

II.

SOVIET STRATEGY AND THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

1. Methodology

In order to understand the place of the Caribbean Basin in Soviet policy, it is necessary to begin by examining the basic strategic considerations which inform Soviet policy in the Third World as a whole. The term "strategy" connotes a set of general principles according to which a state seeks to realize its basic objectives. A number of factors determine the character of any state's strategy. Strategy is shaped in the first place by the objectives being pursued and secondly by the instruments available. Finally, phenomena both internal and external to the state in question also affect the degree to which, and the ways in which, it can pursue its objectives. A state's strategy is basically a method of achieving its aims in the face of instrumental and environmental constraints.

There are several methodological problems in the analysis of Soviet strategy. Two types of data serve as sources from which we can draw inferences about Soviet strategy: Soviet writings and Soviet behaviour. The use of Soviet sources is problematic as Soviet publications pass through informal and formal censorship. Their status — as propaganda, disinformation, or genuine analysis and information — is often indeterminate. We have little or no independent access to primary source material through interviews or archival research.

This has led many in the West to focus on Soviet behaviour in the Third World as the data base for conclusions about motivation and strategy. However, it is often possible to draw very different and, ostensibly, equally valid conclusions about Soviet intentions from a single body of behavioural data.

There are no easy means of surmounting these methodological ambiguities. It is assumed here that the most promising approach to the analysis of Soviet strategy in the Third World is through attention to both statements and behaviour. Soviet practice serves, to some extent, as a test of the significance and validity of Soviet commentary. Soviet political and social analysis, particularly in Russian language publications intended primarily for internal