
3. Conventional arms transfers during the Soviet period

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I. Introduction

During the cold war the main feature of international relations was an active confrontation between two opposing social and economic systems: the capitalist and the socialist. The United States and the Soviet Union were the leading actors. The two systems confronted each other in the economic, diplomatic, ideological and military areas. The military confrontation assumed a variety of forms. These included threats and demonstrations of force, the arms race, and competitive military research and development and intelligence operations.

The cold war left few states unaffected. The disposition of political forces on the international scene changed further with the collapse of the colonial system and the formation of many new states. A number of states remained within the capitalist system even after winning independence and liberating themselves from colonial oppression. However, there were other states which adhered to a neutral status or leaned towards supporting the socialist system. Some states in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America took a further step and proclaimed their determination to build socialism. This process combined with the East–West competition set in train a struggle for a new division of the world, and the policies of the United States and the Soviet Union were intended to support the vitality of their allies and friendly regimes in various regions.

The cold war also involved military assistance to local wars and military confrontations, most often in the developing countries. Several regions in the world became areas of tension or ‘hot spots’. These hostile activities pervaded the whole structure of international life.

Against this background, each of the opposing systems attributed great importance to the supply of armaments and military equipment as an instrument of policy.

The economic and military potential of the Soviet Union was strong enough to produce armaments in sufficient quantity to meet the needs not only of its own armed forces but also of many other countries. The nature of Soviet military supplies derived from both domestic and foreign policy imperatives. Due account was paid to the military and political situation in the world and in various regions and to the military policy of the Western countries.

The pattern of conventional arms exports can be best examined if divided into three parts: (a) supplies to Soviet allies—members of the WTO and other socialist states; (b) supplies to those developing countries which adopted a

socialist orientation or pursued an anti-imperialist policy; and (c) supplies to various non-governmental political forces engaged in internal armed struggles against dictatorships and pro-imperialist states. These non-governmental forces included armed opposition groups struggling for power, national liberation movements and organizations fighting for independence and self-government.

The above classification is not perfect since in some cases the Soviet Union also supplied conventional armaments to forces involved in complicated conflicts that combined more than one of the features mentioned above. These different types of recipient are described in sections IV–VI below.

It will be useful first to describe the general features of Soviet military supplies.

II. General principles guiding Soviet military supplies

The factors guiding the USSR's conventional arms exports and the balance between different priorities were not fixed over the entire period of the cold war. Priorities changed depending on the military–political situation in the arms market, market conditions and the operational performance of particular models during different military conflicts. Special attention was devoted to the specific choice of a military–technical cooperation partner.

However, certain hard and fast general principles did apply throughout the period. The Soviet Union used conventional arms supplies to try to achieve its own political, military–strategic and economic goals. Political goals were the dominant factor when the decision to export conventional arms was taken.

Political factors

Account was taken of the following considerations: (a) the socio-political system of the customer state; (b) the coalition of states to which the customer belonged; (c) the purposes for which the conventional arms were sought; (d) the commitment of the customer state to maintain a certain political regime in the country; (e) the desire of the country to draw closer to the socialist system; and (f) the possibility of aggressive action by that country against other countries of the socialist system, those friendly to the Soviet Union or those tied to it by peace treaties. It was necessary to avoid any risk of being drawn into aggressive actions against friendly states.

The political dimension was analysed most thoroughly when a country requested conventional arms from the Soviet Union for the first time. The analysis covered not just the state of the country at that particular time but also the near-term and more distant prospects. In particular, it was considered whether the country would continue to adhere to a political course that satisfied the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community. In other words, the customer countries were evaluated from the standpoint of their political orientation. Special attention was focused on countries going through profound

socio-economic change. The requests of these countries for conventional arms supplies were considered with regard to the role, place and standing of the country in the overall world political process.

In decisions about conventional arms exports, preference was given to countries which adopted a socialist orientation, took an anti-imperialist attitude or were struggling for political and economic independence and the overthrow of dictatorships. Military supplies were of major importance for penetrating the political and ideological structures of many countries, winning new political allies and, in this way, providing support to the Soviet Union in the United Nations and other international organizations. As new states emerged in various regions as a result of the disintegration of the colonial system, the Soviet Union tried to fill vacant niches and used military supplies to maintain peace in regions of vital interest.

Dependence on Soviet weapons prevented a customer country from rapidly changing its policy and starting to buy arms from other countries. Many countries in Africa and the Middle East which equipped their armies with Soviet weapons now find that they cannot change to an arms supplier other than one of the members of the CIS.

As a rule the Soviet Union prevented arms from being exported to countries which could take aggressive actions that would destabilize the situation in a region. Arms were exported for defensive tasks. If there were sufficient negative aspects in evaluating these factors, requests for arms exports were rejected even if profitable. For example, when Syrian troops entered Lebanon in 1976—an action which was neither approved nor supported by the Soviet Union—this had an immediate effect on arms exports to Syria. Export supplies were temporarily suspended in spite of their great profitability for the Soviet Union and the number of military specialists in Syria was reduced. Profits were high but political and strategic reasons were decisive. Unfortunately, in some cases political errors were made.

Although pursuing economic interest was not the main objective of the Soviet Union—as has been stated, the emphasis was placed on political goals—many newly independent countries were rich in raw materials. The Middle East became a major export market for Soviet arms and appeared profitable from a financial point of view. Many countries of that region paid for weapons in the year of delivery and in hard currency, although in other cases even oil-producing states received arms against credit. In the late 1980s Czechoslovakia put forward an initiative to make economic relations with customers from the developing countries more fair. The Soviet Union opposed that initiative.

Even though conventional arms exports grew during the cold war period, the restraint shown was evident. In spite of requests by certain countries, the export of nuclear weapons and their components, components of chemical weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction was never allowed. Moreover, the Soviet Union did not export strategic missiles, military space equipment, weapons based on new physical principles, advanced missile technologies, long-range air-defence fighter–interceptor aircraft to countries with small

territories, nuclear-powered cruisers and submarines, heavy-calibre artillery, tactical missile systems and many other items.

There was also a list of states to which the export of weapons was forbidden which was periodically revised, depending on military–political conditions in one or another region of the world.

The restraint shown in conventional arms exports and the refusal to satisfy all requests were of major importance in preventing the cold war from escalating into a hot war. This restraint also prevented the development of large-scale arms production by other countries. Similarly, restraint in non-conventional technology transfer made it possible to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The arms exported included both modern models and updated but essentially obsolete models of earlier generations. The ratio between modern and obsolete models varied at different times between 50 : 50 and 70 : 30. However, obsolete models were often re-examined before transfer and updated to match systems adopted in the armies of possible aggressors for another 20–30 years.

The newest types of arms tended to be supplied in emergency situations and to countries playing an extremely important political and strategic role in particular regions. At the same time, the Soviet leadership recognized the possibility of the most modern weapons being seized and the USA acquiring them.

Holding the government monopoly over arms exports, the Soviet leadership took the greatest care of Soviet state security. Adequate steps were taken to provide for secrecy where improvements to the technical and combat characteristics of exported weapons and their combat capabilities were concerned.

Soviet arms supplies were kept strictly secret with no exceptions. At the same time, Soviet leaders spread propaganda concerning the peaceful nature of the socialist state through all available channels.

Weapon systems intended for export were produced with due regard to the need to oppose the weapons of enemy forces. While the performance of some types of arms supplied to the Soviet armed forces was better than that of the arms exported, the performance and combat capabilities of exported arms were often made public.

Decisions to reveal or conceal the characteristics of weapons had both advantages and disadvantages. This fact was taken into account in the arms export concept. The Soviet Union did not participate in arms exhibitions or trade fairs. As data on weapons were mostly secret, it was easy to maintain doubts about their actual performance characteristics. Opponents of Soviet weapon exports identified and exaggerated the shortcomings of weapons used in military conflicts, thus reducing their competitive strength in the world market and beating down their prices. That was the case with T-72C tanks in the 1980–88 Iraq–Iran War and the anti-aircraft missile systems used in the 1967, 1970 and 1973 Arab–Israeli wars. It was also the case in the 1991 Persian Gulf War when much was made of the US MIM-104 Patriot anti-aircraft missile system while its Soviet counterpart—the S-300 MMY-1 (or SA-10)—was disparaged. Many other examples may be found. In the cold war period Soviet arms and equip-

ment were regularly presented by the West as the worst in the world with the purpose of forcing the Soviet Union out of the arms market. However, there were some fields in which the Soviet Union lagged behind some other states. For example, it was seriously backward in electronics, miniaturized optical systems and some radio-electronic control systems.

At the same time the analysis of the impact of excessive secrecy on arms exports urged a fundamental revision of the arms export policy concept in the 1980s and 1990s. First the Soviet Union and then Russia became regular participants at military exhibitions, demonstrating the performance characteristics and describing the means of employment of Soviet weapons. Recently Russia has participated actively in arms exhibitions in Chile, China, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and other countries. This openness has made it possible to clear away suspicions about the quality of arms being exported and, under those conditions, Russia's chances of success in the struggle for markets have become equal to or even better than those of other countries. Many types of arms and military equipment have become known worldwide and won praise in many countries.

The superiority of Soviet weapons was proved by their successful use in military conflicts at various levels and times. The performance of Soviet military equipment in some wars surpassed that of foreign counterparts. Examples include the Kalashnikov and other assault rifles, the ZSU-23 Shilka anti-aircraft system, T-62 and T-72C tanks, some types of artillery, the MiG family of combat aircraft, anti-aircraft missile systems such as the S-75 Dvina (SA-2) and S-200 Angara (SA-5), and several types of diesel-powered submarines and surface ships. Soviet arms proved to be simple in use and highly reliable yet had high performance characteristics.

During the cold war Soviet weapons showed their worth in local wars in Korea and Viet Nam and in the Arab–Israeli wars. Apart from Soviet allies in Europe, North Korea, North Viet Nam and some Arab states were the principal purchasers of Soviet weapons. As a result of close military–technical cooperation, 70–90 per cent of the weapons in service in these countries were Soviet-made. In the cold war years developing countries, particularly in the Arab world, occupied a leading position as markets for Soviet arms exports because they could produce extra profits for the Soviet Union. It is notable that the same countries remain the principal debtors of Russia as the legal successor of the Soviet Union.¹

Local wars and military conflicts did more than give impulse to an expansion of the arms market. A side-effect was the re-export of Soviet arms to third countries. Using both legal and illegal means, some countries went ahead with re-export of arms, thus gaining political, economic and financial dividends. As

¹ See chapter 4, table 4.5 in this volume. According to Vladimir Belskiy, spokesman for the Africa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African countries owe Russia about \$20 billion. Researchers at the Russian Academy of Science have estimated that most of this sum is owed for weapons. Klomegah, K., 'Moscow wants back Soviet loans to Africa', *St Petersburg Times*, 15 Nov. 1996 (in English).

a result, some kinds of weapon—particularly small arms and artillery—appeared in countries banned as destinations for Soviet arms exports. The most intensive and widespread activities of this kind took place during military conflicts and local wars.

Some countries resold weapons exported from the Soviet Union to opposition forces in other countries. For example, China exported Soviet weapons to the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the National Liberation Front of Eritrea (NLFE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Ethiopia. The opposition forces of Sudan received weapons from Ethiopia. The opposition in Chad bought arms from Libya and Sudan. The Arab countries supplied weapons to Sudan. As recently as 1995 Ecuador used Soviet weapons bought from Nicaragua in its war with Peru.

The cold war brought about the militarization of many countries. Some countries of Africa, Western Europe and the Middle East that had no armed forces of any significance became involved in modernization during the cold war, formed national armies and provided them with modern arms and military equipment. Military conflicts and local wars that were unleashed in various regions of the world subsequently accelerated the process. During the 1960s and 1970s entire regions became heavily militarized—for example, in Europe, the Middle East and parts of the Asia-Pacific region. Many of these countries bought their military equipment from the Soviet Union.

The intensive militarization of countries and the creation of militarized zones through Soviet arms exports was not a one-sided phenomenon. The scale of arms export activity was proportional to the threat that a particular state faced as estimated by specialists. For example, Viet Nam armed itself in response to US aggression while the militarization of the Arab states was a response to the build-up of armed forces in Israel.

Strategic factors

The suppliers of arms took account of military-strategic factors. For example, another important reason for militarization in the Middle East was the fact that the Arab and in particular the Persian Gulf states were the main source of oil and natural gas. The struggle for control over sources of raw materials, including threats of and even the actual use of force, intensified there.

The main and decisive consideration in this field was to prevent the security of the Soviet Union and socialist countries from being undermined. Requests for Soviet arms were thoroughly studied and analysed at the Ministry of Defence so as to avoid concentrations of weapons near the borders of the WTO and to rule out the possibility of aggression against Soviet allies. Each type of arms could be exported strictly on the condition that the requesting country was included on the list of regions allowed for the export of a given system.

Arms were also exported with due regard to the interests of the WTO countries, including their security, the impact on their military potential and relations with third countries that wished to purchase Soviet weapons. In some cases the

Soviet Union asked an ally for advice on a possible arms export to a certain country. If the ally disapproved of the export and saw it as a threat to its security, the advice not to export was followed.

In the 1970s and 1980s wars in various regions became an integral part of the world military–political situation, mostly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Wars in Central and Latin America were less frequent. The Soviet Union provided military aid to many countries engaged in wars since its military policies and those of the United States were directed at expanding their spheres of influence and creating a favourable political and military–strategic situation.

Supplies of military equipment were intended to provide favourable conditions in various theatres of war in case a world war was set off or to produce favourable military conditions in a local war should the forces of the Soviet Union or other socialist countries become involved. The equipment needs of states with an important strategic and geopolitical position had high priority. Military cooperation with armies of other countries (including training of their personnel) promoted favourable conditions for the development of the Soviet armed forces and for improving arms and military equipment.

The cold war years were marked by an active struggle by the Soviet Union and the United States for military and political superiority both at the global level and in particular theatres of potential conflict. The performance of military equipment supplied to one or other country by the Soviet Union was compared with the performance of analogous systems used in the armies of potential enemies. An important intelligence priority was therefore to know more about the types of weapon used by the customer's enemies. As the need arose, measures were taken to supply new arms of better quality and higher performance or to improve and modernize existing equipment.

The Soviet military leaders were well informed about the military doctrines and military potential of the customer countries as well as those of potential enemies. In the course of official talks the Soviet side might recommend the type and quantity of arms that were most advantageous to the customer. For example, it was often recommended that arms to counter specific capabilities—anti-aircraft, anti-tank and other systems—should be purchased. Requests did not always correspond to recipient countries' strategic needs, and in these cases Soviet military leaders had to persuade the military representatives of customers to take a more rational and well thought-out position.

There were rare cases when high-ranking Soviet officers effectively forced other countries to buy what they recommended. For example, when South Yemen on one occasion requested the supply of a gunship the Soviet military leaders instead forced it to buy a command version of a large landing ship although it did not fit in with the military doctrine of South Yemen.

Usually, however, the customer took the final decision after detailed consideration of all the political, military and economic factors. It was not unusual for the customer to advance arguments to reduce the prices for weapons. To help in the correct selection of arms for export, the weapons were demonstrated to a delegation of representatives from the customer. Such demonstrations allowed

the customer to evaluate the performance of the equipment including advantages and limitations, service conditions in various types of climate, and principles and methods of its use in combat. As the need arose (at the request of the customer) the Soviet side demonstrated the functions of the equipment, for instance, by live firing or launching of missiles. Representatives of the community of socialist countries were invited to attend numerous live-fire exercises and manoeuvres.

Experts of both the sellers and the buyers studied the following aspects of any transfer thoroughly: the need for a certain type of arms; the conditions for maintenance; and combat use in the given region or theatre of war. Modifications and improvements were introduced when needed. If the purchasing country was unable to provide long-term service and repair of the arms delivered, the Soviet Union also provided the necessary military–technical assistance. Systems were chosen to ensure that the repair of equipment exported was not too complicated, could be done quickly and required only small quantities of spare parts. Exports also involved exporting the means to repair, test and adjust equipment. Some countries were helped with building repair bases for medium and major repairs of the arms purchased after the expiry of the overhaul period stated in the agreement. In considering the abilities of the recipient properly to master and use arms supplied one factor was the possibility of training personnel either in educational establishments in-country or in the Soviet Union.

Arms for export were selected with regard to the capabilities of the customer to standardize and support them. In particular, attempts were made to maintain consistency with the armament and ordnance of the customer's armed forces.

Circumstances are particularly favourable for selling arms after one side is defeated in a war and takes measures to strengthen its military power by, among other things, buying new arms and military equipment. The Soviet Union and the USA took that fact into account when supplying arms to other countries.

Economic factors

The arms and equipment that were in most demand by foreign recipients were also prominent in Soviet state orders to manufacturers. In this way arms exports supported state defence orders which, in turn, made it possible to maintain highly skilled personnel and develop new weapon models. The powerful military–industrial complex of the Soviet Union had an overall positive effect on the economy of Russia. Its achievements in the military industrial field were promptly introduced into heavy industry. Winning markets for armaments also allowed the Soviet Union access to sources of strategic raw materials.

Estimates of the financial solvency of the partner were closely connected with political and military–strategic considerations. The prices for transfers which could bring political benefit to the Soviet Union were reduced. However, this was compensated for by prices charged to partners which were not considered so important. Sales opportunities were studied thoroughly. The financial reserves, raw material base and other material resources of the customer were

estimated. In evaluating the transfer one thing to be found out was whether the partner could pay for military articles promptly when the deal was made or whether a period of grace was needed.

The decisive consideration in the economic estimation was to maximize profits and to cover the costs of manufacturing, expanding production and transport and other costs, regardless of the socio-political system of the customer. This approach could be modified if there were particular reason to take another view. Prices for exported equipment were based on world prices for that kind of product. Some commercial methods were used to maximize profits, such as the granting of credit, barter and trade through third countries or through agents. Sometimes obsolete arms and military equipment were transferred at no charge to the acquiring country, but subsequent supplies of spare parts for these items were subject to payment, thus compensating over the long term for the cost of the original material. The desire to obtain maximum profits determined a number of terms and conditions.

In exceptional cases, decisions were made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Council of Ministers to export arms at reduced prices or hand them over free of charge. These were minor shipments of arms, most frequently small arms and spare parts. The costs of such supplies were compensated for by increasing the prices of and taking additional profits from exports of more complicated and up-to-date arms. Sometimes compensation came through the state budget. Most frequently, the arms supplied free of charge were destined for armed groups struggling for power and those representing national liberation movements.

As manufacturing enterprises belonged to the state, priority was given to state interests in allocating revenue. Profits from exports were put into the state budget and made up one part of state revenues but a small percentage was used to cover the costs incurred by state organizations and ministries during the process of managing the export: for example, the costs of modifying weapons for export, carrying out servicing and repair, transporting weapons, and providing escort and protection could be directly recovered. Orders were allocated with regard to enterprises' workload and the employment of labour resources.

Particular attention was paid to obtaining profits to be used for scientific research and experimental designs. These and other economic factors were thoroughly analysed and evaluated prior to signing a contract.

The trading organizations that were directly involved in arms trade (which are described more fully in section III of this chapter) were interested in selling equipment at higher prices. They received interest from earnings to compensate for their expenses during the conclusion of contracts and as a result they were interested in larger volumes and values of supplies.

The manufacturers of export-oriented military items and their supervising ministries were not directly engaged in the arms trade. They received a state order to produce arms and military equipment and finance from the government to fulfil it. It was not important for the manufacturer or the ministry whether the article produced was to be used by the Soviet armed forces or exported abroad.

Military articles manufactured were always paid for by the state in Soviet roubles. Neither the manufacturers nor the ministries had any role in looking for cooperation partners.

The interest of the manufacturer was in timely production of high-quality articles in order to receive stable payments from the state. The volume of military orders to the manufacturer determined the level of payments: more money was given for larger orders and, correspondingly, minor orders meant less money and lower profits. Manufacturers producing military articles, particularly those making finished items, were always overloaded with orders. This was the socialist method of managing production, with its positive and negative sides.

The assertion that the Soviet Union supplied a substantial or even a greater part of its military equipment free of charge—in particular to the socialist countries or to countries which declared their determination to build socialism—is not true. The fact that the majority of deals were not free of charge is demonstrated by the tens of billions of dollars which customers still owe Russia as the legal successor of the Soviet Union. Some countries did, however, receive free of charge some samples of arms or individual weapons given as presents.

The WTO countries were not supplied with weapons free of charge. Each package supplied was backed by a contract that stipulated all the conditions of the deal. However, it is true that the prices established for the weapons were only to recover the primary costs and that cash payment in foreign currency was rare. To a great extent those deals were of a barter nature, weapons being exchanged for industrial and agricultural goods. It is also the case that debts were supposed to be paid over long periods of time and in some cases were remitted.

The debts that Russia now owes to the countries of the former WTO are good evidence of the fact that all supplies were backed by contracts. At the time when the WTO was dissolved not all weapon supplies for which payment had been made in advance were complete. Upon the dissolution of the WTO those countries which had not received deliveries declared that Russia, being the legal successor of the USSR, had to repay the outstanding debts. Under the same system of accounting some former members of the WTO owe debts to Russia.

As far as other socialist countries are concerned, most of the supplies were of a credit nature and aimed at developing international economic cooperation. In addition the credits were used as a tool of economic and political influence on the debtors. However, some transactions based on financial compensation also took place with these states.

Commercial credit was the basic means of settling the accounts for weapons and combat *matériel* supplies to Cuba. Credits were granted to Cuba for periods that allowed repayment over 10–15 years and even on occasion 20 years with interest at 1 or 2 per cent per annum and with a price discount. There were certainly favourable conditions in the trading of weapons, but these weapons were not given to Cuba free of charge. Barter was widely used as well. Soviet ships carried military products to Cuba and took back Cuban sugar, citrus fruits, coffee and other goods.

The presence of Soviet military advisers and specialists in Cuba and the training of Cuban military personnel in military institutions of the Soviet Ministry of Defence were also governed by contracts. This kind of assistance was paid for either in hard currency or by supplies of consumer goods from Cuba.

Another of the socialist countries, North Korea, paid for Soviet military supplies. During certain periods of the Korean War supplies were sent with a 50 per cent discount and repayment was by instalment.

The prices of weapons supplied to North Korea were not constant over time and during the period 1947–50 were changed several times. The prices for small arms and artillery were set in March 1947 but new prices were introduced in January 1949. Prices were doubled for mortars, increasing by 180 per cent for 76-mm calibre towed guns and 190 per cent for 76-mm calibre self-propelled guns. In 1950, the following prices were in effect: for a 120-mm calibre mortar, 10 200 roubles; for a 76-mm calibre towed gun, 23 050 roubles; for a 122-mm calibre howitzer, 54 100 roubles; for a 95-mm calibre anti-aircraft gun, 93 600 roubles; for a 7.62-mm calibre rifle, 266 roubles; for a 7.62-mm calibre carbine, 289 roubles; for a projectile for a 76-mm calibre gun, 103 roubles; for one round for a 122-mm calibre mortar, 221 roubles; and for a round for the main gun of a T-34 tank, 224 roubles.

In the period 1947–49 the prices for aircraft changed three times. In 1949, they were: for a Il-10, 641 500 roubles; for a Yak-18, 183 500 roubles; and for a PO-2, 56 726 roubles. In 1950 the cost of one T-34 tank ranged from 142 000 to 197 000 roubles depending on where it was manufactured.

North Korea paid for part of its weapon supplies in gold. It also supplied scrap lead and lead concentrate to the Soviet Union. On 26 March 1951, Soviet Prime Minister Joseph Stalin received a coded cable from Kim Il Sung, head of the North Korean communist administration, with the information that 1710 tonnes of lead had already been sent to the Soviet Union—210 tonnes more than planned under the agreement. In addition, Kim Il Sung assured Stalin that 5500 tonnes of lead would be dispatched to the Soviet Union by August 1951.²

At the present time no debt-repayment formula has been found for some countries and several are trying by every possible means to avoid paying their debts to Russia.

Forms of payment

The form of payment for equipment exported also depended on conclusions made in the course of analysing the political and military–strategic factors. The specific forms of payment varied.

The forms of payment for export supplies were: (a) cash payment in US dollars promptly on delivery; (b) payment by instalments; (c) payment by barter; (d) part payment in cash, either in dollars or in the local currency of the buyer, on delivery and part payment by barter; (e) payment against credit;

² Letter of Kim Il Sung to Joseph Stalin, 26 June 1951, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars: Washington, DC, winter 1995/96), p. 63.

(f) part payment by instalments in cash, part on credit and part payment by barter; and (g) various combinations of these forms of payment depending on what the purchasing country could afford and how profitable the deal was for the USSR.

The form of payment was chosen to achieve a number of goals. Political, military and economic factors were an essential basis for this choice and included: (a) the level of development of the customer country; (b) the prospect for a long-term partnership; and (c) the aims of the customer in buying military equipment.

Each deal or contract took account of the direct profit and was normally analysed by economic experts to this end. If the results of such an analysis were unsatisfactory, the deal was rejected in its existing form and appropriate changes and additional terms were introduced into the contract by agreement between the parties.

The starting-point for setting prices for exported arms was the total cost of manufacturing, demonstration and transport and the profit required to replenish the state budget. The cost of each item to be supplied was negotiated with the military cooperation partner and entered in the contract. Where arms and spare parts were obtained from the Soviet Ministry of Defence, the price included the costs of preparing them for export, adapting them for export, transport and delivery.

III. Decision-making procedures in the Soviet Union

In the Soviet Union during the cold war period the monopoly in trade in weapons belonged to the state. All questions and transactions related to weapon exports were handled only by state organizations. The decision-making system was intended to ensure that decisions strictly reflected the policy and ideology of the Soviet state. The system forbade trading organizations from exporting weapons independently.

At the same time, the practical measures for arms exports had to be flexible enough to be easily controlled given the large number of applications for Russian armaments.

The majority of applications and requests from recipient states were received by the Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which exercised direct rule over all state bodies of the country. It was stipulated that in the countries of the socialist commonwealth political authority also belonged to the communist or workers' parties. Hence it was natural for their leaderships to address such requests, as a rule, to the Politburo. Some applications were received directly by one or other individual member of the Politburo. These were considered as official and as far as possible were satisfied. Finally, applications were sometimes received by parts of the government—the Council of Ministers of the USSR—such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and state organizations which traded in weapons. The Ministry of Defence took a special place in the reception of applications.

Delegations from foreign countries, especially developing countries, as a rule brought with them applications for purchase of weapons. Requests for purchase of weapons were almost always addressed to the Minister of Defence, who had no rights to export weapons but transmitted the requests to the government or to trading organizations.

There was a strict order for decision making on exports of weapons. The Politburo decided the list of countries to which export of weapons was authorized and the categories of weapons permitted for export. Separate decisions were required from the Politburo concerning countries not already on the list.

Each specific agreement with a given country was issued either in the form of a decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers together or, under the instruction of the Central Committee, by the Council of Ministers alone. All decrees were first coordinated in an inter-agency body including the State Planning Commission (Gosudarstvennaya planovaya komissiya, Gosplan), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and trading organizations. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence were as a rule members of the Politburo.

The Military Industrial Commission of Gosplan participated directly in preparing the decrees of the Central Committee and of the Council of Ministers on exports of arms and military equipment. As Gosplan directly supervised defence industries, it decided the timetable and terms for manufacturing and delivering arms and military equipment for export.

In the period between 1950 and 1970, and especially in the years of maximum export deliveries to socialist and developing countries, the state order for industry was planned by Gosplan and the Ministry of Defence together. The order consisted of two parts. The first and main part of the order was to support the needs of the Soviet armed forces and to create stocks that could be required in case of war. This part of the order was financed from the state budget using the resources allocated for defence. The other part consisted of arms and military equipment for export. The share of export deliveries in the overall state order was between 3 and 12 per cent at different times. This part of the order was partly financed from the state budget and partly from the budget of trading organizations (at different times, the Central Engineering Directorate (Glavnoye inzhenernoye upravleniye, GIU), the Central Technical Directorate (Glavnoye tekhnicheskoye upravleniye, GTU) and the Central Directorate of Collaboration and Cooperation (Glavnoye upravleniye po sotrudnichestvu i kooperatsii, GUSK). Using the arms allocated under the state order, trading organizations accumulated stocks of arms and military equipment at warehouses from which items were delivered for export. The trading organizations were obliged to repay to the state budget the equivalent of the resources used in the manufacture of arms after the completion of a sale.

In cases where it was impossible to manufacture arms for export by the time fixed, equipment could be taken from the stocks of the Ministry of Defence by agreement between the ministry and Gosplan. These items were compensated for by new production from industry—consisting of the latest models.

Spare parts, fittings and some particularly sophisticated weapon systems were delivered by the Ministry of Defence through trading organizations. From the profit on such transactions 1–5 per cent was deducted to meet the costs of the trading organizations. Of the rest, the Ministry of Defence was obliged to sell 50 per cent of any currency received to the state at the appropriate rouble exchange rate. The money received by the Ministry of Defence—either in foreign currency or the rouble equivalent—was spent essentially on improvement of the living conditions of personnel, the construction of housing, and the development of repair and workshop facilities in the main and central directorates of the armed forces.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had information about the foreign and security policy intentions of the state purchasing the armaments and drafted conclusions about the course of Soviet foreign policy concerning that country.

The Ministry of Defence participated in the decision with the intention of preventing the creation of force groupings in various regions or countries which could threaten the military security of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist commonwealth. The ministry compared the tactical and technical characteristics of the arms exported with the weapons and equipment of the Soviet armed forces: they should not be better than those of weapons adopted for service in the Soviet armed forces. The export of the most modern models of equipment was therefore not, as a rule, permitted. The Ministry of Defence also ensured that equipment exported to one end-user was not re-exported to countries that had not been authorized to receive them. For this purpose an end-user certificate was required from buyers.

The decree or decision adopted usually specified which organizations, departments and ministries were responsible for different aspects of its fulfilment.

Only such a decree or decision could be the basis for foreign trade activities involving the export of arms and military equipment. Without one, orders from trading organizations for the transport and support of equipment were not accepted, the Ministry of Defence would not issue an end-user certificate, and weapons would not be allowed to cross the border by customs and the border security services. In this way there was a harmonious and clear system for taking decisions which excluded any unauthorized deliveries by trading organizations, factories and manufacturers or any other organization, department or ministry.

Trading organizations concluded contracts with the buyer countries based on the decrees and decisions reached by the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. These agreements could be either standard contracts or more complex contracts. Standard contracts referred to a single act of purchase and sale without additional obligations or conditions.

Most standard contracts were concluded with countries of the socialist commonwealth. Many military experts and officers from these countries had received training in the educational system administered by the Soviet Ministry of Defence and were familiar with many terms and concepts. This also eased the use of Soviet troops on the territory of allies to help master arms and mili-

tary equipment. To help allies master and use effectively complexes of arms and equipment such as rocket battalions or anti-aircraft missile regiments, the Ministry of Defence, on the basis of a decision of the government, established educational centres and training grounds with their own equipment on the territory of the USSR. Military units from socialist countries held exercises and live firing.

In this way standard contracts were transformed into a system of managing mutual relations in the field of military–technical cooperation with allies. This permitted not only standardization of equipment systems but also common practices for supporting arms and equipment. This, in turn, simplified the system of combat maintenance and supply and promoted the accumulation of stocks of war *matériel* necessary for defensive and offensive operations.

Complex contracts for deliveries of arms and military equipment were concluded with developing countries. These included contractual obligations for maintenance in combat-ready condition, the supply of spare parts over a long time-period, the sending of military advisers and experts to the buyer, the training of personnel in the military colleges of the Soviet Ministry of Defence, the transfer of special and technical literature, and the development of basic repair facilities.

To maintain arms and military equipment in combat-ready condition it was necessary to supply ammunition, petroleum, oil and lubricants, and test and tuning equipment. In order for the receiving country to be able to master the weapons quickly, Soviet military advisers and experts were sent who were able to teach a domestic cadre to exploit, use and maintain arms and military equipment directly in combat units. In a more long-term perspective, these advisers helped create training units and training colleges.

A special part of the complex contracts regulated deliveries of spare parts. Spare parts were delivered as part of a repair complex along with weapons. However, conditions for deliveries over a long period were stipulated in the contract. The dependence on spare parts ‘attached’ the buyer country to the Soviet Union in its military–technical cooperation. Deliveries of spare parts were complicated because production was not as profitable for industry. These difficulties were overcome and spare parts were delivered regularly in accordance with orders.

Complex contracts were expedient as they allowed profits to be received directly at the moment of delivery and also against future production.

Industrial enterprises, design bureaux and the Ministry of Defence Industry, which all received allocations from the state budget, played no role in trading in weapons and were forbidden to do so. In the case of design bureaux there were more rigid regulations specifically for them. Many designers had no right to go abroad, in order to prevent any outflow of this type of information.

The management of work at enterprises which produced arms and military equipment was carried out by ministries and departments which, taken together, constituted the military–industrial complex. Nine ministries were principally involved: the Ministry of Air Industry, Ministry of General Mechanical Engi-

earing (Minobshchemash), Ministry of Defence Industry (Minoboronprom), Ministry of Mechanical Engineering (Minmash), Ministry of Radio Industry (Minradioprom), Ministry of Communication Industry (Minpromsvyaz), Ministry of Electronic Industry (Minelektroprom), Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry (Minsudprom) and Ministry of Light Mechanical Engineering (Minsredmash). Some military production was also undertaken by enterprises subordinated to the Ministry of Heavy Transport Mechanical Engineering, Ministry of Road and Municipal Mechanical Engineering, Ministry of Tractor and Agricultural Mechanical Engineering and Ministry of Electrotechnical Industry. These ministries executed the state order for industry, which they received from Gosplan as far as it affected military production through their management of enterprises. They were also responsible for coordinating orders placed with other ministries for parts used in manufacturing military equipment such as electric motors, storage batteries or measuring and control devices.

The evolution of administrative arrangements for arms exports

The direct administration of Soviet weapon exports was carried out by specially created trading organizations. These had their own history of development, and during the cold war they were powerful organizations in their own right.

The first special division for military–technical cooperation was developed in 1921—the Department of External Orders of the National Commissariat on Military and Naval Affairs. It directed the activity of engineering departments that were attached to the trade agencies of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) abroad. These departments carried out purchases of military and other property on behalf of the Soviet Government. In 1939 the Department of External Orders was brought within the structure of the National Commissariat of Foreign Trade under the general title ‘Engineering’. During World War II the Engineering Department supervised lend-lease deliveries of military equipment from Canada, the UK and the USA; later it administered the credits given to the Soviet Union by its allies within the anti-Hitler coalition. In 1942 it became the Engineering Directorate and its size and resources were increased as required by the increasing amount of work.

During the cold war the volume of export deliveries of arms and military equipment, the number of different types of equipment exported and the quantity of services rendered to foreign countries for military purposes increased greatly. In this context, by an order of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 8 May 1953, the GIU was created on the basis of the Engineering Directorate of the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Trade. The GIU consisted of specialized divisions which could decide complex questions of military–technical cooperation professionally. In 1955 it was included in the structure of the newly formed Central Directorate of Economic Cooperation with Countries of Socialist Democracy. In 1957 it became a division of the State Committee for External Economic Cooperation of the Council of Ministers.

After World War II the GIU executed the reparations required of Germany and deliveries of military property, arms and military equipment to the armed forces of the European socialist countries.

In 1950–60 construction for military purposes in foreign countries was considerably expanded. Airfields, training grounds, educational centres and repair factories were usually lacking and were built with the help of Soviet experts and equipment. In 1968 the GTU was created on the basis of some of the divisions of the GIU in order to manage this work. Also in 1968, GUSK was set up to improve cooperative links with the members of the WTO on questions of joint manufacture of arms and military equipment and their standardization.

In 1988, within the framework of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the State Committee on External Economic Relations of the Council of Ministers, a new body was created, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations (MFER), incorporating the GIU, the GTU and GUSK with all their rights and responsibilities.

IV. Military supplies to socialist countries

The socialist countries, especially the WTO countries, were the leading recipients of Soviet weapons and combat *matériel*. They enjoyed a privileged place in the military market of the Soviet Union. This could be explained by the political basis of the coalition—the protection of common interests in the event of combat action through joint efforts. An aggression against any member of the WTO was considered to be an aggression against all its members. The WTO member states were equipped with this in mind and, in addition, a considerable part of their forces and means was allocated to a joint command which would conduct a military operation. Large strategic formations consisted of units from different countries of the treaty organization. All member states had standard weapons and combat *matériel*, which simplified the procedures of command, logistics, maintenance and manufacture of spare parts.

All states participating in the manufacture of weapons and combat *matériel* adhered strictly to standardized production based on cooperation in manufacture. Assembly plants in member states were supplied with sub-assemblies and units (such as case blanks, engines, weapon systems and communication facilities) from other treaty partners. The weapons were mostly Soviet designs.

As a rule, cooperatively produced weapons were exported to other socialist countries. Export to a developing country required the exporter to get an export licence from the original manufacturer. The countries licensed to export Soviet-made weapons were Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Romania and, to a lesser extent, Hungary. Some of these states also re-exported surplus weapons and combat *matériel* bought from the Soviet Union.

Production, co-production, supply, export and re-export were integrated in a common military–industrial complex. Policy for this complex where weapons and combat *matériel* were concerned was worked out in the Headquarters of the

Joint Armed Forces of the WTO. The profits earned through exports were spent on the national needs of the exporter.

Cooperation in manufacturing enabled WTO member states to develop new types of weapon and replace one generation of weapons with another quickly and reliably. Although they enjoyed a priority position, the socialist countries were never supplied with weapons of mass destruction. They were, however, in possession of the means of delivery—missile complexes and aircraft—of tactical nuclear weapons. Nuclear ammunition was in the custody of Soviet armed forces stores and was to be issued only in extraordinary circumstances with special permission and approval from the highest political level.

Exports of weapons and combat *matériel* to socialist countries outside the WTO were handled in almost the same way. However, with these countries there was no cooperation in the manufacturing of weapons and less attention to standardization.

Newly independent socialist countries received large shipments of all types of weapon and combat *matériel* from the Soviet Union.

The Korean People's Army (KPA) was founded in 1946 and the Soviet Union then began deliveries of weapons and combat *matériel*. In 1947, 17 362 rifles and carbines, 5816 sub-machine-guns, 268 mortars and 234 artillery pieces were supplied to North Korea. On 1 June 1949 the KPA had 36 622 rifles and carbines, 345 mortars, 352 artillery pieces, 64 tanks and 48 combat aircraft. On 1 January 1950 these numbers had increased to 43 371 rifles and carbines, 442 mortars, 515 artillery pieces, 151 tanks and 89 combat aircraft. The Soviet Union also helped North Korea establish a small fleet which included 3 hunter-killers, 5 torpedo boats, 3 minesweepers, 6 patrol boats, and 60 schooners and launches. By March 1950 the ambassador of the Soviet Union to North Korea reported to Moscow that the KPA had been fully equipped with Soviet weapons and combat *matériel*.

The Soviet Union also played a great role in creating the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). In 1949 the PLA received 360 anti-aircraft guns (sufficient to equip 10 anti-aircraft artillery regiments), 332 aircraft, 32 radio stations of different types, 130 telephone sets and 196 parachutes. In February 1950, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, sent a letter to Stalin in which he asked for further supplies of weapons and combat *matériel*. On 27 February 1950, Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolay Bulganin discussed this request with Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and, in March 1950, it was decided to supply China with naval *matériel* in the third quarter of the year. This included 4 minesweepers, 52 patrol boats and naval aircraft worth a total of 460 million roubles. Chinese air divisions were equipped with Soviet-made aircraft, specifically the MiG-15, La-9, Il-10, Il-28 and Tu-2. Also in March 1950 the decision was taken to send China 450 aircraft (a single delivery of 184 aircraft was made in June 1950). In May 1950, 235 railway wagons loaded with ammunition and 92 with spare parts were sent to the PLA.

A great deal of assistance was given by the Soviet Union to countries of the socialist community during wars and military conflicts in which they were

engaged. North Korea and Viet Nam are examples. In both cases the Soviet Union provided not only arms but also other forms of military assistance, including the direct participation of Soviet forces in combat roles. In exchange it received information about the performance of its own systems in combat (which was valuable for improving their capabilities). It was also very interested to receive examples of US equipment captured during military operations.³

On 25 June 1950, North Korea attacked South Korea and the Korean War began. It lasted until July 1953. Documents now available show that the war efforts of North Korea and of the Chinese forces which later assisted in combat operations were almost entirely underwritten by the Soviet Union. North Korea fought with Soviet-made weapons. The quantity and types of weapons and combat *matériel* supplied corresponded to the objectives of the war and to the specific requirements of the combat actions anticipated. Military supplies were also needed to compensate for the great losses suffered by the KPA and materials for maintenance of equipment in the field, such as oil and lubricants, were also sent from the Soviet Union.⁴

During the first stage of the war (25 June–24 September 1950) North Korean units carried out successful offensive operations, seizing Seoul, the capital of South Korea, and inflicting a heavy defeat on US and South Korean forces in the process of reaching Pusan. In this period of the war intensive supplies of Soviet combat *matériel* began. On the 10th day of the war the decision was taken to send North Korea 32 self-propelled guns, 310 mortars, 248 artillery pieces, 84 anti-aircraft guns, 50 000 rifles and carbines, 705 sub-machine-guns, 68 000 mortar bombs, 82 000 rounds of artillery ammunition, 15 000 rounds of tank ammunition and 128 radio systems. On 29 July 1950, 124 aircraft were sent to North Korea and 130 tanks were sent under a directive issued on 4 July. The armed forces of North Korea received equipment of the first rank including the latest model T-34 tank.⁵

Despite the success of the offensive, the KPA was suffering heavy losses, amounting to 40 per cent of its artillery and 50 per cent of its tanks. On 22–24 August 1950 the Soviet Council of Ministers decided to supply weapons and combat *matériel* to North Korea as a matter of urgency. Within the framework of that decision North Korea was sent 110 aircraft, 150 tanks, 100 self-propelled guns, 480 mortars, 674 artillery pieces and 53 anti-aircraft guns.

³ According to a recent volume based on archives of the CPSU. Gaiduk, I. V., *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, Ill., 1996).

⁴ By early 1951 tens of thousands of tonnes of petrol, diesel lubricant, brake-oil and grease were being transferred to Chinese and Korean forces each month. Ciphred telegram from Zhou Enlai to Stalin, 16 Nov. 1950, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), p. 49.

⁵ Chang-II Ohn, 'Military objectives and strategies of two Koreas in the Korean War', Paper prepared for *The Korean War: An Assessment of the Historical Record* (Georgetown University: Washington, DC, 24–25 July 1995), p. 10. [Editor's note. This was a contrast with the equipment initially supplied to the People's Republic of China, most of which was surplus equipment that had been produced during World War II. Only rocket artillery was of the latest generation. I would like to acknowledge Milton Leitenberg and the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC, for much detailed information and primary documents related to the Korean War.]

Table 3.1. The value of Soviet military aid to North Korea, 1949–51^a

Figures are in thousand current roubles.

Year	General	Air Force	Armoured force	Chief Artillery Department
1949	249 962	195 293	..	51 388
1950	869 677	347 757	1 238	383 164
1951	2 612 822	1 182 044	179 253	881 585

^a Total military aid including aid to the air force, the armoured forces, artillery forces and unspecified recipients.

Source: Goncharov, S. N., Lewis, J. W. and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, Calif., 1993), p. 147.

During the second stage of the war (25 September–24 October 1950) there was an urgent need to form new divisions quickly and equip them with aircraft, tanks and artillery after US and South Korean forces counter-attacked and reached northern areas of North Korea near the Chinese border. The KPA left 200 tanks behind in South Korea during its retreat. On 27 September the Soviet Minister of Defence, Marshal A. M. Vasilevskiy, contacted Stalin with a proposal to form and equip six new infantry divisions urgently. Stalin granted permission and 600 artillery pieces, 630 mortars, 40 000 rifles and 12 000 sub-machine-guns were dispatched to North Korea. In September–October 1950, 80 fighter aircraft, 20 000 anti-tank mines, 40 000 anti-personnel mines and 100 000 overcoats were supplied.

During the third stage of the war (25 October 1950–July 1953) Chinese volunteers joined combat operations. US and South Korean forces retreated from the territory of North Korea and the armed forces of the warring parties conducted combat operations in areas close to the 38th parallel. In November 1950, the North Korean air forces received 24 Yak-9 fighter aircraft and 15 PO-2 aircraft (used for night-time missions).⁶ In the same month Stalin approved the creation of a North Korean air division equipped with MiG-15 fighters and a bomber regiment equipped with Tu-2 bombers.⁷ In December 1950, Stalin gave an order to send weapons and combat *matériel* sufficient for nine new infantry divisions. The supplies included 940 mortars, 900 artillery pieces, 59 000 rifles and carbines. In May and June 1951 additional shipments were approved.⁸

⁶ Ciphred telegram from the Soviet Military Representative in Beijing to Stalin, 2 Nov. 1950, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), p. 48.

⁷ Ciphred telegram from Stalin to Kim Il Sung, 20 Nov. 1950, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), pp. 50–51.

⁸ The May shipment included 25 000 rifles, 5000 sub-machine-guns, 1200 light machine-guns, 550 medium machine-guns, 275 heavy machine-guns, 500 anti-tank rifles, 700 82-mm calibre mortars and 125 120-mm calibre mortars. Ciphred telegram from Stalin to Kim Il Sung, 29 May 1951, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), p. 59. The June agreement included equipment sufficient for 16 divisions as well as a commitment that 8 Soviet fighter aviation divisions would be made available to support Korean operations. Ciphred telegram from Stalin to Gao Gang and Kim Il Sung, 13 June 1951, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), p. 60.

After Chinese volunteers joined in combat actions, the Soviet Union also supplied China with a great deal of weapons and combat *matériel* to support these operations. In November 1950, it sent China 214 railway wagons of small arms and ammunition, 37 loaded with aviation equipment and 1400 with petrol, oil and lubricants.⁹

During the war China suffered heavy losses in aviation and the Soviet Union supplied both aircraft and aircraft engines to compensate. In December 1950, China received 257 aircraft and 360 aircraft engines and in February 1951 an additional 190 aircraft engines. At the end of June 1951 Stalin approved the release of the MiG-15 fighter aircraft to the PLA Air Force (previously the MiG-9 had been the main combat aircraft supplied) and Soviet instructors began retraining Chinese pilots from three fighter aviation divisions to fly these aircraft.¹⁰ During 1951, 13 air divisions, 3 artillery divisions, 2 divisions of rocket artillery, 2 anti-tank divisions, 8 artillery regiments, 3 tank divisions and 59 anti-aircraft artillery battalions were formed on the basis of Soviet combat *matériel*. The Chinese volunteers fought using Soviet tanks and armoured vehicles. At the beginning of the war the Chinese had no tanks, but by the end of it they were in possession of 316 tanks and 75 self-propelled guns. In 1953, the Soviet Government issued China with a licence to manufacture 76-mm calibre guns and 122-mm calibre howitzers.

By 1 August 1952, the equipment of the PLA was dominated by Soviet-made items. In 1952, 1056 artillery pieces of all types were delivered to the Chinese forces. All combat aircraft, 85 per cent of their anti-aircraft guns, 80 per cent of their heavy machine-guns, 60 per cent of their tanks and self-propelled guns, 40 per cent of their mortars and 40 per cent of their anti-tank guns were of Soviet origin.

Throughout 1953 equipment continued to be provided to the Chinese forces. In that year equipment sufficient for 20 infantry divisions was scheduled for delivery along with 1652 artillery pieces of various types (including some self-propelled guns).¹¹

After the end of the Korean War, Soviet military advisers helped the KPA to develop a new organizational structure. It required large amounts of weapons and *matériel*, which were supplied from the Soviet Union and Poland. In 1954 North Korean purchases from the Soviet Union included 124 12-mm calibre howitzers, 166 76-mm calibre guns, 16 57-mm calibre guns and 24 120-mm calibre mortars. Later, in 1955–56 a further 192 122-mm calibre howitzers, 144 76-mm calibre guns, 112 57-mm calibre guns, 136 anti-aircraft guns and 160 000 rifles and carbines were supplied by the Soviet Union.

⁹ The shipment included 140 000 rifles, 26 000 sub-machine-guns, 7000 light machine-guns and 2000 heavy machine-guns along with over 250 million rounds of ammunition. Ciphred telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin, 8 Nov. 1950, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), p. 48.

¹⁰ Weathersby, K., 'Stalin and a negotiated settlement in Korea, 1950–53', Paper prepared for the conference on The Cold War in Asia, University of Hong Kong, 9–12 Jan. 1996, p. 23.

¹¹ Telegram from Stalin to Mao Zedong, 27 Dec. 1952, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 2), pp. 79–80.

After the Korean War China also received a large amount of additional combat *matériel* from the 64th Air Corps, which had been deployed on Chinese territory and participated in the Korean War. By 10 December 1954, 296 MiG-15 fighter aircraft and 302 anti-aircraft guns had been transferred.

Arms transfer decision making during the Korean War

In principle, decisions on military and technical assistance during the Korean War were made in a way that was similar to those in peacetime, by the Politburo—although in practice it was Stalin who had the final word. After the Politburo had made its decisions, decrees were issued by the Council of Ministers, signed by Stalin as the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and sent to the ministries for implementation.

The decision that North Korea would unleash war against South Korea was taken in March 1950, after negotiations between Stalin, Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung. Also in March, several decrees of the Council of Ministers pertaining to massive supplies of weapons and *matériel* to North Korea were adopted.

Marshal Bulganin supervised all military matters, including those involving the Korean War, in the Politburo and Council of Ministers. Decisions on several matters seem to have been taken by Bulganin himself. In January 1948, for example, Kim Il Sung sent a request to dispatch ships, tools and training aids for a navy school. The resolution of Bulganin says: ‘Allow implementation through the Ministry of Foreign Trade’.

Dealing with military and technical assistance to North Korea were the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Navy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Armaments, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Health and others. Each ministry had a deputy minister dealing specifically with supplies of weapons, combat *matériel* and equipment.

Within the Ministry of Defence the Minister of Defence (Marshal of the Soviet Union Alexander Vasilevskiy), Army General Shtemenko, the Chief of the General Staff, the commanders of the various branches of the armed forces and the heads of the main departments of the Ministry of Defence were all involved in dealing specifically with matters of military and technical assistance. However, the greater part of this work was assigned to the General Staff and the office of the Chief of General Staff in particular. Smaller structures dealing with some aspects of weapons and combat *matériel* supplies were established in many different bodies of the Ministry of Defence.

Decrees of the Council of Ministers provided guidance for the General Staff to determine what types of weapon and *matériel* should be supplied to North Korea and from which military districts as well as the terms, procedures and routes of supplies.

Weapons and *matériel* for North Korea were taken from many military districts and plants but, as it shared the border with North Korea, the Soviet Maritime Territory (Primorskiy Kray) Military District (MD) played a leading

role. Soviet officers would hand over weapons and *matériel* to the North Koreans at the border points. For example, on 22 September 1950 Lieutenant-Colonel Yuriy Pavlovich Maksimov handed over 47 aircraft of different types to North Korean representative Li Phar in the city of Vozdvizhenka while 32 577 anti-tank mines and anti-personnel mines were handed over by Major Bryantsev to North Korean representative Pak Sobon.

Kim Il Sung usually delivered his requests for weapons and *matériel* via the Ambassador of the Soviet Union and the Chief Military Adviser in North Korea and sometimes addressed his requests directly to Stalin, Bulganin, Andrey Vyshinskiy (Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs), Andrey Gromyko (First Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Deputy Minister of Trade Yeregin. Most often, however, requests were addressed to General Shtemenko.

V. Soviet military assistance to developing countries

The collapse of the colonial system was largely completed during the 1960s and 1970s. The result was the emergence of a large number of independent and sovereign states. During the cold war these countries did not become a ‘neutral zone’ between the two social systems but rather became the theatre of that war.

The Soviet Union and the United States regarded developing countries as the scene on which the confrontation of capitalist and socialist models of social development could be played out. Political, economic and ideological contradictions between newly independent countries were often the cause of military conflicts and wars. Political orientation in favour of capitalism or socialism was also at the root of some civil wars. In addition to the cold war and decolonization, there were other explanations for why developing countries went to war—competition over resources, materials and territory, and ethnic and religious conflicts.

In any event, many of the hot spots and areas of tension in the world were found among the developing countries. The sharpest conflict was probably the Middle East conflict, which has lasted for more than 40 years. While the hostility between Israel and the Arab countries formed the main axis of conflict it was not the only one. Arab forces were also occasionally used against one another—as in the case of the crisis in Jordan in 1970, for example.

To wage war against one another and to ensure their security, the newly independent states required armed forces, armaments and combat equipment. However, they lacked the resource base, the industrial base and the experience and know-how to produce their own arms and combat equipment. Consequently, those that made their choice in favour of socialism requested the Soviet Union to supply them with arms. Others asked France, the UK or the USA. Some states requested arms from both the Soviet Union and the West. As the number of newly independent states increased, arms deliveries increased. In some of the wars between developing countries both belligerents were using Soviet weapons, for example, in the wars between Algeria and Morocco (1963),

India and Pakistan (1971), Iran and Iraq (1980–88), Ethiopia and Somalia (1978), and North Yemen and South Yemen (1994).¹²

In the years of the cold war East–West hostility was an important factor. If, in some country, a pro-Western orientation emerged, the Soviet Union tried to find a counterbalance among the neighbouring countries. The USA and the other Western countries were pursuing their own political objectives—supporting counter-revolution in countries with a socialist orientation and supporting countries which were oriented to the West.

Having become an importer of Soviet arms, a developing country became ‘tied’ to the USSR in important ways. Arms deliveries were followed by the expansion of military assistance. In some cases the Soviet Union also sent military advisers and military units to advise the national military command on the national defence or military construction, and advisers were sometimes present even during the repelling of an aggression. The USSR had relations of this type with Algeria, Ethiopia, the United Arab Republic, North Yemen and later Syria. Countries were also forced to set up economic relations to manage payment. Arms exports from the Soviet Union were sometimes cancelled if the armed forces of the importer threatened or waged war against countries friendly to the Soviet Union or might become a threat to the Soviet Union itself.

The Soviet Union was forced to take account of military and political factors—according to or against its wishes—since the collapse of the colonial system was not peaceful but was the source of a number of local wars and acts of aggression. It cannot be claimed that the Soviet Union always had a purposeful, well-thought out foreign and military policy concerning the newly independent states and the conflicts between them. Often political and military activity took place in confused circumstances immediately after liberation from colonial dependence. Often war began by surprise and was recognized too late for policy to be established. Sometimes military action was opportunistic—the simple seizure of available territory. Sometimes subjective factors were decisive: for example, Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev liked the Ethiopian leader Lieutenant-Colonel Haile Mariam Mengistu and wanted to make him a great revolutionary ‘African Castro’.

Military–technical cooperation with the developing countries could also have negative political aspects. Developing countries which used fine rhetoric about building socialism were often insincere. Public opinion was being deceived, the idea of socialism was being discredited and countries of the socialist community ignored these facts or published without criticism information known to be untrue. For example, during the immediate post-colonial time the Central Committee of the CPSU announced that Algeria, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Somalia, Syria, Tanzania, Zambia and other countries were of a socialist orientation. These were never true socialist states.

¹² Since the end of the Soviet Union, in the recent war between Peru and Ecuador in 1995 both parties used weapons of Russian origin. However, while Peru was supplied directly by Russia, Ecuador received its weapons through third countries.

Events also changed the political context in which arms transfers took place. On occasion, the Soviet Union was supplying a country with weapons when the recipient changed its political course.

This happened more than once in East Africa. In 1967 the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia began to supply arms to the government forces of Sudan. In 1969 the reactionary dictatorship in power there was toppled by the Revolutionary Command Council. When the new leaders of Sudan asked the Soviet Union for military assistance, it delivered tanks and BM-21 multiple-rocket launch systems to the Sudanese land forces as well as MiG-19, MiG-21, MiG-23 and An-24 fixed-wing aircraft and Mi-1 and Mi-8 helicopters to the air forces. In addition, S-75 Dvina (SA-2) anti-aircraft systems were provided for air defence.

In 1971 Sudan changed its political orientation once again and pursued a pro-Western course until 1985. During that period the USSR stopped its military assistance. In February 1974 there was a revolution in Ethiopia and the monarchy was overthrown. However, the relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan remained antagonistic. At this time the Soviet Union started to supply Ethiopia with weapons. In all it supplied Ethiopia with more than 1000 T-55 and T-62 tanks, about 1000 anti-tank guided missiles, about 100 MiG-21 and MiG-23 fighter aircraft, 3500 artillery pieces and mortars, about 400 BM-21 multiple-rocket launch systems, 25 ships of different kinds, and more than 10 S-125 Pechora (SA-3) and S-75 Volga (SA-2) anti-aircraft missile complexes.

In October 1969 Siad Barre came to power in Somalia through a military *coup d'état* and declared the Somali Democratic Republic. Between 1969 and 1977 the Soviet Union supplied the Somali armed forces with equipment including tanks, armoured personnel carriers (APCs), heavy artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, combat aircraft and a range of combat and support ships.

In July 1977 Somalia began military operations against Ethiopia in order to seize control of the vast Ogaden region through which the border between the countries passed. It was intended to incorporate all of the lands where Somali-speaking tribes were living and roaming into a 'Greater Somalia'—an idea that had been maturing in Mogadishu since the 1960s. By accelerating its deliveries of arms and combat equipment from the Soviet Union and with the active help of Cuba, Ethiopia was able to resist Somalia.¹³ On 9 March 1978 the Somali Government announced the withdrawal of troops from the Ogaden region.

¹³ The governments of Ethiopia and the USSR signed an agreement on arms transfers and military cooperation in Dec. 1976. However, this agreement covered only a limited volume of small arms. Ethiopia requested additional Soviet arms and military assistance in Mar. 1977. Having observed increased military activity along the border with Somalia, it also approached the USA for assistance. The Ethiopian forces relied heavily on US equipment. The USA did not approve exports of spare parts for this equipment, and in late Apr. Ethiopia abrogated the bilateral agreement with the USA on the preservation of mutual security. As a result, Ethiopia approached both North Viet Nam (for equipment and spare parts of US origin) and the USSR (for equipment of Soviet origin). Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Acting Chargé d'Affaires in Ethiopia, S. Sinitsin, and Ethiopian official Berhanu Bayeh, 18 Mar. 1977; and Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Acting Chargé d'Affaires in Ethiopia, S. Sinitsin, and Political Counselor of the US Embassy in Ethiopia, Herbert Malin, 9 May 1977, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin*, issue 8-9 (Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars: Washington, DC, winter 1996/97), pp. 56-57, 61-62.

Large-scale conflicts as well as small ones were taking place between developing countries, involving all kinds of weapons—aviation, rocket forces, armour and artillery—supplied to the belligerents by China, France, the UK, the USA, the USSR and other countries. In smaller conflicts the warring parties were using, as a rule, small arms, artillery and mortars, and helicopters.

The USSR rarely supplied the least developed countries with complex or expensive weapons and combat equipment. As a rule exports to them involved small arms, light artillery, anti-aircraft missile systems (including light anti-aircraft systems) and aircraft with a small radius of operation. The weapons delivered were simple because their military personnel were not well educated.

Economic dimensions

In each case the method of payment for the weapons and combat equipment was determined by agreement between governments and specified in a contract.

The prevalent system of payment for weapons by developing countries was with hard currency—usually US dollars. Some countries—Iraq, for example—were both paying some hard currency and supplying the USSR with petroleum. Such orders provided for part payment in order to produce the weapons while the main payment was put into effect on delivery.

Immediately before and in the course of an armed conflict no requests to produce weapons were transmitted to industry because time was needed to produce them. Weapons were delivered from the warehouses or taken from the Soviet Ministry of Defence and later replaced from new production. Because weapon deliveries in war often had an immediate operational task, air and sea bridges were thrown to deliver them. In these cases the price for weapons to be delivered was a little higher than usual.

A second main method of payment was instalments against credit. The deferment of payment for different countries varied and fluctuated between 7 and 10–15 years. The annual rates of interest for deferment also differed and were between 1.5 and 2 per cent. Depending on the rate of interest and the length of payment, credit terms could increase the costs of armaments significantly. For example, weapons were delivered to Syria on the basis of a 50 per cent cost increase over 10 years with interest at 2 per cent per annum.

This method was widely used and credit had a number of positive features. While getting credit from the USSR for military cooperation, developing countries often applied in other areas of cooperation as well. Credit arrangements also created one more condition binding the buyer into the Soviet weapon mar-

The USSR agreed to give logistical support to North Yemen, which began supplying arms and military equipment to Ethiopia from around Apr. 1977. In addition, the USSR agreed that Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland would supply military equipment to Ethiopia. Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A. N. Ratanov and Cuban military official Arnaldo Ochoa, 17 July 1977, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (winter 1996/97), pp. 65–66.

The decision to supply large amounts of heavy weapons to Ethiopia was taken in Oct. 1977 during the visit to Moscow of President Mengistu. Background Report on Soviet–Ethiopian Relations, 3 Apr. 1978, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (winter 1996/97), pp. 90–93.

ket. Finally, a country which bought armaments and combat equipment on credit was usually supportive of socialism and generally favoured the consolidation of the socialist system and the authority of the Soviet Union.

A third form of financing was full or part payment in goods—that is, barter. Barter deals were used not only with countries of the socialist community but with developing countries as well. This allowed the Soviet Union to get scarce goods in exchange for weapons. Sometimes the Soviet Union would also help developing countries to sell goods in other markets as part of a financing arrangement associated with weapon transfers.

As a consequence of difficulties in the political and economic spheres and a deterioration of relations in the military sphere, Russia has suffered economic and financial costs. It suffered a great deal of damage as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union because debts which were being remitted were questioned by many developing states. For example, Ethiopia still owes Russia \$6.2 billion, Libya \$3 billion, Syria about \$4.2 billion and Zambia \$300 million.

Under current conditions a number of developing countries are refusing to pay their debts or resorting to tricks in order to evade payment, justifying this by referring to current relations in the area of military–technical cooperation or by questioning the formula used in the calculations. Some do not want to continue cooperation with Russia but are applying to other weapons markets.

There has been a sharp reduction in the number of military advisers and specialists sent on official trips to countries which buy Russian weapons. Neither educational and technical materials, services for repair and maintenance nor bases to carry them out are being created any longer. The number of foreign persons studying in the colleges of the Russian Ministry of Defence has been reduced. All of these were formerly sources of revenue both for Russia and for its Ministry of Defence.

The main recipients of Soviet arms

Large deliveries of weapons and combat equipment were sent from the Soviet Union to Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and North and South Yemen.

During the crisis which preceded the 1956 war between Egypt and British, French and Israeli forces, the Soviet Union made an emergency delivery of weapons to Egypt.¹⁴ After the war Egypt paid increased attention to the creation of national armed forces and sought help from the Soviet Union. Its land forces were supplied with T-54, T-55 and T-62 tanks as well as the Luna-M (FROG-7) tactical rocket system, BM-21 and BM-24 multiple-rocket launch systems, and Malutka portable anti-tank missile systems. The Kvadrat anti-aircraft missile system and the Shilka self-propelled anti-aircraft gun were provided for air defence. The air force received Tu-16 bombers, MiG-17 and MiG-23 fighter aircraft as well as An-12 and Il-14 transport aircraft and Mi-4 Hound transport

¹⁴ Engelmann, B., *The Weapons Merchants* (Elek Books: London, 1968), pp. 174–75.

helicopters. The air defence forces were supplied with S-75 and S-125 anti-aircraft missile systems and portable Strela-2 anti-aircraft missiles. The Egyptian Navy was supplied with diesel-powered submarines, destroyers, landing ships, motor torpedo boats and patrol boats. In all, Egypt received more than 2000 tanks, 5000 APCs, 21 tactical rocket systems and 14 submarines.

The USSR also supplied Syrian land forces with a wide range of equipment including tactical missiles, tanks, artillery and mortars, APCs and Strela-1 (SA-7) portable anti-aircraft missiles. The Syrian air forces and air defence forces were armed with Soviet aircraft, helicopters, anti-aircraft artillery and missile systems while the naval forces received warships, fast patrol boats, mobile coastal defence missile systems and helicopters equipped to attack ships. By 1992 Syria had been supplied with about 5000 tanks, more than 1000 aircraft, 4000 artillery pieces and mortars, and 70 combat and support ships.

Soviet arms deliveries to Egypt and Syria were at their height in 1973, when the war against Israel was going on. When Syria suffered heavy losses, the USSR helped to restore and update its forces by sending military advisers and specialists and delivering weapons and combat equipment in 1974. The Syrian armed forces were not only restored but increased in numbers and quality: for example, Syria was supplied with new T-62 tanks and Su-7 fighter aircraft.

Libya bought many modern weapons in the USSR, including about 200 tactical missiles, 4000 tanks and about 600 aircraft. A large number of air defence systems were supplied including S-200 Angara (SA-5), Kub (SA-6) and Osa (SA-8) missile complexes and six submarines. The proportion of Soviet weapons in the armed forces of Libya is close to 95 per cent.

The USSR supplied South Yemen with weapons for political and military-strategic reasons. South Yemen was always among the most faithful supporters of Soviet positions in the UN—even though this was not always in its own interests—and had strategic significance for the USSR as it made available port facilities for Soviet warships.

Military relations between the USSR and both South Yemen and North Yemen were established in the 1960s. When the leaders of North Yemen declared that they would fight actively against imperialism, the Soviet Union began to supply the country with aircraft, APCs, artillery pieces and mortars, anti-tank guided missiles and small motor boats. Military cooperation with South Yemen started in 1969. The USSR was simultaneously supplying both North and South Yemen with weapons. In 1979 South Yemen began a war against North Yemen with the aim of uniting both parts into one country and Soviet weapons were used in that war. The Soviet Union approved the war and Soviet military advisers remained in both South and North Yemen. Some third countries were reselling Soviet weapons to North Yemen—notably Egypt.

In its 1980–1988 war with Iran, Iraq relied heavily on Soviet weapons. It received far greater supplies than Iran from the Soviet Union and the most modern weapons, including T-72 tanks. However, Iran did receive T-54 and T-55 tanks and other armoured vehicles. Later, after the war was over, MiG-29 and Su-24 combat aircraft and air defence systems were also delivered.

The Soviet Union gave significant military assistance to all branches of the armed forces of India to strengthen its security. Of the developing countries, India received most assistance with arms production. The Soviet Union helped it to build factories where MiG-21 and MiG-23/27 fighter aircraft were first assembled and then produced under Soviet licences. It also helped to build a tank factory designed to repair T-72 tanks.

VI. Military supplies to political movements and organizations

During the cold war internal wars and conflicts based on clashes of economic, territorial, ethnic, religious and ideological interests between different political forces were not unknown. Self-determination and political power were the main goals of the conflicting parties.

The Soviet Union's aim was to bring to power pro-Soviet, pro-communist, anti-imperialist forces. These forces were supported not only by political means but also through military assistance and in particular by supplies of arms and military equipment. This equipment was used in *coups d'état*, guerrilla campaigns and acts of terrorism.

During the cold war the Soviet Union, the United States and their respective allies were involved—indirectly or directly—in internal conflicts and wars in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Both sides in the cold war assigned a very important role to military instruments of policy.

The Soviet Union supplied arms and military equipment to national liberation movements and organizations that carried on the struggle for national independence and to military opposition groups that shared a position ideologically close to that of Moscow and carried on a struggle for power inside their state.

In the period 1960–80 the stubborn struggle for national independence went on in many colonial possessions in Africa, Asia and the Near East. In several cases it took the form of armed conflict. Western countries that possessed colonies sought to suppress national liberation movements while the Soviet Union did its best to help them.

In the framework of this policy, the Soviet Union supplied weapons to many national liberation movements and political organizations. As noted above, it was often these kinds of supplies that were free of charge.

The International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Committee of State Security (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, KGB) scrutinized the policy of ruling regimes in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as opposition movements, which were divided into communist, social democratic, religious and nationalist tendencies. These analyses were to detect political forces that followed an anti-imperialist tendency and desired cooperation with the Soviet Union and with the Central Committee in particular.

The leadership of the Central Committee exaggerated the extent of revolutionary processes taking place in countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and

the Near East in order to enhance the prestige of the CPSU (especially in resolutions of party congresses). Under pressure from the Central Committee some movements were declared to be revolutionary although they were not. This was so in Afghanistan in particular. Nevertheless, it seems that the Central Committee did not give birth to revolutionary processes but scrutinized processes already taking place in national liberation movements and began to act only when positive developments were identified.

This can be illustrated by some examples.

In 1958, in accordance with a UN General Assembly resolution, the Federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea was proclaimed. Eritrea was to have its own parliament and autonomous administrative organs. The Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, in defiance of the decision of the international community, began to curtail the rights of the Eritrean population. In 1962 the deputies, under pressure from the emperor, decided on a full merger of Eritrea with Ethiopia. Opposition groupings appeared in Eritrea. Christians and Muslims were united by the struggle against the central government. Opposition to the leadership was combined under the NLFE and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Before the overthrow of Selassie the USSR supplied arms to the opposition forces through Egypt, Sudan and South Yemen.

As early as the late 1950s movements were formed in Angola to fight colonialism, the largest being the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The leading role in the struggle against Portuguese colonialists belonged to the MPLA, which was the strongest and best organized group. From 1964 the Soviet Union began to supply weapons to that movement.¹⁵ In January 1975 a transitional government was formed with the participation of the MPLA, the FNLA and UNITA. However, the FNLA and UNITA—with the support of the USA and the Republic of South Africa—attempted to deprive the MPLA of participation in the government. In the resultant outbreak of armed conflict the MPLA took control of the capital, Luanda, and then of the central and eastern regions of the country. Finally it gained control of the main ports on the Atlantic coast.

The emergence of a pro-Soviet group as the dominant force in Angola did not suit the USA, South Africa or neighbouring Zaire. In the summer of 1975 South African armed forces opposed to the MPLA entered Angola from Namibia while forces from Zaire invaded from the north. The MPLA had meanwhile formed a single-party government and the Soviet Union had increased the volume of military supplies considerably.¹⁶ This Soviet military support and

¹⁵ The main period of Soviet assistance was 1964–72. Message from Cuban Military Adviser Raul Diaz Arguelles to Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro, 11 Aug. 1975, reproduced in *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 13), p. 14. The USSR reduced its support as the liberation movement in Angola divided into factions in the period 1971–73. Westad, O. A., 'Moscow and the Angolan crisis, 1974–76: a new pattern of intervention', *Cold War History Project Bulletin* (note 13), pp. 21–32.

¹⁶ The decision to increase arms transfers and military assistance to the Angolan Government was taken in Oct. 1975, after Cuba had decided, in Aug. 1975, to send military advisers to Angola. Gleijeses, P., 'Havana's policy in Africa, 1959–76: new evidence from the Cuban archives', *Cold War History Project*

numerous Cuban military forces made a decisive contribution to defending the MPLA regime. After repelling the initial external aggression, the Soviet Union continued to supply weapons to the MPLA (now the government) as it carried on a struggle against UNITA (still supported by the USA and South Africa).

The territory of Western Sahara was a colonial possession of Spain. After the proclamation of independence of Morocco in 1956 the activities of the national liberation movement in Western Sahara accelerated. However, Morocco had its own claim on the territory of Western Sahara, which is rich in phosphates. In May 1973 with the support of Algeria the People's Liberation Front of Sakiet Al-Khamra (the Polisario Front) was set up and headed the national liberation struggle. On 27 February 1976, on territory controlled by Polisario detachments, the Arab Democratic Republic of Sahara was proclaimed. The Soviet Union supplied weapons to Polisario through Algeria.

In the 1960s a conflict flared up in Namibia (called South-West Africa until 1968). In 1920 the League of Nations handed a mandate to govern South-West Africa to the Union of South Africa. After World War II the government of the new Republic of South Africa refused to return that mandate. In early 1960 the leadership of South Africa decided to divide Namibia into semi-autonomous administrative entities governed by tribal chiefs. Namibian nationalists began to protest against being placed under South African administration. In 1960 the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO) was founded to pursue the goal of a unified state for all tribes and nations of Namibia. Meeting with repression from South Africa, from 1961 SWAPO initiated an armed struggle for national liberation and organized military formations—the People's Liberation Army of Namibia. The Soviet Union began to supply arms and military equipment to SWAPO. In 1990 the independence of Namibia was proclaimed.

In 1975 Mozambique became independent. The struggle against Portuguese colonialists had been headed by the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and Soviet arms and military equipment were supplied to this organization as well. Here as in Angola the Soviet Union found itself supplying arms to the government of an independent state that was itself opposed by internal forces. From 1978 RENAMO (the National Resistance of Mozambique), headed by Afonso Dhlakama, began to act as an anti-government armed grouping, its activity being made possible because the USA and South Africa gave military and economic assistance.

In May 1961 apartheid, expressed through the adoption of a number of laws that infringed the rights of the native non-white population, was raised to the level of the official state policy of South Africa. Black and coloured peoples set

Bulletin (note 13), pp. 5–18. In discussions of documents released by the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1994, Russian specialists suggested that the Soviet Union was not enthusiastic about increasing arms deliveries to Angola. However, the presence of Cuban troops created a new dimension to the decision. As one former Soviet official commented, 'we could not let them die there, be killed there, without helping them, sending our weapons'. Brutents, F. and Kornienko, G. (former Deputy Head and First Deputy Head, International Department, Central Committee of the CPSU, respectively), 'US–Soviet relations and Soviet foreign policy toward the Middle East in the 1970s', Transcript from a workshop at Lysebu, 1–3 Oct. 1994, Norwegian Nobel Institute, Oslo, 1995, pp. 43–47.

up a number of organizations to fight for their rights, the African National Congress (ANC) being the main one. The ANC had been proscribed as early as 1960 and it therefore began to act under ground. Its main forces were compelled to make their base on the territories of countries neighbouring South Africa. From early 1960 the Soviet Union began to supply the ANC with small arms.

From 1964 the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) carried on a struggle against Israel, uniting the different organizations that made up the Palestinian resistance movement. At different times the PLO maintained armed formations in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia. These formations were equipped with Soviet-made weapons including main battle tanks, multiple-rocket launch systems, anti-aircraft artillery, mortars and field artillery. Soviet-made arms and equipment were supplied to the PLO through Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, South Yemen, Syria and other countries.

During the period 1975–92 civil war raged in Lebanon. Nationalist and right-wing Christian forces were fighting national patriotic forces supported through Syria and also the PLO. By 1988 the PLO had in various locations more than 100 T-54 and T-55 main battle tanks, 50 Grad multiple-rocket launch systems, over 200 guns and mortars, nearly 100 APCs and armoured fighting vehicles and over 400 machine-guns. In 1982 right-wing Christian forces were equipped with a small number of T-54 and T-55 main battle tanks as well as four Grad multiple-rocket launchers received from Israel, which transferred them from captured stocks seized from the PLO during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

The large amounts of arms in the possession of countries like Iraq, Libya, South Yemen and Syria inhibited them from carrying on any armed struggle against neighbouring countries. However, the supplies of weapons to the PLO had some negative impact on internal stability in some countries of the Middle East. Non-Palestinian armed revolutionary formations also existed on the territory of some of the states of the region and these armed opposition groups could cooperate with Palestinian formations in order to purchase weapons to use in civil wars. This feature contributed to the instability of Ethiopia, Lebanon, Somalia and South Yemen.

The presence of revolutionary forces in countries where they had military camps and bases often led to their being actively used by the ruling regimes. For example, Libya sent members of the PLO to carry out terrorist acts in Egypt, and Egypt sent members of the same organization to carry out subversive acts in Libya.

In the 1980s there was some amalgamation (both ideological and organizational) of left-wing militant organizations with nationalist organizations and Islamic fundamentalists. This led in some cases to the strengthening of Islamic opposition movements in countries such as Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon and to some extent also Syria.

Soviet arms and equipment were used in the internal military conflict in Sudan between the ruling regime and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which was defending the interests of three southern non-Muslim provinces. The President of Sudan, Gafaar Mohammed Numeiri, returned to an

open policy of Islamicization of southern Sudan in early 1980. In September 1983, when he introduced Islamic law, the SPLA, headed by Colonel John Garang, refused to lay down arms until these laws in the southern territories were lifted. As a result armed struggle resumed. Colonel Garang was supported by the regimes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Zaire and later Egypt. There are SPLA military bases in Ethiopia and its military formations are equipped with some Soviet-made weapons—small arms, mortars and anti-aircraft guns—supplied through Ethiopia.

In Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey and in several post-Soviet successor states lives a Kurdish population which is demanding national autonomy or the foundation of an independent Kurdish state and is waging a stubborn struggle using both peaceful and military means. During the cold war the Soviet Union supplied arms and military equipment to some Kurdish movements and organizations.

The Soviet Union had no role in instigating the revolutions that took place in Latin America in the 1950s—including the Cuban revolution. However, after that revolution Cuba was supported by Soviet First Secretary Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, who regarded it as a bridgehead for future socialist revolutions. Small arms and then artillery, main battle tanks and military aircraft were sent to Cuba. Cuban leaders supplied these Soviet-made arms and equipment to other revolutionary organizations of Latin America without permission from the Soviet Union, which was against an export of revolutions. It was in this way that Soviet arms were supplied to the revolutionary forces in Guatemala.

The Central Committee of the CPSU had no purposeful revolutionary strategy for Latin America, which was far away from the Soviet Union and where the United States had a very strong influence.

From 1979 to 1981, during the Nicaraguan conflict, Soviet arms were transferred to the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) through Cuba and through the revolutionary forces of Panama. In July 1979 Sandinist forces succeeded in overthrowing the Somoza regime and from the spring of 1981 the Soviet Union began to supply arms and military equipment directly to the new regime rather than through intermediaries.

From 1979 to 1991, during the conflict between the ruling regime and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, the Soviet Union supplied arms to the FMLN via the revolutionary organizations in Honduras and Panama.