

In such circumstances, it is not particularly surprising that Soviet strategy in the Third World relies heavily on military instruments — arms transfers, training, logistical support of military activity by client states, and, on occasion, the deployment of Soviet military effectives in deterrent, command and control, and ground combat roles. This emphasis on military activity has grown stronger with the passage of time, as is clear in the ratio of Soviet economic to military assistance, which has declined steadily since the early 1960s.¹⁵ It is also evident in shifts in Soviet military procurement towards the development of a multi-faceted, conventional force capable of long-range activity. Similarly, changes in Soviet conventional military doctrine imply a greater readiness to contemplate direct military involvement in the Third World, as do changes in Soviet military practice of at least three types:

1. the more or less permanent stationing of Soviet naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, and the Caribbean Sea;
2. the transfer of increasingly sophisticated weapons systems to friendly states in the Third World, such as Libya, Algeria, Syria, India, Vietnam, and Cuba; and
3. an increasing use of Soviet forces in Third World conflicts.

In general, the influence of outside actors in Third World politics depends on their being able to fulfil the needs of their clients. The Soviet Union, given that its capabilities are so one-dimensional, will appear most attractive to those actors involved in, or anticipating involvement in, conflict. That is to say, conflict in the Third World creates opportunities which the Soviet Union is well-placed to seize. Further, to the extent that Soviet influence rests on its client's continuing need for military assistance, the Soviet Union has a general interest in instability and regional conflict, for it is these conditions which sustain this need. This does not imply, however, that there may not be other circumstances tempering the Soviet interest in instability, and this brings us to the last topic for consideration here; external constraints shaping Soviet behaviour in the Third World.

In the first place, Soviet domestic economic difficulties are intensified by the necessity of providing assistance to fraternal socialist

¹⁵ In 1955-64, this ratio was approximately 60:100, in 1965-74 34:100, and in 1975-9 26:100. Derived from statistics presented in Gu Guan-fu, "Soviet Aid to the Third World: an Analysis of Its Strategy", *Soviet Studies* XXXV (1983), #1, pp. 72-74.