed many of the nationals of these countries to Communist ideas and techniques and have developed close relationships with military men who hold or may hold key

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positions in their countries. They have established the USSR as the most influential great power in most radical Arab states, have gained acceptance of their right to concern themselves closely with the affairs of all the Middle East and South Asia, and have extended their influence into parts of Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

D. Still, Soviet activities in remote areas have not met with unqualified success and there are a variety of circumstances which impose constraints on Soviet policies. The USSR has encountered many disappointments—in Cuba in 1962, in the Middle East (e.g., the Arab-Israeli war in 1967), in Africa (Ghana, Sudan), and in Southeast Asia (Indonesia). Aid programs have been expensive—only a quarter of the \$5.4 billion of arms aid drawn has been repaid to date. The recipients of aid have often been ungrateful, most of them resist Soviet tutelage, and only Cuba has joined the Soviet camp. And in some areas, Soviet efforts have been complicated by the appearance of the Chinese as alternate sources of aid and as bitter competitors for influence.

E. As a consequence of frustrations such as these, the Soviets have continuously had to revise their expectations and adjust their tactics in the Third World. They have not, however, lost their ambition. On the contrary, they are now anxious to demonstrate that, as a world power, the USSR has legitimate interests virtually everywhere. And, indeed, Moscow now has the ability to support policies in distant areas and the capability to extend its military presence in one form or another considerably beyond the negligible levels of the 1950s and early 1960s.

F. Since then, new multipurpose naval ships, better suited to distant operations, have entered the Soviet Navy. Naval infantry and amphibious shipping have doubled in size; the Soviet merchant marine has tripled its tonnage, and now includes nearly 400 ships suited to the needs of military sealift. Soviet military transport forces have been re-equipped with new turboprop aircraft with greater capacity and range, and civil aviation has expanded overseas. Command and control capabilities to support distant military operations have also been improved.

G. Not surprisingly, then, the frequency and extent of Soviet military operations in the Third World have picked up considerably. The expansion of the USSR's presence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East (including some 50 surface ships and submarines in the Mediter-

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anean Squadron and some 16,000 Soviet military personnel stationed in Egypt) owes much, of course, to the Arab military weaknesses exposed in 1967. But it is also evident that Moscow has for some time had military interests in the Mediterranean (including the US Sixth Fleet) which extend beyond the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since 1967, these two sets of interests have by-and-large coincided, so that Egypt has been strengthened vis-à-vis Israel and the USSR has not only gained influence in the area at the expense of the West, but has also obtained facilities for its Mediterranean Squadron's forward deployment in defense of the USSR.

H. The USSR's increased visibility in the Indian Ocean includes not only its modest naval presence, but also its civil air routes, arrangements for facilities for the Soviet fishing fleet and increased diplomatic and trade relations. As for the Caribbean, the Soviets are not likely to attempt to use the naval facilities in Cuba for forward basing of their submarine launched ballistic missiles so long as they have reason to anticipate strong US opposition. But they will probably continue to probe US reaction to different levels and types of naval deployment by, for example, deploying other types of submarines as well as missile ships and submarine tenders to Cuba.

I. The Soviets have substantial ground, air, and naval forces which can be used effectively to establish a presence in distant areas. This capability enables them to support political forces friendly to their policies and influence. It may make it possible in some situations to pre-empt the actions of others or to deter their intervention. But Soviet capabilities to use force at long range to establish themselves against opposition are limited. Against a submarine or surface ship threat, Soviet naval forces in distant waters could be increased substantially over present levels for short periods, but a sustained augmentation would require additional logistic support and ships to defend that support. The USSR still has only small numbers of naval infantry and amphibious ships, and it lacks long-range tactical aircraft and aircraft carriers. And the Soviets would need to make a substantially greater effort in developing these forces than is now evident if they were bent on establishing substantial capabilities for military action against opposition in countries remote from their borders.

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J. Indeed, the growth in the USSR's capabilities for distant operations has not followed the course that might have been expected if the Soviets were interested principally in direct military intervention in Third World countries. The expansion of their forces can, in fact, be attributed in large part to other causes. Increasing Soviet naval deployments to distant areas were, in the first instance, in support of potential general war missions; once begun, the USSR found in these activities opportunities to buttress its claim to a world power role equal to that of the US. The growth of the merchant fleet has been in line with the increasing requirements of Soviet foreign trade. Most of the transport aircraft added to military transport aviation are designed to improve airlift capabilities in theater operations. The capabilities of amphibious forces have improved but continue to be oriented primarily toward the support of theater forces on the flanks.

K. Nevertheless, continued improvement of Soviet capabilities for distant action can be anticipated. Some of this improvement will be a by-product of the expansion of naval, merchant marine, and airlift forces in support of their separate primary missions. Naval programs now underway will, by 1975, bring forth new surface ships and submarines capable of distant operations.

L. Soviet military requirements for foreign bases are more likely to grow than diminish. Prospects for Soviet antisubmarine warfare and strategic attack forces, as well as the trend in increased out of area operation of general purpose forces, both point in this direction. Soviet bases in the Third World are not easily acquired but the Soviets have been seeking additional facilities ashore and the search can be expected to continue. In general, however, for political and economic reasons as well as military, the USSR is most likely in the next few years to favor a gradualist approach in seeking to expand its influence in the Third World. And Soviet efforts abroad will continue to be aimed more at increasing Soviet influence than at establishing Communist-dominated regimes.

M. If the Soviets should again involve themselves militarily in a Third World country, as they have in Egypt, it would probably come about as an outgrowth of a Soviet military aid program. But circumstances leading to the establishment of a Soviet military presence in distant areas are unlikely to arise frequently. Virtually all Third World

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leaders are ardent nationalists and hence little disposed to inviting Soviet forces to be based on their territory. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as a compelling threat, would one of them be disposed to accept that kind of Soviet help. Moscow for its part would have to make its own calculation of risks and advantages before granting it. The record of recent years shows the Soviets are capable of bold decisions when they consider the stakes high enough or their interests and prestige sufficiently involved—as in Egypt.

N. The Soviets may feel that with their attainment of rough strategic parity with the US, they will in the future have wider options to project their influence in distant parts of the world. Given only a gradual accretion of forces useable in distant areas, there will be more instances in which the Soviets can, if they choose, try to use such forces to exploit opportunities—particularly if one or another government in the Third World should ask Moscow for assistance. The Soviets will be inclined to exercise caution in areas where US interests are deeply engaged, but even in these circumstances the Soviets may calculate that an assertive policy will entail fewer risks to themselves than in the past.

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The USSR has been politically active in the Third World for many years, and a new stage was reached in 1955 when it began to become a major supplier of arms to many Third World countries. Only since the mid-1960s, however, have the Soviets made a consistent effort to project their military power into distant areas. This projection has taken the form primarily of naval deployments—not only in the Mediterranean, but also to a lesser degree in the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean. It has also entailed, in the case of Egypt (as in Cuba and North Vietnam) the introduction of air combat and air defense units designed to give direct military support both as a deterrent to Israel and as a defense in case hostilities break out.

2. The growth of Soviet capabilities appropriate to distant areas is in large measure a product of the USSR's efforts to improve its overall military posture vis-à-vis the US across

the whole spectrum of international power. The political impact of the Soviet presence in distant areas has owed a good deal to its novelty, i.e., the absence of a colonialist record—and, in the case of the Middle East, to a number of fortuitous developments. But Moscow by now considers its military aid program and, in some cases, a military presence, as instruments serving broad objectives in the Third World including its role as a great power. And it may expect that, with the attainment of rough parity with the US in strategic weapons, it will be able to secure for itself even wider political and military options in the future through the deployment of military forces in distant areas.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET INTEREST AND INFLUENCE IN DISTANT AREAS

From Lenin to Stalin

3. The 1920s were a period of fairly vigorous Soviet political and propaganda activity in the underdeveloped world. The early collapse

of Soviet hopes that the Bolshevik Revolution would take hold in the West helped to turn Moscow's attention in other directions—especially toward areas adjacent to Soviet territory, such as Turkey, Central Asia, and China. But the promising relations established with such national revolutionary leaders as Kemal Ataturk and Chiang Kai-shek eventually unraveled. Partly because of these disappointments and partly because of the adoption of Stalin's policy of "socialism in one country", Soviet interest receded. Through the 1930s, the Russians, though they did not abandon the field, tended to let it lie fallow.

4. Although World War II enhanced the USSR's relative power in the world, its main concerns were in developing a strong position in Eurasia, rather than in extending military influence to more distant areas. The energies of its war-weary leaders were largely concerned with the problems of rebuilding the nation and securing its approaches by occupation and by establishing Communist regimes wherever the army could reach. Stalin was reluctant to become committed militarily "beyond the range of Soviet artillery". He was supported in this orientation by the military leadership, mostly ground force generals who thought of military power in terms of massive ground armies, with air and naval forces as closely supporting arms. Although Moscow made claims to pieces of Turkish and Iranian territory, these were abandoned in the face of stiff Western opposition; there seemed to be few opportunities, in the face of US preponderance, for the USSR to assert itself militarily in areas not controlled by the Sino-Soviet bloc. Indeed, in the postwar period under Stalin the only example of Soviet military combat involvement outside Eastern Europe was their support to North Korea's air defenses in the Korean war.

5. Stalin was also slow to see opportunity in the wave of national revolution which was

breaking up the old imperialist empires. He underestimated the force of nationalism and was doctrinally unprepared to exploit the end of the colonial empires. To Stalin, the new nationalist leaders were still the "lackeys of imperialism". He continued to evaluate his assets in the newly or soon-to-be independent countries largely in terms of the indigenous Communist parties, which he frequently regarded with contempt or distrust. He believed liberation could only come through proletarian revolution and that, although these countries would eventually fall to "socialism", the time was still distant.

Change of Policy after Stalin

6. The USSR's decision to become actively engaged in the Third World emerged from the general reassessment of policy conducted during the first year or two after Stalin's death. Stalin's successors shared his view that the security of the USSR was the paramount concern of policy and that the USSR's chief interests lay in Europe, the Far East, and in the countries along the USSR's southern borders. But they concluded that the USSR had reached a point of stalemate with the West in those areas and should therefore look elsewhere for opportunities. Moscow soon discovered that the Nehrus and the Nassers, previously scorned as "bourgeois", were after all "progressive". Starting in 1954, trade and aid agreements with India definitely set the USSR on the new path. In 1955, the Soviet leaders set about establishing cordial ties with many of the non-aligned: they sent observers to the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung; they arranged a reconciliation with Tito, one of the pillars of non-alignment; Khrushchev and Bulganin made a much-publicized tour of India, Burma, and Afghanistan. The Egyptian arms deal in the same year, conducted through Czechoslovakia, marked the first key move in establishing the USSR in the Middle East.

Moscow also took steps to strengthen the ideological base for its actions by proclaiming, at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, that "socialism" could be achieved by non-violent means.

7. The Soviet leaders, Khrushchev especially, came to see cultivation of the Third World as a way of circumventing US containment efforts and eventually of achieving an alteration in the international balance of power in favor of the USSR and to the disadvantage of the US (the Chinese did not enter these calculations until later). Although non-alignment in international affairs was commonly espoused in the Third World, many of the leaders there harbored suspicions and fears of the US, which they tended to identify with their former colonial masters. This gave them a bond with the USSR, which seemed free of the colonialist taint. And Soviet political forms and economic methods had considerable appeal among nations striving for national cohesion and rapid economic development. In these circumstances, the USSR could hope to turn the West's political flank and to render an expanding area increasingly inhospitable to the West's political, economic, and military presence.

Ideological Evolution

8. In the late 1950s, the advent of Castro in Cuba and his adherence to the Soviet bloc, and of Kassem in Iraq and the consequent weakening of CENTO, gave the Soviets further grounds to hope for relatively inexpensive political gains. Buoyed by these events, and probably also by the USSR's progress in building its strategic arsenal, Khrushchev in 1960 revalued upward the ideological significance of the Third World to the global struggle. He identified the "national liberation revolution", said then to be under way there, as a major front in this struggle and declared that, thanks to it, the world-wide triumph of communism

was now in view. This exuberance, no doubt partly genuine and partly a matter of domestic political expediency for Khrushchev, marked a high-water point of Soviet expectations.

9. Soviet theory with respect to the Third World lagged behind practice, and both were marked by experimentation and improvisation. Realpolitik usually prevailed but ideological considerations colored Soviet behavior and introduced some tension into the making of policy. There was ideological convenience and propagandistic utility in viewing the Third World as the cradle of progressive forces which would ally themselves with the USSR against "imperialism". But it was not easy to sanction the embrace of regimes dominated by the "bourgeois elements", often military men, which in some cases actively persecuted Communists.

10. To meet this problem and to justify the expectation that these regimes were on the road to communism, such concepts as "national democracy" were used to describe countries as disparate as Cuba, Egypt, Syria, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Burma, and Algeria. This label justified support for leaders who, though not Communists, could be represented as "progressives" capable of leading their countries along a generally socialist path.

11. Like its political expectations, Moscow's ideological optimism was seen in time to be exaggerated. It was noted not only that many Third World countries were slow to establish socialist economic institutions and practices but that in many places movement was in the other direction. Soviet economists began to ask whether, in any case, a headlong rush toward nationalization and industrialization was necessarily a good thing. By the late 1960s they were more often than not couching their advice to the Third World countries about development plans in terms of economic prac-

ticality rather than Communist orthodoxy. This shift no doubt reflected a fear that indiscriminate copying of the "socialist model" of development, if it led to economic disarray, could bring discredit on socialist methods. While stressing that each country must base its economic development on its own resources, the Russians, at the same time, recommended against hasty and indiscriminate exclusion of Western capital. This advice was a sign of Moscow's unwillingness to foot any great part of the bill for economic development in the Third World.

The Instruments of Soviet Policy in the Third World

12. From 1955 when the Soviets first began to distribute military aid, Moscow's usual practice throughout the Third World has been to deal with the governments in power, approaching them by conventional paths: military aid and training pacts, diplomatic ties, economic and technical assistance agreements, trade relations, and educational exchanges. Native Communist parties have not been primary instruments of Soviet influence.

13. Until the mid-1960s direct military involvement in the Third World was thought to be neither necessary nor desirable. The USSR apparently intended to have an active policy in the Third World, but at minimum cost in military commitment and with minimum risk. It was essential to Moscow's conception that embroilment in regional military conflicts and civil wars be avoided, and the Soviets tried to keep a respectable distance from most such conflicts.

14. The sale of weapons to Egypt, though it began a far-reaching program which complemented other Soviet efforts to build up the USSR's stature as a world power in the Third World, was an act of political opportunism rather than deliberate military infiltration. There was no indication in the early

years that the Soviets had any precisely thought out rationale for their military aid programs in the Third World other than the general belief that this would help bind anti-Western new nations to the USSR. Any country could be a recipient, as long as it showed promise of lining up on the side of the USSR in the cold war. There certainly was no suggestion in the 1950s that the Soviets were embarking on a deliberate program of projecting their military power into distant areas. Opportunistic political gains appeared to be the order of the day, as evidenced by Khrushchev's shotgun approach in offering aid.

15. Under Khrushchev and the succeeding leadership about \$6.6 billion in military aid has been extended to the Third World of which \$5.4 billion has been drawn down.¹ This figure represents about one-fourth of comparable US military aid to Third World states. Eighty percent of Soviet military aid has been directed toward countries comprising an arc running from the eastern Mediterranean through South Asia, leapfrogging NATO and CENTO countries on the southern border of the USSR. More than half (\$3.4 billion) has gone to three radical Arab states—Egypt, Iraq, and Syria—and, of this, \$2 billion to Egypt alone. Prior to 1970, the total military aid extensions had averaged only about \$400 million per year. In 1970, mainly as a result of the buildup in Egypt of an air defense network, military aid increased to \$960 million.²

Setbacks and Achievements

16. During the 1960s the USSR encountered disappointments, complications and outright setbacks which led it to revise its expectations and adjust its tactics in the Third World. With time Moscow had learned certain lessons and

¹ This figure excludes some \$1.6 billion of military aid extended to North Vietnam and \$0.8 billion each to North Korea and Cuba.

² See Annex I, "Soviet Military Aid".

adjusted its expectations to the longer term. The USSR's presence had grown and its influence had spread but the liberated countries had not quickly gravitated into the Soviet political and ideological orbit, or even been grateful. They had shown that there were limits to the amount of political direction they would accept from the USSR. Many of the new nations were plainly intent on working both sides of the street—East and West—insofar as economic and military aid were concerned.

17. Even where Soviet military assistance was most substantial, Moscow could only advise, not dictate, what uses it was to be put to. In the case of Egypt and Syria, Moscow had to contend both with the military incompetence of its clients and with their propensity for risking war with Israel. Soviet relations with Iraq, Algeria, and Guinea were frequently troubled. In Indonesia, Ghana, and Mali the Russians had the ground cut out from under them by coups. In Libya, a revolutionary regime came to power which is at least as anti-Soviet as it is anti-West. In the most recent instance, in Sudan, the coterie of Soviet friends and clients was nearly wiped out and Moscow's position was severely shaken in a violent internal struggle for power. These experiences showed that nationalism and parochial self-interest were more vigorous forces in the Third World than Moscow had supposed and not easy ones to harness. They revealed also that in many places the Russians had no solid political base but were at the mercy of the goodwill or staying power of mercurial or ephemeral leaders.

18. Wider contact has often produced friction. Many Egyptians dislike the Russians as much as they disliked the British earlier. There is ample evidence of comparable dislike (or at least ambivalence) among civilians and within the military in many other countries receiving extensive Soviet military assistance.

And these sentiments are not always confined to nationals of the host country. Some of Cuba's and Egypt's neighbors take dim views of the Soviet presence so near their borders.

19. Moreover, extension of aid has been expensive often both to Moscow and to many of the recipients. Despite the favorable terms on which Moscow usually sells arms, most recipients have experienced some difficulty in meeting their scheduled debt payments. Only about one-fourth of the estimated total of \$5.4 billion arms debt has been repaid. Egypt, Syria, and Indonesia have had the most difficulty in meeting their payments and have repaid only about 22, 17, and 10 percent, respectively, of their debts—this despite the fact that they have been preferred customers receiving a large volume of grant aid as well as generous credit terms. Indonesia alone accounts for about one-third of total outstanding Soviet arms indebtedness. Finally, some arms recipients have had great difficulty in absorbing Soviet equipment, in getting spare parts, and in some cases have complained about its low quality.

20. Regional complications and the unanticipated behavior of third parties sometimes confounded Moscow's expectations and made the execution of its policy more difficult. In such instances as Somalia vs. Ethiopia and Algeria vs. Morocco, Soviet-supplied arms were used in support of irredentist claims, which complicated matters for the Soviets who wish to maintain good relations with both parties. India's conduct was largely determined by its dispute with Pakistan and its fear of China. In Latin America, having pulled back from a dangerous strategic initiative in Cuba in 1962, the Soviets were frequently handicapped or embarrassed by Castro's militancy. Elsewhere—Lebanon in 1958, in the Congo in 1960, and subsequently in Vietnam—the West did not turn out to be as reluctant to intervene as Moscow had expected.

21. Over the years, Moscow has kept its distance from movements directed against traditional regimes in the Middle East. It has throughout maintained some reserve in its relations with the Arab fedayeen and, on the whole, has been wary of involvement with guerrilla movements. It has, however, kept lines open to a number of insurgent forces and has in cases, provided some support as in parts of Africa, where these forces aim at the overthrow of governments controlled by "Europeans", e.g., South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese territories in Africa. It has done so partly in order not to leave the field to the Chinese.

22. From the early 1960s onward, the Soviets also had constantly to be on guard against being outflanked on the left by the Chinese. Despite China's remoteness, relative paucity of means and internal convulsions, it laid claim to the leadership of the "national liberation movement", and thus goaded Moscow into a competition for influence which the Soviets might otherwise have pursued less actively. China has been able to keep varying degrees of competitive pressure on the Russians in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, and the Chinese challenge has been a prime factor in propelling the Russians toward deeper involvement.

23. The foregoing should not be read to mean that the Soviet effort in the Third World has been a failure—far from it. For all their problems, measured against the position they held 15 years ago, the Soviets have made impressive progress in developing their presence and influence in the Third World. They succeeded in breaking through the ring of containment constructed by the West and in opening many parts of the Third World to their own influence. Diplomatic and trade ties have been greatly widened and are now very nearly universal. As a result of military aid agreements a number of states—e.g., Egypt, Syria,

and Iraq—now are largely or almost totally dependent on Soviet military equipment and rely on the USSR for logistical and technical support. Moreover, the USSR has, through its military-technical assistance—together with its economic-technical assistance and academic training—exposed many of the nationals of these countries to Communist ideas and techniques—an exposure which Moscow hopes will influence the institutional development taking place in the Third World. Also, it has established important relationships with individuals, particularly military men who hold, or in the future may hold, key positions in their countries.

24. The USSR is the leading great power in most radical Arab states and their principal source of diplomatic and military support. It has gained acceptance of its right to concern itself closely in the affairs of South Asia, and has established ties of growing intimacy with India. In Southeast Asia and Latin America it has extended its relations and influence. Though they have suffered reverses in parts of Africa, the Russians, by cutting their losses, remain in a position to compete for influence on fairly even terms with both the West and the Chinese. The USSR can now look to the Third World countries for substantial support in forums such as the UN. And, during this same 15-year span—for many reasons, only some of which have to do with Soviet efforts—the West has seen its military presence in many parts of the Third World whittled away, its political influence reduced, and its economic interests damaged or placed in jeopardy.

III. EXPANSION OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER TO DISTANT AREAS

25. During the last decade or so the USSR has intervened militarily in a number of distant areas in a variety of ways. In addition to their deployment of offensive missiles and ground forces to Cuba and air defense to

Cuba and Vietnam, Soviet fighter pilots engaged in combat in the Yemen in 1967; air defense equipment and combat personnel were dispatched to Egypt in 1970 in response to Israeli air attacks; military supplies were airlifted to Nigeria during the civil war in 1970; and Soviet destroyers were deployed to Guinea in 1970 and 1971. The continuing improvement of Soviet naval forces, accompanied by some expansion of airlift and amphibious capabilities, give the USSR additional flexibility in distant operations.

26. As a result of their activities in Cuba and in North Vietnam, the Soviets gained a variety of experience with respect to distant operations. In Cuba they mounted an extensive sealift operation and deployed an air defense system (run by the Cubans). The outcome of the Cuban adventure probably reinforced their caution about future deployments and also underlined their need for improvement and increased air and naval capabilities. Through their aid to Vietnam, the Soviets kept their hand in Southeast Asia, and gained valuable tactical and air defense experience which they have been able to apply in both Egypt and the USSR.

27. These military activities are closely related to Soviet political interests, yet they remain in many ways distinct. In many respects, the USSR's long-distance military activities and capabilities are an extension of the general defensive and deterrent missions of the Soviet Armed Forces. (The Soviet deployment to Cuba in 1962 was, of course, an effort to increase Soviet strategic attack capabilities.) Soviet naval ships were deployed to the Mediterranean partly to counter, first, the US carrier strike force and, later, US missile submarines. Subsequent Soviet deployment in the Indian Ocean may have been undertaken partly in anticipation of possible future US strategic deployments in that area.

28. In the early 1960s, Soviet capabilities for distant operations were of a low order. Moscow's basic concern—military operations on the Eurasian landmass—guided conventional weapons procurement and force deployments. The Soviet Navy was large but ill-equipped for distant operations: it lacked experience; the armament of Soviet ships offered little protection against aircraft; and logistic support ships were not available. Tactical air and naval infantry units were also equipped and trained for continental warfare: tactical aircraft were short-ranged, and the naval infantry was structured for shore-to-shore operations in support of the army.

29. Lift capabilities to transport forces to distant areas by air or sea were negligible. The airlift forces, equipped primarily with light transports, had small payloads and ranges insufficient for operations beyond the periphery of the USSR. Amphibious assault shipping was suitable only for shore-to-shore operations in calm seas. The Soviet merchant fleet was small, totalling only 600 ships; only a few were suited for the needs of a military sealift, as the Soviet program for procuring large hatch ships was just beginning in the early 1960s.

30. During the past decade, Soviet forces and capabilities for distant operations have grown. New multipurpose naval ships, better suited to distant operations, have entered the Soviet Navy. Naval infantry and amphibious shipping have doubled in size; the Soviet merchant marine has tripled its tonnage, and now includes nearly 400 ships suited to the needs of military sealift.³ Soviet military transport forces have been entirely re-equipped with new turboprop aircraft with greater capacity and range, and have received

³ See Annex C, "Amphibious and Merchant Marine Sealift Capabilities".

several large new heavy transports; civil aviation has expanded overseas.⁴ Command and control capabilities to support distant military operations have been improved.

31. This growth has been magnified as a result of a Soviet policy of more forward deployments of its naval forces. In the last decade Soviet naval ship days outside of the areas close to the USSR have grown tenfold,⁵ and port calls by Soviet naval ships in foreign ports have grown a hundredfold.⁶

32. The growth in Soviet capabilities for distant operations has not, however, had the character that might be expected if the only purpose were intervention in Third World countries. In particular, the Soviets evidently determined they would not build capabilities for intervention against significant opposition ashore. For one thing, they have not developed large numbers of naval infantry and necessary air cover. Moreover, their naval deployments to distant areas are an element in the general expansion of the USSR's international role designed, like their strategic missile forces, to buttress the USSR's claim to international equality with the US. (Despite the sharp increase in days-out-of-area per ship, the Soviets are still far behind the US in this regard.) The growth in ship-days on distant station has of course given Soviet naval personnel some experience useful for distant operations, and it has had some political impact in the Third World. But the more intensive exercise of Soviet ships on the open ocean serves a number of purposes, only some of which relate to capabilities for distant operations in the Third World.

⁴ See Annex H, "Capabilities of Military and Civil Airlift to Support Distant Operations".

⁵ See Annex A, "Soviet Ship-Days on Distant Station".

⁶ See Annex B, "Pattern of Soviet Naval Port Visits".

33. The growth of other forces which contribute to capabilities for military operations in distant areas is also largely attributable to other causes. The growth of the merchant fleet has been in line with the increasing requirements of Soviet foreign trade. Most of the transport aircraft added to military transport aviation are designed to improve airlift capabilities in theater operations. The capabilities of amphibious forces have improved but continue to be oriented primarily to support of fighting on the flanks of theater forces.

IV. GENERAL POSTURE IN AREAS OF MAJOR INTEREST

The Mediterranean and Egypt

34. The Mediterranean, especially the Middle East, is the Third World area wherein the Soviets enjoy their greatest prestige and influence. Soviet objectives in the area are to gain predominant influence, and, as a corollary to reduce Western, and especially US influence. Soviet policy in this area, has, especially since the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, acquired its own dynamics and imperatives. Here the USSR has come face to face with the dilemmas as well as the advantages which stem from a substantial military commitment. Soviet involvement, which has been partly a result of calculation and partly a result of happenstance, has produced a situation in which the USSR sees itself as having political interests worth defending even if this has meant raising the level of military risk. It probably regards the preservation of its ties with the radical Arab states, and its presence in Egypt in particular, as of vital importance to its future role in the Middle East, as an important element in its world-wide rivalry with the US—and to a lesser extent with the Chinese.

35. The Arab-Israeli conflict has been of central importance in Moscow's decisions on

the shape and size of its military presence in Egypt. The severe embarrassment inflicted on Nasser by Israel's deep penetration air raids in early 1970 convinced the USSR that its political standing with Egypt, its own military prestige, and its facilities there required substantial engagement in Egypt's air defense and a long-term commitment to maintain Egypt's overall military preparedness.

36. This commitment has resulted in Soviet construction in Egypt of one of the world's most concentrated air defense systems. (The importance of the commitment is underscored by the fact that the commander of the defenses had previously been in charge of the Moscow air defenses.) Over half of the 16,000 Soviet military personnel in Egypt are involved in manning parts of the air defense system. Soviet pilots are flying air defense missions from bases in Egypt. The Soviets partially or wholly man a number of surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites and anti-aircraft batteries.

37. Soviet personnel in Egypt also include more than 1,000 naval personnel associated with shore support for the ships of the Mediterranean Squadron⁷ and its naval air element, and some 5,000 personnel serving as advisers, training officers, and technicians with all branches of the Egyptian Armed Forces. The commitment also involves the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron which by its presence deters Israeli attack on certain Egyptian ports and gathers intelligence on Israeli activities and forces.

⁷ See Annex C, "The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron".

The Soviets identify their naval forces in the Mediterranean as the Fifth *Eskadra* (Squadron); however, it contains many more types and numbers of ships than does the US naval organization designated a squadron. The US Sixth Fleet and the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron contain a similar number of ships though differing in composition.

38. The objectives of the Soviet military presence in the Mediterranean, however, go beyond the USSR's role in the Arab-Israeli situation. The various activities of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron are directed primarily against NATO naval forces and the Sixth Fleet in particular, emphasizing the improvement of maritime reconnaissance, and capabilities for antiship and antisubmarine warfare (ASW). In these activities the Squadron is an extension of the Black Sea Fleet's defense of the maritime approaches to the southern flank of the USSR. The USSR is also interested in extending its political influence as well as the range of its naval operations into the western Mediterranean and is thus working to develop its relations with the North African states and with Malta.

39. As a result of the expansion of the Squadron during and after the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, unprecedented demands were placed on Soviet naval logistic capabilities. Initial logistic requirements were met by conducting all replenishment at anchorages in international waters. As Egyptian reliance on Soviet political and military support increased, the Soviets were able to secure more established arrangements in Egypt. The Soviets obtained the use of an oil storage facility in Port Said and a facility at Alexandria which was used for maintenance and limited self-repair. Now Soviet ships and submarines are serviced by Soviet auxiliary ships at Port Said and Alexandria on a continuous basis for limited maintenance and repair, resupply, and crew recreation. They make more limited use of the port at Mersa Matruh, which is still being developed. Besides using the port facilities in Egypt, Soviet units visit the Syrian ports of Latakia and Tartus from time to time and make occasional port calls to Algeria and Yugoslavia.

40. The first contingent of the naval aviation arm of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron—six reconnaissance aircraft—reached Egypt in April 1968. The introduction of air-to-surface missile (ASM) TU-16 aircraft in November 1971 added a new forward-based element to the Soviet strike capability against NATO surface forces, particularly the US Sixth Fleet, in the eastern and central Mediterranean. By late 1971 there were about 30 ASW, reconnaissance, electronic warfare and ASM units—all operating with Egyptian markings. Badger tankers could be deployed to Egypt, enabling Egyptian-based ASM-carrying Badgers to provide air coverage of the entire Mediterranean. The naval air squadron regularly uses the Mersa Matruh Air Base, as well as the Cairo West and Aswan Airfields.

41. We believe the primary mission of the ASM-carrying Badgers is to improve the Soviet antiship capability against the Sixth Fleet and other NATO forces in the Mediterranean. The Soviets probably also hope that the presence of these aircraft will serve to bolster their commitment to Sadat, and to bring pressure on Israel.

42. We doubt that the ASMs now in Egypt have nuclear warheads (they are reasonably effective weapons against ships without such warheads). We cannot, however, entirely exclude the possibility that nuclear warheads would be introduced—if, for example, the Soviets concluded that Israel had acquired a nuclear capability.

43. In the five months prior to the June war of 1967, the Soviets maintained an average of only 14 ships in their Mediterranean Squadron. Shortly before the outbreak of hostilities the Soviets began heavy reinforcement and at its peak in July 1967 the Squadron consisted of 42 units. This total fell off in the winter of 1967-

1968; it has since increased gradually until in 1971 the size of the Squadron averaged 50 surface ships and submarines. The Squadron's capabilities have grown as well as its numbers. The Squadron's tactical units carry out anti-ship and ASW exercises and extensive surveillance of NATO forces, naval aircraft fly daily reconnaissance missions, and in 1969 and 1970 small amphibious assault exercises were conducted on Egyptian beaches. The Mediterranean has also developed into an arena for trying out new operations techniques with new units such as the C-class cruise-missile submarine and the Moskva-class ASW cruiser.⁸

44. Thus, the expansion of the USSR's presence in the Middle East owes much to the Egyptian military weaknesses exposed in 1967. But it is also evident that Moscow has for some time had military interests in the Mediterranean which extend beyond the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since 1967, these two sets of political and military interests have by-and-large coincided, so that Egypt has been strengthened vis-à-vis Israel and the USSR has not only gained influence in the area at the expense of the West, but has also obtained bases for its Mediterranean Squadron's forward deployment in defense of the USSR. Both parties have, at the same time, been carried in directions which each may consider hazardous: the Egyptians toward dependence on the Russians and the latter toward deeper involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Indian Ocean

45. As in the case of the Mediterranean, Soviet activities in the Indian Ocean have served a number of military or quasi-military as well as political purposes since they estab-

⁸ See NIE 11-14-71, "Warsaw Pact Forces for Operations in Eurasia", dated 9 September 1971, SECRET, Annex B, for more detailed discussion of these ships.

lished a naval presence there in 1968. These include space and oceanographic operations, testing ships and submarines in a tropical environment, and improving ASW techniques in an area in which Moscow may expect the US eventually to deploy nuclear ballistic missile submarines. These operations also support the Soviet Navy's efforts to gain experience in distant operations and prepare the way for the establishment of a more convenient transit route between the USSR's eastern and western fleet operating areas if and when the Suez Canal is reopened. The USSR's increased visibility in the Indian Ocean includes not only its growing naval presence, but also its civil air routes, arrangements for facilities for the Soviet fishing fleet and increased diplomatic and trade relations.⁹

46. For short visits, Soviet naval units find more ports open in the Indian Ocean than in the Mediterranean. Ports used most often are in South Yemen, Somalia, and Mauritius. Both the frequency and duration of Soviet port calls in the Indian Ocean have generally increased.¹⁰ But the Soviets have not obtained access to or use of facilities comparable to those available in Egypt or in Cuba. Although there have been persistent rumors of activity on the island of Socotra east of the Horn of Africa, a visit in January 1971 by a qualified observer established that there was no Soviet base on the island; however, the Soviets continue to use the nearby anchorage.

47. Shore facilities along the Red Sea, at Aden, or along the coast of the Horn of Africa would facilitate Soviet operations in the western Indian Ocean. The Soviets have helped with the construction of a deepwater port at Berbera in Somalia and have been involved in construction activity at Aden. The Soviets have military aid-related personnel in Aden and

⁹ See Annex D, "Indian Ocean Operations".

¹⁰ See Annex B, "Pattern of Soviet Naval Port Visits".

have used the airfield there in their recent airlift to India. While there is no evidence that they have applied for permanent facilities in Somalia and Aden, their relations with those governments are such that they might expect a favorable response if they did apply. They sought rights to unrestricted access to certain shore facilities in India and have so far been refused, though some elements in the Indian Government apparently favored granting the request. The Soviets had a similar request turned down by the Government of Ceylon before it was replaced by Mrs. Bandaranaike's government. They may make the request again, though in view of Mrs. Bandaranaike's campaign to make the Indian Ocean off limits to major naval powers, she would be likely to resist a Soviet request—despite recent Soviet assistance to her government in putting down insurgency. For over a year, the Soviets have been exploring the possibility of using Singapore's dockyards on a regular basis for their naval vessels, and may secure limited access to some facilities on a purely commercial basis, but Premier Lee Kuan Yew is not anxious to concede them anything like base rights.

48. The increased military deployments in the Indian Ocean are an aspect of Russia's ambition to establish itself as a global power in general and an Asian power in particular. By showing the flag in the area Moscow evidently hopes to accomplish several aims: to make the littoral states aware of the USSR's might; to demonstrate that the USSR has interests in the area; and, to warn its antagonists—in this case both the Western powers and the Chinese—that it has military means on the spot to support its interests. In present circumstances—given the all-but-total withdrawal of British military power from East of Suez and uncertainty about the future role of the US—Moscow may believe that it can accomplish these purposes with only a modest force and that many of the nations of the

area will come increasingly to think of friendship with the USSR as an alternative to accommodation with the Chinese or alignment with the West.

49. The USSR has tried to make itself more acceptable wherever possible in the Indian Ocean area. The Russians probably believe that the Persian Gulf states face an uncertain political future and that the withdrawal of the British presence will make possible some increase of their own influence which might enable them to put pressure on Western economic interests in the area. But the main Soviet political interest in the area is clearly India. The Soviet-Indian Friendship Treaty confirms this priority and marks a switch from the policy, inaugurated in Tashkent in January 1966, which attempted to put the USSR in a position of greater impartiality between India and Pakistan. With the treaty and India's need for Soviet support against both Pakistan and China, the USSR has a stronger claim to Indian cooperation in support of its military presence in the Indian Ocean. It may be that Moscow also sees the treaty as the initial step in creating the Asian security system—aimed at containing China—which Brezhnev first proposed in 1969.

The Caribbean and Cuba

50. After the missile crisis in 1962, Soviet naval operations in the Caribbean were negligible until July 1969. Since then, they have conducted a series of probes whose precise objectives are not yet clear. Their naval deployments to the Caribbean may have implications for strategic capabilities vis-à-vis the US, as well as local ramifications.

51. A naval support facility capable of minor repair and provisioning both nuclear submarines and surface combatants has been established on an island in the harbor at Cienfuegos, Cuba. The Soviets have stationed there two barges designed for the collection

of effluent from nuclear-powered submarines. In peacetime these facilities would be useful for supporting naval units during crew rest and rotation and maintenance of Soviet submarines, and would permit more frequent and prolonged naval operations in the Western Hemisphere. However, Moscow has not used the Cienfuegos facilities for support of ballistic missile submarines, evidently out of concern for American reaction, and the matter seems to be in abeyance since Moscow has reaffirmed its intention to refrain from stationing offensive weapons in Cuba.

52. Since 1969 pairs of Soviet Bear-D naval reconnaissance aircraft have flown six times to Cuba, and Soviet surface ships and submarines have visited the island seven times. Although the purpose of the visits was mainly political, the ships were replenished in port and on a few occasions conducted basic ASW exercises with Cuban Navy ships. Cuba would be a valuable replenishment site for submarines, reconnaissance aircraft, and surface ships operating in the western Atlantic.

53. Other Soviet aims in the Caribbean appear to be similar to the efforts the USSR is pursuing in other areas to enhance its international prestige and to improve its overall operational capabilities. Its activities serve to score points against the US, to demonstrate Soviet support for Cuba, and to strengthen the USSR's prestige in Latin America. In recent years, trends in Latin America have been encouraging to Moscow. The Russians no doubt see in the growth of radical nationalism with its anti-American strain a force which promises to weaken the US position in the area and to strengthen its own. The installation of a Marxist-led government in Chile—though not an unmixed blessing from the Soviet point of view—must nonetheless cause Moscow to believe that, over time, a number of Latin American coun-

tries can be drawn into a pro-Soviet alignment.

The Eastern Atlantic and West Africa

54. Occasional Soviet naval operations off West Africa started as early as 1967. In 1967 the Soviets carried out an afloat submarine support operation for three nuclear and two diesel submarines off the Cape Verde Islands, proving the ability of the Soviet Navy to sustain a submarine group in the central Atlantic for a period of six months. Since 1969, the operations of Soviet ships off the West African coast have been related to political events: a Soviet surface ship task force patrolled the Ghana coast in the spring of 1969 to effect the release of two Soviet fishing vessels that the Ghanaian Government had impounded. In November 1970 two destroyers were diverted to Guinea at the invitation of that government after the Portuguese-sponsored incursion into that country; and at least one has remained in the area since.

V. CURRENT SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR DISTANT ACTION

55. Soviet military potential in distant areas is not limited to current deployment in those areas. There is also the question of how much and how quickly the Soviets, with present capabilities, could augment their presence through rapid deployment of additional naval forces or quick reaction forces, or through shipments of increased amounts of military equipment.

A. Naval Forces

56. Given their total naval inventory, the USSR could, for short periods of time, increase considerably the number of combatants deployed in certain distant areas. The specific number would depend upon many variables, including the place, purpose and desired

length of the deployment, homeland defense requirements, and the international political climate. By drawing on all four fleets, the Soviets could assign to distant operational commitments 14-18 major surface combatants and 45-52 long range, general purpose submarines over and above forces already deployed in distant areas. These units could be used to reinforce current Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Indian Ocean deployments or to support other distant operations. However, current Soviet logistic support forces are inadequate to support greatly expanded and sustained surface naval operations in far distant areas.

57. While fresh water, provisions, and, in some instances, fuel are available to Soviet combatants in many foreign ports, any logistic support system depending upon such ports can be disrupted by even minor changes in the political climate or the mood of foreign suppliers. Probably with this in mind, the Soviets have, in large part, continued to replenish at sea or at anchor from naval auxiliaries and merchant ships, even in the eastern Mediterranean where facilities are available ashore. Although merchant and naval support shipping have been able to provide for the needs of the forces currently deployed, the Soviet Navy is short of certain types of support ships—tenders, repair ships, and supply ships—which would be needed for more extensive deployments.

B. Quick Reaction Forces

58. Should requirements dictate, any of a wide variety of Soviet army, naval infantry, and air force units could be transported by air or sea to distant areas if landing and docking facilities were available. The equipment which might accompany such units would depend on the situation and transportation available. However, certain units of the Soviet forces do, by virtue of their function

or equipment, seem more likely than others to be tapped for use in distant areas. These include airborne divisions, naval infantry, and tactical air units.

*Airlift*¹¹

59. The USSR airlift for military personnel and supplies is furnished by Military Transport Aviation (VTA). The Soviet Union's military airlift capability has increased in recent years to satisfy expanded objectives and missions. Still, the force has no large all-jet transports and only a few large turboprop aircraft in service. A jet-powered aircraft similar to the US C-141 is, however, being flight tested. Compared with the US military airlift, Soviet forces have about one-half the capacity, less ability to fly extremely long distances, and cannot react as rapidly and effectively to situations in the Third World because they lack an overseas support infrastructure.

60. If essentially all VTA aircraft were used, they could airlift two airborne divisions with all supporting equipment to a distance of about 850 n.m. and return, or land them to a distance of about 1,700 n.m. In a situation involving opposition, the Soviets could probably airdrop assault elements of these divisions. In these circumstances, Soviet airborne divisions use parachute rocket deceleration devices and are estimated to have an effective capability to drop heavy equipment.

61. The VTA could without refueling airlift 12,700 tons of supplies to 850 n.m. and return or it could land 9,500 tons to a distance of 1,700 n.m. The Soviets have conducted successful airlifts of arms to a number of countries in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. The performance in the Peruvian relief airlift of 1970, however, indicates that currently the Soviets

¹¹ See Annex H, "Capabilities of Military and Civil Airlift to Support Distant Operations".

are ill prepared for large-scale operations over the Atlantic or Pacific.

62. Some portion of the Soviet civil aviation fleet (Aeroflot) could also be mobilized for airlift purposes. If all serviceable heavy and medium transports in Aeroflot were made available (unlikely because of other requirements), cargo airlift capability would increase by 25 percent and troop airlift more than double. Although transition from civil to a military role would require only a few modifications, Aeroflot aircraft generally are not well suited to military airlift. Most are not rear loading, having only a rather small conventional opening and cannot admit large vehicles. Moreover, some of these aircraft need airfields with longer and more durable runways than those required for assault-type transports. Nonetheless, the Soviets can utilize their civil airlift in much the same ways as the US uses commercial airlifts to support its operations in Vietnam.

63. The above represents maximum Soviet airlift capabilities. Considering primary missions and requirements the Soviets would probably make available only about 20 percent of the medium and heavy transports in VTA and 25 percent of selected Aeroflot medium and heavy aircraft for an airlift to certain distant areas. Such a force might comprise 150 AN-12s and 5 AN-22s from VTA, plus over 50 AN-12s, AN-22s, and passenger carriers from Aeroflot. The VTA component could airland in one week two to three paratroop regiments of 1,500 men each with all their weapons, most of their combat support equipment, and necessary consumables to a radius of 1,300-1,800 n.m. from Warsaw Pact countries. Provided fuel and support facilities were available at the final destination and at intermediate points not more than about 3,800 n.m. apart, this force could move anywhere in the world in a rather longer period of time. The Aeroflot component could carry in a week's time 13,500 troops with hand-

carried weapons or 6,500 troops and 850 tons of supplies to a distance of some 1,400 n.m.

64. The capabilities cited presuppose the existence of optimum conditions. These capabilities would be reduced to some degree by any kind of opposition. For one thing, since fighter escort from the USSR is limited to a range of 500 n.m., distant situations involving air opposition would require fighter protection be made available. Moreover, even without opposition there would be the problems of overflight and staging rights, advance base preparations and the emplacement of maintenance facilities and adequate stocks of fuel.

*Amphibious Forces*¹²

65. The naval infantry is organized into battalion landing teams designed to play supporting roles on the flanks of the ground forces. The Soviets have a theoretical capability for lifting some 18 landing teams to distant areas, if all existing long-range amphibious shipping were used. However, most of the ships involved and most of the naval infantry units are based in four widely separated fleet areas, all of which are well removed from potential Third World trouble spots except the Middle East. One landing team is on station in the Mediterranean and one of the 10 Soviet LSTs (tank landing ships) is deployed more or less continuously in the Indian Ocean.¹³ As much as 75 percent of the amphibious shipping is probably combat ready, the remainder being involved in training, refit, and maintenance requirements. As a consequence, about 2 landing teams from the Northern Fleet, 3½ from the Baltic, 2½ from the Black, and 3½ from the Pacific Ocean Fleet could be sealifted to dis-

¹² See Annex G, "Amphibious and Merchant Marine Sealift Capabilities".

¹³ Two LSTs were involved in the Soviet show of support to Guinea in late 1971 and as of this writing one is still there.

tant areas on short notice. Transit would be at 300-350 n.m. per day (about 15 knots). Depending on the circumstances, air cover as well as naval escort might be required.

66. The Soviets thus have only a limited long-range seaborne assault capability. They can, with the forces described, provide training in a distant theater and in certain circumstances they have the capability to carry out small-scale, unopposed landings. However, against significant opposition such a force would have little utility since the naval infantry are lightly armed, lack staying power, and have no organic close air support.

Air Forces

67. The Soviets have substantial bomber forces that could conceivably be employed in distant areas. There are some 145 strike-configured Bear and Bison bombers and 50 Bison tankers in Long Range Aviation that have sufficient range to reach many Third World countries. In addition, they could use some of the 1,000 medium bombers in Long Range and Naval Aviation. Some could be refueled in flight, while others would have to be staged through forward bases. In considering whether to use these strategic forces in a Third World situation, the Soviets might have to decide whether to divert them from their primary missions and also to calculate the possible risk of escalation.

68. Since tactical aircraft lack both the range and air refueling capabilities of heavy and medium bombers, long-range fighter deployments are contingent upon ferrying aircraft, or securing suitable staging bases. Ferrying of currently operational fighters would require a series of 600- to 1,300-mile hops, depending upon the type of aircraft, with more recent models having the longer ranges. These distances preclude ferrying across the Atlantic or Pacific. In an unopposed situation,

the present support system would probably permit deployment of up to 8 tactical air regiments (about 300 aircraft) in one day from bases within the western USSR to Egypt and Syria by overflying Turkey and Iran and refueling in Iraq. If Soviet fighters were allowed to stage through the southernmost Yugoslav bases they also could reach the Middle East.

69. The Soviet practice has been to send disassembled tactical aircraft either by transport aircraft or by ship rather than to develop longer range aircraft or aerial refueling. We estimate that within one week a limited number of tactical aircraft could be transported to and reassembled in any part of the world, providing that the necessary overflight and logistics accommodations had been arranged. Recently, a few fighters and helicopters were transported to Ceylon in this manner. However, where time is not critical the Soviets apparently prefer to send disassembled aircraft by ship.

C. Merchant Marine Sealift¹⁴

70. As in US experience, support for substantial new deployments of ground and air units would have to come from the merchant marine, since transport aircraft are incapable of carrying the large tonnages required. The same is true of rapid supply lift of military equipment and supplies. About 17 ships would be required for a Soviet motorized rifle division and its equipment. The actual tonnage of tankers and cargo ships required for a given supply lift depends, of course, on the distance involved and the rate in tons per day at which deliveries are required. This, in turn, depends on the number and type of military units to be supplied, the nature of their activity (whether they are in combat or merely on training or standby duty), the pre-

¹⁴ See Annex G, "Amphibious and Merchant Marine Sealift Capabilities".

positioning of ships such as tankers, and the feasibility and desirability of obtaining supplies locally. But distance is probably the major factor. For example, it would require almost three times as much shipping to deliver a given tonnage per day to Cuba as to Egypt. Reaction time is another factor, inasmuch as many of the ships particularly suited for military sealift would probably be at sea carrying civilian cargo at any given time.

71. In 1955, the Soviet fleet had fewer than 600 ships and totaled about 2.5 million dead-weight tons (DWT). In the following 10 years, it was expanded to more than 1,000 ships totaling over 8 million DWT. Between 1965 and 1970, the Soviets added 470 ships of 4.3 million DWT. Their fleet now totals 1,460 ships of 12.1 million DWT. While vessels of the Soviet fleet are fully utilized in peacetime, they could be valuable adjuncts to distant operations to the extent that the Soviets chose to divert them for this purpose.

72. Any large-scale diversion of merchant ships for military sealift operations would be at the cost of some curtailment of the USSR's foreign trade and to its balance of payments. The Soviet merchant fleet is generally working at capacity in normal trade activities. The USSR's tanker needs are so great throughout the year that it makes tankers available to non-Communist charters only in the course of return voyages to the Soviet Union. Except when ice makes certain northern Soviet ports inaccessible, most dry cargo ships are occupied in moving Communist cargoes on a full-time basis. It is doubtful, however, if these considerations, mostly economic, would inhibit the Soviets from utilizing part of their merchant fleet for military purposes of a high priority in the Third World.

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73. In sum, the Soviets have substantial ground, air and naval forces which could be

used in distant operations where there is no significant opposition. Against opposition their capabilities are more limited. Against a submarine or surface ship threat, Soviet naval forces in distant waters could be increased substantially over present levels for short periods, but a sustained augmentation would require additional logistic support and ships to defend that support. Soviet amphibious forces are primarily designed for operations on the periphery of the Soviet Union and their capabilities across open oceans are accordingly limited by the small numbers of naval infantry and amphibious ships available. The lack of long-range tactical aircraft and aircraft carriers virtually precludes distant intervention ashore against air opposition more than a few hundred miles from a base where supporting fighters are deployed.

74. By contrast, Soviet operations—both sea and air, in situations where they have been invited—have been used with increasing frequency to support Soviet clients in the Third World and the Soviet Union's own combat forces in Egypt. In addition, of course, the appearance of Soviet naval units in distant ports has a symbolic value in demonstrating Soviet ability to project some elements of military power anywhere in the world.

VI. LONGER TERM OUTLOOK: CONSTRAINTS AND OPTIONS

75. Events not now foreseeable could serve either to stimulate or to dampen Soviet interest in the Third World and in developing military means to support its political aims there. A more active involvement might result if developments within the Third World itself seemed to offer new opportunities or if Moscow had reason to believe that the risks of involvement had greatly diminished. If, on the other hand, the Soviets were to experience a number of costly failures in the Third World, if there were serious conflict on the Sino-

Soviet border, or if there were severe political or economic complications at home, they might considerably curtail their activities in the Third World.

76. In general, however, the trend toward a steady expansion of Soviet capabilities for distant operations seems likely to be sustained. Emphasis may be on both extending the geographical range of operations and on developing logistics and air support for these operations. The momentum of overall military growth will help to carry the Soviets in this direction. Moscow will also be seeking in this way to add to its international prestige generally and to win greater influence in the Third World at the expense of both the US and China. In proceeding along this line, however, the Russians will be confronted by a number of constraints—geographical, economic, military, and political.

Military Considerations

77. The uses to which the Soviets can put the distant action forces they now have, or will acquire in coming years, will of course, depend on the kinds of situations which will confront them. Soviet military involvement in the Third World has so far been mainly by invitation, as in Egypt. And the Russians have succeeded in avoiding direct engagement in hostilities on any substantial scale. This may be the most frequent pattern in the future as well. Where this is the case, intervention would present no great problems for the Soviets even if their capabilities for distant action remain as they are today. But for purposes of analyzing Soviet capabilities and limitations, consideration must also be given to the requirements the Russians would need to meet in order to conduct operations against significant opposition or to plan for such operations.

78. In its planning, Moscow must always recognize that deployment of these forces against significant opposition in the Third World may carry risk of escalation to a major conflict. In some circumstances, control of key points on the sea and air routes from Soviet bases might be in unfriendly or potentially unfriendly hands. In any sizable military operation beyond its periphery, the USSR would have some problems of support and reinforcement, and in case of major opposition, these problems might be formidable.

79. Naval construction programs now under way could by 1975 provide increased numbers of surface ships and submarines capable of distant operations—on the order of 10 additional cruisers, 25 more missile-armed destroyers and 30 additional cruise-missile and torpedo-attack nuclear submarines. But if the Soviets continue to retire older classes there will be little, if any, increase by 1975 in the total number of major combatants in the order of battle. There will be a continuing deficiency in naval support ships.

80. By 1975, the additions now being made to sealift and airlift forces will improve present capabilities for distant operations. The Soviets are acquiring distant amphibious shipping capacity to accommodate about one additional battalion landing team a year. Merchant shipping tonnage which could be used for supporting distant operations will increase substantially (although this increase will not outstrip growing foreign trade requirements). With respect to airlift capability, the Soviets will have about 50 AN-22 heavy transports by mid-decade and the first IL-76 heavy transports may enter service with military aviation by 1974. Thus, by 1975 Moscow will have at its disposal greater capabilities than before for rapid delivery of military aid or for establishing a military presence quickly in certain circumstances. The Soviets, however, do not

appear to be giving a high priority to developing a distant assault capability.

81. The Soviets have not as yet come up with a solution to the problem of air cover for distant operations. Except where they have aircraft deployed, notably in Egypt, their capability in this respect remains extremely limited. Tests of refueling between fighter aircraft have been reported recently, but several years will be required before operational ferrying would be possible. A very large surface combatant, has been reported to be under construction with an estimated initial operational capability of 1974-1975. It is too early to estimate what the function of this new ship will be. It may carry helicopters. Or it may be designed for fixed-wing aircraft. Or it may not carry aircraft at all. If it is configured for fixed-wing aircraft or large helicopters, it could improve Soviet capabilities for ASW, fleet air defense, or landing support; the latter two would add appreciably to capabilities for distant operations.

82. The increasingly forward posture of Soviet strategic forces against NATO carriers and ballistic missile submarines has resulted from requirements independent of Soviet objectives in the Third World, but the two interact, particularly when it comes to the question of basing. It is still uncertain how far the Soviet leaders have committed themselves to the concept of foreign basing. We do not know whether they planned to seek shore base facilities all along or whether the need for facilities has simply grown with the expansion of operations. But this factor is clearly one the Soviets will have to take into account in planning for operations in distant areas. In areas close to home bases, simple rotation of ships is practicable, but as distances increase the number of ships required to maintain rotation increases rapidly. Floating bases or replenishment at sea can accomplish routine

resupply or minor maintenance, but for purposes of prolonged deployment, shore facilities are important.

83. Soviet military requirements for foreign bases are more likely to grow than diminish. Prospects for Soviet ASW and strategic attack forces, as well as the trend in increased out of area operation of general purpose forces, both point in this direction. Soviet bases in the Third World are not easily acquired and keeping them would depend upon political relationships in areas notorious for political instability. Many states in the underdeveloped world want Soviet arms assistance and, in certain circumstances, might want Soviet support in more direct ways against an adversary; but none likes the derogation of sovereignty implicit in the granting of assured facilities, and none is as peculiarly dependent on the Soviets as circumstances have made Egypt. Nevertheless, the Soviets have sought shore facilities of various kinds in several countries, in addition to those they already have in Egypt, and the search can be expected to continue.

Political and Economic Considerations

84. Soviet efforts abroad will in general be aimed more at increasing Soviet influence with existing governments than at establishing Communist-dominated regimes. This is not to say that Moscow would in no case assist or welcome such an outcome, which might, besides being ideologically satisfying, appeal to the Soviets as a way of establishing some measure of direct control even at some cost. The urge to obtain such control is likely to be especially felt in those areas, like the Middle East and the Asian subcontinent, where the USSR's interests and prestige are substantially engaged and where its military commitment is considerable. But few, if any, Third World countries are willing to become satellites of the USSR, and Moscow, for its part, would be mindful of the political and economic burdens

of supporting additional dependents. And, though Communist regimes would in many instances be dubious assets for the Soviets, they would, nonetheless, have a strong claim on Soviet support.

85. Where areas such as the Mediterranean and Caribbean are concerned the Soviets may recognize that by pressing too hard on US or West European interests they could jeopardize the USSR's détente strategy. This is not to say that the Soviets will pull back from positions won in such areas, but only that there are important factors making for prudence in how far and fast they try to go. Various domestic considerations may also incline Moscow to take care not to overextend its commitments in the Third World. High risk ventures—one of which helped to bring down Khrushchev—can be politically damaging to individual leaders. Moscow will, because of the many other demands on its economic resources, tend to be frugal but it will find the funds to expand its activities when it is clearly to the USSR's advantage to do so.

86. The Soviets are probably conscious of the tenuousness of a position which is dependent on relationships with the individual leaders. They will seek ways in coming years to establish a more durable foundation for their presence in many parts of the Third World by overt and covert courting of potential "establishment" types—e.g., the educated elites, younger military officers, and civil servants—as well as by developing organizational ties with indigenous "progressive" parties.

87. Brezhnev has declared that the USSR is ready "to solve the problem" created by the great powers' naval deployments in areas "far from their own shores", adding, however, that this could be only on the basis of Soviet equality with the US. The Russians are probably not, at this stage, prepared to enter into formal understanding with the US on mutual limitation of military forces or arms assistance

in Third World areas—solely in order to reduce the risk to themselves of political conflict or military confrontation with the US or to avoid a costly competition. But in some areas—in particular, those in which the Chinese are also involved—the Russians, may from time to time, find it advantageous to follow policies which happen more or less to parallel those of the US and aim at preventing the outbreak or worsening of local conflicts. Regional security arrangements, as in Asia, in which the USSR played the part of principal sponsor but not sole guarantor might commend themselves to Moscow as a way of insuring a strong political role at minimum military risk.

Future Options and Alternatives

88. Some of the constraints described in the foregoing paragraphs may, of course, not be permanent. Committee rule in Moscow could, for example, give way to the domination of a single leader who, either because he felt confident of his position or was eager to show results, might launch a more venturesome policy. Whatever the nature of the leadership, it has not been and will not be immune to overconfidence, miscalculation, or opportunism. And by the very fact of its presence in distant areas, the USSR is more likely to encounter situations in which it will have both the capability and the temptation to make its weight felt. Such a situation might arise, for example, if the Russians saw a chance to influence the outcome of a local conflict or power struggle or to pre-empt a Western response by making a show of force on the spot. In cases where Soviet forces were near at hand and Western forces were not, one or another of the contestants in the conflict would be more inclined to look to the Russians for help, while the Russians would see less risk to themselves in acting.

89. A marked movement to the left among Third World countries generally or the emer-

gence of a dramatic opportunity such as might be presented, say, by the collapse of the monarchy in Saudi Arabia or in Ethiopia, might persuade Moscow that its political opportunities had greatly widened. And Moscow's view of its prospects might be considerably altered if it came to believe that the US was irrevocably committed to a substantial reduction of its international role or had become deeply reluctant to get involved in local conflicts especially where there was a risk of confrontation with the USSR.

90. While the Soviets will, we believe, continue to be careful in accepting risks, they no doubt also wish to have wider options than in the past. The Soviets will be inclined to exercise caution in areas where US interests are deeply engaged, but even in these circumstances they may calculate that an assertive policy will entail fewer risks to themselves than in the past. Instability in the Third World engendered by conflicts between radical and traditionalist elements, between regional states, or between those states and the Western Powers will in coming years offer Moscow numerous opportunities to test these possibilities.

91. In any event, military assistance will remain a major instrument of Soviet policy. The Russians may resort increasingly to the use of airlifts in critical or fast-moving conflict situations as a means of dramatizing its assistance. And in situations where the Soviets have developed an important stake and their friend or client has reason to fear air attacks, they might dispatch air defense equipment together with personnel to man it as in Egypt. In some instances this could mean the participation of Soviet personnel in hostilities.

92. *The Mediterranean.* The Soviets will certainly proceed with efforts to improve the effectiveness of their NATO-oriented operations in the Mediterranean. To this end, they will no doubt take measures to enhance the capabili-

ties of their Mediterranean Squadron without necessarily increasing its size significantly. There will probably be some increase in numbers of aircraft for reconnaissance, ASW, and ASMs. They may also acquire additional facilities for the servicing of their ships or aircraft on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, in the interior of Egypt, and along the Red Sea.

93. The Soviets will probably try to expand their operations in the western Mediterranean. Access to shore facilities in Libya or Algeria would greatly assist these efforts. But the governments in these countries, despite their readiness to accept Soviet military aid, are only slightly less suspicious, if at all, of the Russians than of the West. Their determination to limit Soviet influence appears firm, and unless there is a drastic change in these regimes, neither Libya nor Algeria is likely to assist the growth of the Russian Mediterranean presence. The Russians may also hope eventually to obtain the use of Malta's facilities for their naval ships as well as securing the denial of those facilities to NATO forces. But the Malta Government, under Mintoff, is probably genuinely interested in moving into a position of non-alignment. While it would, if its economic position permitted, be glad to see NATO go, it does not want to replace NATO with the Russians.

94. Egypt's willingness to permit an enlargement of the Soviet presence will depend in great part on how much it needs active Soviet support in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. Since one of the major aims of the Soviet military presence in Egypt is to prevent the Israelis from inflicting further humiliation on the Egyptians, a substantial and probably prolonged Soviet involvement in Egyptian air defenses is foreseeable—though some of the air defenses are being turned over to Egyptian personnel. And the Russians, who want to limit their direct involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, will probably continue to try to main-

tain a blend of political and military pressures in dealing with this confrontation.

95. *The Indian Ocean.* There is a considerable potential for turbulence at many points along the littoral of the Indian Ocean and its contiguous waterways, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea. While the Russians will certainly not want to become embroiled in each and every troublespot—and, in some cases, will see their interests best served by an easing of conflicts—it is not difficult to conceive of circumstances arising in which the Russians would consider a show of force and even a threat of intervention politically expedient and low in risk. At all events, they will continue to seek such political profits as they can from "showing the flag".

96. The reopening of Suez would facilitate Soviet naval transit operations and probably lead to some increase in deployments in the Indian Ocean. But the USSR does not need to undertake much larger deployments in order to keep pace with its competitors so long as the Western naval presence remains small and the Chinese presence non-existent. The Chinese might, in time, however, become more active in the area as an outgrowth of their interest in East Africa, and possibly in connection with missile testing. This could result in some increase in Soviet naval activity, though it would hardly warrant a large increase. In any case the Soviets will probably seek access to facilities in the Indian Ocean.

97. The Soviets probably would increase their operations in the Indian Ocean more substantially if it became, or they anticipated that it might become, an area of increased deployment of US forces. They would be particularly sensitive to deployment of missile submarines and would probably undertake some ASW effort in response. But the Russians probably do not regard the Indian Ocean as a likely theater of major naval combat; in case of hos-

ilities with the West, other naval theaters nearer to Europe would be of far greater strategic importance.

98. *Caribbean.* Within the next couple of years the Soviet naval presence in the Caribbean is likely to become continuous. It will be designed to demonstrate—to the US, to Cuba and other Caribbean nations, and to Latin America as whole—that the US has lost its exclusive naval role in the area. As opportunities permit, the Russians will probably “show the flag” more widely elsewhere in Latin America.

99. We think it unlikely that the Soviets would attempt to use the naval facilities in Cuba for forward basing of their submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) so long as they have reason to anticipate strong US opposition. They may, however, argue that they are entitled to a *quid pro quo* with regard to forward basing of US SLBMs. And they will probably continue to probe US reaction to different levels and types of naval deployments by, for example, deploying other types of submarines as well as missile ships and submarine tenders to Cuba.

100. They may also seek to acquire shore facilities elsewhere in Latin America, attempting to test the limits of US tolerance at various stages of this process. We do not believe, however, that the USSR would attempt to obtain in Latin America, Cuba aside, the kind of air and naval facilities it now has in Egypt. Such an action besides being provocative to the US and offensive to Latin American attitudes, would probably be considered unnecessary for Soviet political and military purposes. At the same time, the Soviets may find it possible to obtain access to shore facilities for refueling, reprovisioning, and minor repairs; the USSR might be able to negotiate with Chile and perhaps one or two other countries for the use of maintenance facilities for its naval vessels.

Some Latin countries will be receptive to such exercises as port and airfield visits to “show the flag”. Moscow may also find customers for its arms, and some governments willing to grant overflight and landing rights.

101. *West Africa.* Unlike the other areas just mentioned, we have no evidential base to estimate that the Soviets have an interest in securing air or naval support facilities in this area. Interest in such facilities, however, would be logical. They might come to want access to shore facilities to support naval operations in the South Atlantic and to support transits to and from the Indian Ocean. Air facilities in West Africa could be useful for air transport operations into Latin America or southern Africa.

VII. EPILOGUE

102. It is by now conventional wisdom that the military capabilities of great powers are not always or automatically translatable into commensurate political influence—especially in the Third World. Recent history has many examples of small and relatively weak states successfully defying (or at least refusing to be intimidated by) a much larger adversary possessed of overwhelmingly superior forces. The modern world tends to look disapprovingly on intervention by the great powers; and many issues between a large and a small nation which might once have led to a punitive expedition, to war or the threat of it, have in recent decades been resolved or accommodated or simply endured without violence. The fact that one side in such disputes enjoyed formidable military superiority has often had little to do with the outcome, because in the crunch neither party was actually willing to resort to war and both sides knew it. One factor, of course, that often deterred the great power from using force was that the small state could count on aid and support from another great power.

103. But if these considerations have made for a good deal of independence of action on the part of some small states, they have not precluded the use or threat of force in many areas at different times over the past quarter century; for all that its use is widely condemned, military force is not yet obsolete or irrelevant to international politics, and no government's words and actions speak louder or more clearly to that effect than the USSR's.

104. In any case, the essential question here is not what we think of the limitations on military power as a political instrument, but what the Soviets think. There is considerable evidence that they have some respect for the climate of international attitudes described above. They may occupy an ally like Czechoslovakia or menace another Communist state like China, but they have for some time avoided saber rattling threats against small neighbors like Turkey and Iran. They can use gunboat diplomacy, as they showed off the coast of Ghana last year, but in general, when they want concessions from countries in the Third World, they have been more inclined to bargain than to threaten, and they have frequently been turned down, even by states heavily dependent on them. They may drive hard bargains with clients in the Third World like Egypt and Syria, but the record shows they *do* bargain—and so do the clients.

105. And in the few cases where the USSR has a clear military presence, as in Egypt, the involvement probably appears to the Soviet leaders as a mixture offering both benefits and liabilities. To the host country, the balance sheet may be reversed. Thus, access to naval facilities and the ability to station various air units in Egypt are no doubt seen by Moscow as military assets; by contrast, the need to re-equip Egyptian forces after their shattering defeat and the subsequent decision actively to commit Soviet personnel are probably viewed

as involving risks and expense even if justified on the other side of the ledger.

106. The problem of balancing costs and risks against gains in the Third World will continue to confront the Soviet leaders indefinitely. The record of the past 10 years suggests that they are cautious in these calculations, but it also shows they are capable of bold decisions when they consider the stakes high enough or their interests and prestige sufficiently involved—as in Egypt. Soviet involvement in Egypt is the most notable example of how a Soviet aid program developed over time into a substantial Soviet military presence. It illustrated a Soviet propensity in recent years for making greater use of its military resources in the Third World.

107. We have in this paper offered detailed judgments on capabilities and limitations of Soviet forces for conducting assaults in distant areas of the world. Direct assault, however, seems to be the least likely form in which the USSR would make any attempt to intervene in a distant area. The Soviet General Staff would appear to share this judgment, for the USSR does not appear to be developing rapidly the kinds of forces which could carry out a major operation against significant opposition far from home.

108. Past practice suggests that any future Soviet involvement would more likely come about as an outgrowth of a Soviet military aid program. What kinds of circumstances would favor the transition from an aid program to a situation of direct involvement of Soviet forces?

—First, some compelling circumstance, most likely an external threat, would seem to be a prerequisite to driving a potential client into deep dependence on the USSR. Most Third World politicians are nationalists who prize their countries' independence, and who would be inclined to accept So-

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viet forces on their territory only in extreme circumstances. For Castro, the compelling circumstance was fear of invasion. For Nasser, it was Israeli air raids.

—For the Soviets, the venture would have to represent a politically promising course of action. The needy client should not be in such desperate straits that he was beyond effective help. On the other hand, Moscow's stake in the client—in terms of amounts already invested and the extent to which the Soviet Union's prestige and world position were involved in his survival—would also be a factor in deciding on a course of action.

—The Soviets would almost certainly have to look at the prospective course of action as one which did not put the USSR itself in jeopardy. After all, even Khrushchev's missile deployment in Cuba would appear to have been undertaken on the assumption that the risks were manageable.

—Finally, opportunities to use the client's territory for Soviet purposes may be part of the calculation of costs and worth. The chance to deploy missiles in Cuba was no doubt more important to Moscow than the political goal of saving Castro. In the case of Egypt, basing of naval units and aircraft appears to have been a secondary, but still, important consideration.

109. The combination of circumstances leading to the stationing of Soviet forces in distant areas has, of course, been rare, and it is likely to remain so. It took a remarkable series of events, coincidences and accidents to produce exactly the right combination in Egypt.

Nevertheless, in recent years the Soviets have shown a greater propensity to think in terms of using their military resources in the Third World. In particular, the Soviets have been quick to use airlift for emergency deliveries of assistance to favored clients. Moreover, the line between aid programs and the involvement of Soviet personnel in foreign conflicts seems to be less sharply drawn than we might have thought five years ago—before we saw Soviet SAM sites in North Vietnam, the curious interlude of Soviet pilots flying combat missions in the Yemen, and the Soviet advisors in the field with Egyptian units.

110. The USSR's interests in expanding its power and influence around the world have been made abundantly clear. The Soviets can be expected to continue to exploit opportunities in Third World areas. Future decisions about involvement in particular situations, however, will no doubt be made case by case and in contexts not easy to predict. Several things, however, seem clear: the Soviets are not mounting an all-out program to acquire large-scale distant action capabilities on any urgent basis; they are steadily increasing their naval forces and improving certain auxiliary capabilities which give them more capacity for limited distant action than the negligible levels of the 1950s and early 1960s; this trend is likely to go on—at least in terms of developing capabilities—whether or not they are actually used; and given even a gradual growth of forces applicable in distant areas, opportunities may arise to use these forces for political effect—particularly if one or another government in the Third World should ask the Soviets for such assistance.

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