

Second, US defence policy may involve costs to the Soviet Union which impede the latter from committing substantial resources to lower priority concerns. In the current period, for example, Soviet writings suggest that the US arms build-up is creating strains on resource allocation in the Soviet Union. The need to keep up with the United States limits the Soviet capacity to provide assistance to Third World states.¹⁸

Third, despite Soviet denials of the validity of the concept of "linkage", Soviet-US competition in the Third World may spill over into the broader relationship between the two superpowers, rendering it difficult for the Soviet Union to pursue other objectives such as economic détente or arms control. There is considerable evidence that Soviet analysts in the 1970s simply failed to understand the nature of linkage in US politics and foreign policy. They apparently thought that US policy-makers understood, shared, and could implement the Soviet view that the central co-operative aspects of the Soviet-US relationship could be insulated from Third World issues. They considered that US claims to the contrary were merely vain attempts by "reactionary circles" to sabotage a process of détente which was objectively determined and hence irreversible.¹⁹ There is some indication, both in the literature and in Soviet practice, that they are now more aware than they once were of the fragility of the détente process and of the consequences of Soviet activism in the Third World for Soviet-US relations.

The experience of the 1970s and early 1980s suggests that the inhibiting effect of the "American factor", in Soviet decision-making on Third World issues, depends strongly on Soviet perceptions of American capacity and will to defend US interests in the Third World and/or to inflict costs on the Soviet Union in other areas of the superpower relationship in response to Soviet challenges in the Third World. One source of Soviet activism in the mid-1970s may have been a Soviet perception, widely evident in the literature of the time, that the United States was a declining power unwilling and (owing to shrinkage in the defence budget) increasingly unable to defend its interests, that, if you will, the "correlation of forces" was shifting reasonably rapidly in favour of world socialism.²⁰

¹⁸ See, for example, I. Koshelev, "Ekonomicheskoe Sotrudnichestvo SSSR s Afrikanskimi Gosudarstvami", *Narody Azii i Afriki [Peoples of Asia and Africa]* (1982), #2, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹ S.N. MacFarlane, *Third World Conflict and Arms Control: The Soviet View of Linkage* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, forthcoming).

²⁰ cf. Tsentral'nyi Komitet KPSS, "Postanovlenie Ts. K. KPSS ot 31 yanvarya", *Pravda* (1.ii.77); L.I. Brezhnev, "Velikii Oktyabr' i Progress Chelovechestva", *Pravda* (3.xi.77); *inter alia*.