

1 Party Congress at which Khrushchev had shaken the communist world with his denunciation of Stalin and had adopted momentous innovations in the fields of ideology and foreign policy, anticipation of something similarly bold must have been felt by many in the party and country. However, on the very eve of the congress, far from presenting himself as a reformer and liberalizer in the mold of Khrushchev, Gorbachev associated himself with Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's lieutenant, who was responsible for the repression of the intelligentsia and artists in the Soviet Union right after World War II. That evening, *Pravda* prominently featured an article commemorating the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Zhdanov and extolling his "enormous talents" as an organizer and propagandist of his wholehearted service to the nation and the Communist party, thus sending a signal that was unmistakably on a neo-Stalinist, ultra-conservative wave length.<sup>5</sup> Remembering this, it may be useful to keep in mind Andrei Gromyko's observation that Gorbachev is a man who smiles, but his smile has "iron teeth."

## ANTI-SOVIET INSURGENCIES: GROWING TREND OR PASSING PHASE?

by Mark N. Katz

Since the end of World War II, there have been several insurgencies in which Marxist forces have fought against a pro-Western government. In some cases, the Marxists have come to power, as in Vietnam, Cuba, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Nicaragua. In other cases, the Marxists have been defeated, as in Greece, Malaya, and Oman. But whether they win or lose, the West has been on the defensive against the Marxists. Since the mid-1970s, however, a new phenomenon has taken place. Pro-Soviet Marxist Third World governments have had to fight armed internal opponents in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua, and these governments have been unable to defeat their opponents even after many years of fighting.

The term "anti-Soviet insurgency" is not really the most accurate description of these conflicts. The forces opposing pro-Soviet governments in these situations are for the most part primarily motivated not by anti-Soviet or even anticommunist concerns but by local factors. Nevertheless, the term "anti-Soviet insurgency" is useful because it points out a larger problem faced by Soviet foreign policy. No matter what the cause of each of these insurrections, they demonstrate that the rule of pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist governments in the Third World is not secure. Although none of these pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist governments has yet been overthrown by guerrilla forces,<sup>1</sup> the governments have not been able to defeat the guerrillas either. This is especially striking in cases where guerrillas have managed to survive even when forces from the established socialist countries have fought against them, as have the Cubans in Angola, the Vietnamese in Cambodia, and the Soviets in Afghanistan. Now that these conflicts have been going on for several years, the Soviets must be extremely concerned whether the anti-Soviet insurgents in any of these countries can be defeated, whether more such conflicts will erupt in other nations allied to the Soviet Union, and whether guerrillas might ever

<sup>1</sup> Grenada was an exception. The Marxist regime there was overthrown not by local insurgents but through American military intervention.

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<sup>5</sup> B. Glagolev, "Iz pokoleniya Bol'shevikov" (From the generation of the Bolsheviks), *Pravda*, July 24, 1986.

actually succeed in overthrowing a pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist government.

Are these Soviet difficulties potential opportunities for the West? The U.S. government would undoubtedly consider the overthrow of a pro-Soviet Marxist government by internal forces to be a foreign-policy victory. The Reagan administration has given military aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, the Afghan *mujahidin*, and most recently UNITA in Angola. But is it really possible for the West to bring about the overthrow of a pro-Soviet Third World government or even to prevent the Soviet Union and its allies from eventually defeating the anti-Soviet guerrillas? There have been anti-Soviet insurgencies before, and all of them have been defeated. From the Russian Revolution until the mid-1930s, Muslims in Soviet Central Asia fought against Bolshevik rule. Although the insurgents (called *Basmachi* — bandits — by the Soviets) held out for many years, Moscow was victorious in the end. There was also an insurgency in the Ukraine that lasted for several years after World War II with similar results. While it might not be too surprising that the Soviets were able to defeat insurgencies in their own country, there have also been two previous attempts to overthrow pro-Soviet regimes distant from the Soviet Union. The first was the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. This is commonly remembered as a CIA-sponsored action, but the military operation itself was carried out primarily by Cuban exiles. In addition, after the coming to power of a Marxist government in 1967, several South Yemeni exile groups based both in Saudi Arabia and in North Yemen tried on many occasions from 1967 to 1973 either to overthrow the radical government or to make the eastern part of the country independent. Both in Cuba and in South Yemen, these attempts at counterrevolution failed.

Are the anti-Soviet insurgencies occurring now likely to be a long-term problem for Soviet foreign policy, or are they merely a passing phase in the consolidation of pro-Soviet Third World regimes? Can any of them realistically be expected to succeed in overthrowing the Marxist governments they are fighting? What has Moscow's response been to the phenomenon of anti-Soviet insurgencies, and what policy choices does it face? What are the opportunities and dangers that this phenomenon presents for U.S. foreign policy? In seeking to answer these questions, it is first necessary to examine the circumstances of each of the six anti-Soviet insurgencies.

### The Six Anti-Soviet Insurgencies

All six of the ongoing anti-Soviet insurgencies began immediately upon or soon after the establishment of the pro-Soviet Marxist-

Leninist government they are directed at. In one case, Ethiopia, the regional insurgency in Eritrea actually predated the Marxist revolution. None of the Marxist governments had been firmly settled in power for a long time before these conflicts erupted. In addition, in each conflict there is both an element of indigenous support for the guerrillas and an element of foreign support to them, though the relative mix of each varies widely over the six conflicts. Further, the degree of internal support for the Marxist regime varies widely from very little in Afghanistan to fairly substantial in Nicaragua. The degree of military involvement on the part of the established socialist states in these conflicts also varies widely from extremely heavy in Afghanistan and Cambodia to very limited in Nicaragua and Mozambique. In discussing each of the six insurgencies, the degree of foreign and domestic support for both sides will be examined, as well as the likely future prospects for each.

### Angola

At the time of the 1974 left-wing military coup that ousted the conservative Portuguese dictatorship, there were three main rebel groups in Angola, based roughly on Angola's main tribal divisions: the FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), led by Holden Roberto, was backed by the Bakongo in the north; the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), led by Agostinho Neto, was backed by Mbundu in the center; and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), led by Jonas Savimbi, was backed by the Ovimbundu in the south. The Marxist MPLA was also strong in the capital, Luanda, and had the support of many leftist Portuguese and mestizos there.

The history of the Angolan civil war is well known and will not be repeated here. By early 1976, the Soviet-backed and Cuban-backed MPLA had rallied and driven the FNLA into Zaire and the South African forces back into Namibia.<sup>2</sup> The FNLA was completely defeated at this time and has never recovered its strength. It appeared that UNITA was also defeated, but this proved not to be the case. The MPLA was never able to assert its authority in the Ovimbundu heartland. UNITA was able not only to stave off defeat but also to consolidate its hold in the south and expand its influence northward. By the summer of 1985, it was estimated that UNITA controlled approximately 55 percent of Angola and was able to mount operations in other parts of the country, including the

<sup>2</sup> On the Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola during 1975-76, see Bruce D. Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars 1945-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), chapter 8; and Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985), chapter 15.

capital, despite the presence of Cuban troops in Angola. In September 1985, however, MPLA forces with Cuban and Soviet support launched an offensive against UNITA and succeeded in driving the latter's forces southward. However, the MPLA offensive ceased by early October 1985 some 150 miles north of Jamba, UNITA's capital.<sup>3</sup>

UNITA's main strength is derived from its solid basis of internal support among the Ovimbundu. This has allowed UNITA to develop a firm territorial base inside the country from which to operate. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Savimbi controlled some 18,000 "regular" fighters as well as an additional 23,000-man militia in 1985.<sup>4</sup> The United States did not provide UNITA with any military aid between the passage of the Clark Amendment in 1976 and its repeal in 1985, but South Africa has given it a substantial amount of assistance over the years. South Africa has also conducted military operations inside southern Angola in order to weaken the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO), which is trying to win independence for Namibia. Savimbi's willingness to cooperate with South Africa has made it difficult for the West, China, and black African states to support him. In March 1986, though, the Reagan administration began sending Stinger shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles to Savimbi's forces.<sup>5</sup> UNITA's strength among the Ovimbundu may ultimately limit its popular appeal in Angola as a whole, especially among the Mbundu, who may prefer to be ruled by their own tribesmen in the MPLA.

The MPLA government has continued to be strongly supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union since 1975. Cuban forces in Angola reached a high of 36,000 (according to Castro) in 1975-76, then fell to about 12,000 but rose again to their current level of 25,000 to 35,000 when UNITA and South African military operations grew more threatening. The Soviet Union signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Angola in October 1976, has provided most of Angola's weaponry, and maintains about 500 military advisers there.<sup>6</sup>

A rough rule of thumb often cited with regard to insurgencies is that the counterinsurgency forces need to have a 10-to-1 advantage

<sup>3</sup> Simon Jenkins, "Destabilisation in Southern Africa," *The Economist*, July 16, 1983, p. 21; and Allister Sparks, "Angolan Forces Fall Back from Site of Heavy Battle," *Washington Post*, October 9, 1985.

<sup>4</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1985-1986* (London: IISS, 1985), p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> On South Africa's role in Angola after the Angolan revolution, see Jenkins, "Destabilisation in Southern Africa," pp. 20-22; and Kenneth W. Grundy, "Pax Pretoriana: South Africa's Regional Policy," *Current History*, April 1985, pp. 150-54. On recent U.S. military aid to UNITA, see David B. Ottaway and Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Sends New Arms to Rebels," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1986.

<sup>6</sup> Mark N. Katz, "The Soviet-Cuban Connection," *International Security*, Summer 1983, pp. 94-95; *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, pp. 30, 91; and David B. Ottaway, "Rebel Threatens U.S. Firms in Angola," *Washington Post*, February 1, 1986.

over the insurgents in order to defeat them.<sup>7</sup> The MPLA's regular armed forces consist of 49,500 men. Together with the 25,000 to 35,000 Cubans, 500 Soviets, and 500 East Germans, the MPLA has some 75,000 to 85,000 regulars at its disposal, compared with 18,000 UNITA regulars.<sup>8</sup> This gives the Marxists a greater than 4-to-1 advantage in regular forces over UNITA. If the Cubans depart (as the United States has called for in return for Namibian independence accompanied by a complete South African military withdrawal),<sup>9</sup> UNITA might be in a better position, but the MPLA would still have an almost 3-to-1 advantage in regular forces. And if South Africa withdrew from Namibia, UNITA would not receive military assistance from Pretoria that would be as effective as the assistance it now receives.

The prospects for UNITA's survival, then, are bright, but its prospects to defeat the MPLA or to force it into a power-sharing agreement (as Savimbi has proposed and Luanda has rejected) are dimmer.

### Mozambique

FRELIMO (the National Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) was formed in 1964, and by 1969 it was dominated by Marxists-Leninists. Operations were at first largely confined to northern Mozambique, where FRELIMO benefited from sanctuaries in Tanzania. FRELIMO's influence grew rapidly after June 1974, when the new Portuguese government announced it would withdraw from Africa the following year. At the time of Mozambique's independence, FRELIMO assumed power without having to fight serious rivals, as the MPLA did in Angola.<sup>10</sup>

The new FRELIMO government openly allowed Robert Mugabe's guerrillas to use bases inside Mozambique to launch attacks against the forces of white-ruled Rhodesia. The Ian Smith government responded

<sup>7</sup> This 10-to-1 force advantage was often cited by the Pentagon as being necessary for pro-Western forces to defeat Marxist insurgents in Vietnam and more recently in El Salvador. Those who support U.S. aid to anti-Soviet rebels cite this figure in reverse to show that, despite numerical inferiority, these rebels can avoid being defeated. Whether this means they can also be victorious is another question.

<sup>8</sup> *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup> The United States has attempted to arrange for a simultaneous withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola and South African forces from both Angola and Namibia. South Africa has announced that it would withdraw its troops from Angola and allow Namibia to become independent, while the Cubans and Angolans have said Havana would withdraw all but 6,000 to 10,000 Cuban troops (which would remain in Luanda and the oil-rich Cabinda enclave). Little progress toward a settlement has actually been made. David B. Ottaway, "U.S. Offers a Timetable for Cuban Withdrawal from Angola," *Washington Post*, April 6, 1985; Allister Sparks, "S. Africa to Remove Troops from Angola," *Washington Post*, April 16, 1985; and David B. Ottaway, "Angolan Says Talks Are at 'Impasse' Following Sabotage Attempt," *Washington Post*, June 14, 1985.

<sup>10</sup> Robert D'A. Henderson, "Principles and Practice in Mozambique's Foreign Policy," *The World Today*, July 1978, pp. 276-86; and Thomas H. Henriksen, "Mozambique: The Enemy Within," *Current History*, March 1982, pp. 111-14, 135-36.

by sponsoring the MNR (Mozambican National Resistance) to fight against the Marxist government in Maputo. When Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, the MNR transferred its headquarters to South Africa. At first, however, the MNR made little impression in Mozambique, and by 1979, it had only about 1,000 men under arms.<sup>11</sup>

But worsening economic conditions, combined with the unpopular policies of the government, led to popular dissatisfaction with FRELIMO.<sup>12</sup> This has allowed the MNR to develop a basis of internal support within Mozambique in addition to its backing from South Africa. Certain ex-FRELIMO members also joined the MNR, including Afonso Dhlakama, current leader of the MNR.

The MNR has expanded its military operations to all ten of Mozambique's provinces, especially those in the central region of the country. Like other black African nations, Mozambique is not free of tribal cleavages, and the MNR has been able to take advantage of this to gain support from some of the Manica, Nbau, Makonde, and Makusas.<sup>13</sup>

The MNR claims to have 16,000 men under arms: FRELIMO puts MNR strength at 10,000. Others estimate the figure as being lower still (the International Institute for Strategic Studies says 6,000 trained men and 3,000 reservists). Mozambique's army has about 14,000 men, of whom approximately 75 percent are conscripts whose reliability is doubtful.<sup>14</sup> FRELIMO, then, does not come anywhere near having a 10-to-1 advantage over the MNR, and indeed may not even have a 2-to-1 advantage.

FRELIMO has received military assistance from the Soviet bloc. In March 1977, Maputo and Moscow signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation. The Soviet Union has also provided some military equipment, and Soviet naval vessels have visited Mozambique. There are also about 750 military advisers from Cuba, 100 from East Germany, and 300 from the Soviet Union in the country.<sup>15</sup> Yet despite the threat the MNR poses to FRELIMO (arguably a greater one than UNITA poses to the MPLA), the Soviet bloc has been either unable or unwilling to make the same sort of large-scale military commitment to Maputo that it has made to Luanda.

In order to defend itself, the FRELIMO government has chosen to turn more and more toward the West. At the end of 1981 Mozambique and Portugal announced plans for joint military cooperation. In April 1982

<sup>11</sup> Michael S. Radu, "Mozambique: Nonalignment or New Dependence?" *Current History*, March 1984, p. 134.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; and *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, p. 102.

<sup>15</sup> *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, pp. 30, 33, 102, 147.

the two countries signed an agreement whereby Portuguese military instructors would provide training in counterinsurgency warfare to the Mozambicans.<sup>16</sup> In April 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati Accord, in which the former agreed to stop supporting the African National Congress (ANC) and the latter agreed to cease aiding the MNR. The willingness of FRELIMO leader Samora Machel to sign this agreement with South Africa only shows how threatened by the MNR he is, since his government previously gave much assistance to Zimbabwean rebels and was among the strongest critics of the white regime in Pretoria.

When the accord with South Africa was signed, FRELIMO did indeed withdraw its support for the ANC, but MNR activities have continued. In 1985 the South African government admitted that it had continued to support the MNR even after the agreement was signed.<sup>17</sup> The Nkomati Accord, then, does little to help FRELIMO defeat the MNR.

The MNR has also benefited from the absence of a large-scale Soviet-Cuban military presence, yet the MNR's prospects for overthrowing FRELIMO are doubtful. Observers note that, apart from anticommunism, the MNR has yet to articulate a political program that would appeal to the Mozambican people as a whole. Further, it has not made much effort to set up an alternative government, but has concentrated on attacking FRELIMO positions and then withdrawing. In addition, there are over 7,000 Zimbabwean troops in Mozambique helping FRELIMO. In August 1985, FRELIMO and Zimbabwean troops launched an offensive that succeeded in capturing the MNR's headquarters in central Mozambique (but in February 1986 the MNR recaptured it).<sup>18</sup>

It is not clear whether South Africa really wants the MNR to come to power. Pretoria might prefer a weak Marxist government in Mozambique increasingly willing to cooperate with it to a strong non-communist government that is not willing to do so, or to a weak non-communist government that South Africa might have to exert a great effort to keep in power. It is much easier to support the MNR in its effort to weaken FRELIMO than it would be to help it stay in power as a government that might in turn face armed opposition. Nevertheless, FRELIMO is one of the pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist governments most seriously threatened by anti-Soviet insurgents.

<sup>16</sup> Norman MacQueen, "Mozambique's Widening Foreign Policy," *The World Today*, January 1984, pp. 22-28.

<sup>17</sup> Glenn Frankel, "Aid to Mozambican Rebels Said to Continue," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1985; and Brian Pottinger, "Military up in Arms over Nkomati," *Sunday Times (South Africa)*, September 22, 1985.

<sup>18</sup> Jenkins, "Destabilisation in Southern Africa," pp. 23-24; and "Mozambique: A Need to Settle," *The Economist*, March 22, 1986, pp. 38, 41. According to well-informed sources, FRELIMO and Zimbabwean forces captured MNR headquarters yet again in the spring of 1986.

## Ethiopia

The history of the 1974 Marxist coup in Ethiopia, the Somali attack to regain the Ogaden in 1977, and the expulsion of the Soviets and Cubans from Somalia are also well known. With the aid of 1,500 Soviet advisers and 12,000 to 15,000 Cuban troops, the Ethiopians were able to drive the Somalis out of the Ogaden by March 1978.<sup>19</sup>

But this was not the end of the new regime's problems. It was also faced with growing insurgencies in other parts of Ethiopia, especially Eritrea. In the late nineteenth century the Italians failed in their attempt to colonize Ethiopia, but they did take Eritrea. Except for the brief period when Mussolini occupied Ethiopia, Eritrea had been separately ruled until the end of World War II. The British occupied Eritrea then, but the United Nations decided after World War II that it should be ruled as an autonomous region by Haile Selassie. In 1962, Haile Selassie annexed Eritrea outright, and an insurgency soon arose there. Since the 1974 revolution, several other regional revolts flared up, including ones in Tigray, Afars, and Oromo.<sup>20</sup>

The new Ethiopian regime was just as determined to assert its authority over the rebellious province as the old regime had been. After driving the Somalis out of the Ogaden, Addis Ababa launched an offensive against the Eritrean rebels. Although the Soviets had helped the Eritrean Marxists for years, Moscow quickly switched to helping the Ethiopian Marxists in their attempt to suppress them. The Cubans, however, refused to do this; after aiding the Eritreans for so long, Castro would not send Cuban soldiers to fight against them. Instead, he urged a political solution to the Eritrean conflict.<sup>21</sup>

The several attempts that Addis Ababa has made to crush the Eritreans have all failed. In 1982, for example, the Ethiopians launched a major offensive against an Eritrean stronghold in Nakfa, but this failed partly because rebels in Tigray kept attacking Ethiopian supply lines. In 1983, Addis Ababa tried to defeat the rebels in Tigray but again was unsuccessful.<sup>22</sup>

Ethiopia's armed forces (including the army and the People's Militia) total 217,000 men. Addis Ababa signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Moscow in November 1978 and has received modern

<sup>19</sup> On these events, see Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts*, chapter 9; and Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 630-53.

<sup>20</sup> Mekail Hamet, "Reflections on the Eritrean Revolution," *Horn of Africa*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1983-84, pp. 3-4; and Paul B. Henze, "Communism and Ethiopia," *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1981, pp. 65-66.

<sup>21</sup> Katz, "The Soviet-Cuban Connection," pp. 95-97.

<sup>22</sup> James Myall, "The National Question in the Horn of Africa," *The World Today*, September 1983, p. 338. Another Ethiopian offensive was launched in Eritrea during the summer of 1985; see Paul Valley, "Relief Workers Moved in After Ethiopian Troops Rout Rebels in the North," *The Times* (London), November 1, 1985.

Soviet weapons. There are also some 1,500 Soviet and 550 East German military advisers. Cuba used to keep as many as 17,000 soldiers; but this number has fallen to 5,000, in part because Somalia is not expected to attack again and in part because of Ethiopia's unwillingness or inability to continue paying for such a large Cuban presence. There are about 28,500 Eritrean, 5,000 Tigrayan, and 600 Oromo rebels.<sup>23</sup> Although they apparently do not receive aid from the West, the conservative Arab states do assist them.

The Ethiopian government has better than a 6-to-1 force advantage over the guerrillas. However, it is believed that Addis Ababa keeps only 100,000 troops in Eritrea<sup>24</sup> and thus has an actual advantage of only 3.5 to 1 in that rebellious province. (Ethiopia has not sent more troops into Eritrea partly because it must deploy a number of them in the Ogaden region as well as keep a large number in the Ethiopian heartland to maintain internal security there.) As long as this remains the case, the Ethiopian government will find it difficult to defeat the guerrillas.

Yet while Addis Ababa may be unable to crush the insurgents, the continued existence of the latter does not threaten the Ethiopian government the same way that UNITA threatens the MPLA or the MNR threatens FRELIMO. It is not the aim of these rebels to overthrow the Marxist government in Addis Ababa; their aim is to gain independence, or perhaps just autonomy, for their regions.

Another factor hindering the guerrillas in Eritrea is that they are divided into four separate groups and have spent as much time fighting each other as they have spent fighting Ethiopian government forces.<sup>25</sup> This helps Addis Ababa maintain its presence in the province. As a result of internal divisions and smaller forces, compared with Addis Ababa's forces, the Eritreans are not likely to gain independence through defeating Ethiopian forces militarily. And as long as Eritrea cannot win its independence, the more united but numerically much smaller Tigray People's Liberation Front has no real hope of winning independence for its province either. Perhaps the best they can both hope for is that Addis Ababa will tire of fighting and will be willing to negotiate a political settlement granting them some form of political autonomy.

## Cambodia

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge came to power in Cambodia at the same time as South Vietnam fell to Hanoi's forces. Although Marxist,

<sup>23</sup> *The Military Balance 1979-1980*, p. 79; *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, pp. 30, 33, 96-97, 147.

<sup>24</sup> Henze, "Communism and Ethiopia," p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> For an account of the intra-Eritrean disputes, see Hamet, "Reflections on the Eritrean Revolution," pp. 3-15.

the Khmer Rouge was bitterly opposed to the Hanoi government because it feared that the Vietnamese sought to dominate Cambodia. The Chinese backed Khmer leader Pol Pot in his independent stand on Vietnam — a policy that did much to sour Sino-Vietnamese relations from 1975 onward. Tension grew along the Vietnam-Cambodia border as the Pol Pot government reasserted claims to territory in Vietnam that was formerly Cambodian. At the end of December 1978, Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia and quickly overwhelmed the Khmer Rouge. Hanoi established a new government in Phnom Penh led by the Cambodian Marxist Heng Samrin, who had earlier broken with Pol Pot. The new Vietnamese-backed government was recognized by the Soviet Union and its allies, but through the efforts of China and ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the Pol Pot regime continued to hold Cambodia's seat at the United Nations.<sup>26</sup>

Although the Vietnamese succeeded in sweeping through most of Cambodia, they did not completely destroy the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge was able to remain in parts of western and northwestern Cambodia, as well as to conduct guerrilla operations elsewhere. Both China and ASEAN funneled military aid to the Khmer Rouge through Thailand. A pattern emerged in which during the dry season of every year (January through April) the Vietnamese would launch an offensive against the resistance that would make substantial progress, but during the wet season resistance activity would resume. Vietnamese forces have on many occasions pursued Cambodians across the border into Thailand, and this has led to several clashes between Vietnamese and Thai forces.<sup>27</sup>

The Khmer Rouge are not the only Cambodian group resisting the Vietnamese; there are also two noncommunist groups. One is led by Prince Sihanouk — the neutralist leader of Cambodia until he was overthrown in 1970 by Lon Nol — and another is led by former Prime Minister Son Sann. In 1982 the Khmer Rouge joined a "coalition government" with the two noncommunist resistance movements in order to reduce the risk of losing the United Nations seat because of Pol Pot's past activities. However, the Khmer Rouge remains the most important element in the coalition. In 1985 the Khmer Rouge had a 35,000-man guerrilla force, while Son Sann had some 18,000 men and Prince Sihanouk only 7,000. The Heng Samrin government has a 35,000-man conscript army. More important, the Vietnamese have a force of 160,000 men in Cambodia.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> David P. Chandler, "Kampuchea: End Game or Stalemate?" *Current History*, December 1984, pp. 413-17, 433-34.

<sup>27</sup> Leszek Buszynski, "Vietnam's ASEAN Diplomacy: Incentives for Change," *The World Today*, January 1984, pp. 29-36.

<sup>28</sup> *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, pp. 126, 137.

The Vietnamese and the Heng Samrin government, then, only have a force advantage of somewhat greater than 3 to 1, which demonstrates that having a 10-to-1 force advantage over insurgent forces is not always necessary for counterinsurgency warfare to succeed. The Vietnamese, however, are much better equipped than the Cambodian resistance. In addition, much of the Cambodian resistance is in Thailand.

Although united in a coalition, the three resistance forces operate independently, for the most part. In the 1985 dry season offensive, the Vietnamese were for the first time able to drive virtually all the resistance forces out of Cambodia into Thailand. These groups, especially the Khmer Rouge, did succeed in moving forces back into the country during the subsequent wet season, but their operations were reduced.<sup>29</sup>

Unlike the rebels in Angola and Mozambique, the Cambodian resistance forces do not appear to have any chance of ousting the Heng Samrin government as long as Vietnamese forces remain in the country. Prince Sihanouk once said that he was fighting in order to get the Vietnamese to enter negotiations, not to defeat them, because this was not possible. Yet if the Cambodian rebels have little chance of succeeding, and if even their ability to continue operating in Cambodia is doubtful, the Heng Samrin government would be unable to survive without Vietnamese help.<sup>30</sup> Thus, Vietnam must continue to maintain large numbers of troops in Cambodia in order to keep its protégé in power.

### *Afghanistan*

The events leading up to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are also well known. A coup in April 1978 brought a Marxist government to power in Kabul, and its radical policies quickly led to the growth of internal opposition. Exacerbating the situation was the division of the Afghan Marxists into two opposing factions: the Khalq and the Parcham. Both were pro-Soviet, though the Parcham were more so. The first two Marxist rulers, Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, were Khalqis. By December 1979, internal opposition had become so strong that the Soviets invaded with 80,000 troops in order to preserve Marxist rule. The Soviets immediately executed Amin and replaced him with the Parchami, Babrak Karmal. In May 1986, the ailing Karmal resigned as general secretary of the ruling party and was replaced by Najibullah, who is also a Parchami. But if the Soviets had been under the impression that

<sup>29</sup> See Daniel Southerland, "Sihanouk Doubts Cambodia Victory," *Washington Post*, April 13, 1985; and Paul Quinn-Judge, "Vietnam Said to Be Planning Major Offensive in Cambodia," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 13, 1985, pp. 1, 40.

<sup>30</sup> On this point, see Kishore Mahbubani, "The Kampuchean Problem: A Southeast Asian Problem," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1983-84, p. 413.

invading and subduing Afghanistan would be as easy for them as were Hungary and Czechoslovakia, they were quickly disabused of this notion.<sup>31</sup>

The Soviets at present have about 115,000 troops in Afghanistan, while the Kabul regime has an army of about 30,000 to 40,000. This latter is not an especially effective force and is at a considerably smaller number than before the Soviet invasion because of large-scale defections to the rebels. Defections still take place at a high rate, and the Kabul regime has had to resort to press-gang techniques to keep the army at its present size, but these soldiers are not reliable. The Afghan rebels are believed to have forces of anywhere from 75,000 to 100,000 men, along with the sympathy and support of most of the population as well as the refugees in Pakistan.<sup>32</sup> Even including the Kabul regime's forces then, the Soviets have at best only a 2-to-1 advantage over the guerrillas.

The guerrillas hold most of the countryside, while the Soviets hold the main cities and roads, but the rebels often successfully attack these too. The Soviets have launched several offensives against the rebels, and these have usually done well as long as Soviet forces concentrated on the attack, but once most of the Soviet forces have been deployed elsewhere, the rebels have been able to move back in. The Soviets have not succeeded in making the Karmal government popular in Afghanistan; without the presence of Soviet troops the regime would quickly be overthrown.<sup>33</sup>

The Afghan rebels, however, do suffer from several disadvantages. They are divided into seven separate groups, three traditionalist and four Islamic fundamentalist, and they have often fought each other as well as the Soviets. Efforts have been made to unite the groups, but the largest rebel group (the fundamentalist Hizb-i-Islami) refuses to cooperate.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the Soviets have resorted to increasingly brutal tactics. One French observer noted that the Soviets understand that the guerrillas are supported by the population, so Soviet forces have undertaken campaigns to destroy agriculture in order to drive as much of the population either into Pakistan or into the main cities, where the Soviets have more control.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 887-937.

<sup>32</sup> *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, pp. 30, 118-19; Tahir Amin, "Afghan Resistance: Past, Present, and Future," *Asian Survey*, April 1984, pp. 382-84, 391.

<sup>33</sup> For an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Soviet operations in Afghanistan, see Joseph Collins, "Soviet Military Performance in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Assessment," *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1983, pp. 147-68.

<sup>34</sup> See Amin, "Afghan Resistance," pp. 373-99, and Zalmay Khalizad, "Moscow's Afghan War," *Problems of Communism*, January-February 1986, pp. 10-13.

<sup>35</sup> Claude Malhuret, "Report from Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1983-84, p. 427.

So far, the Soviets have been unable to defeat the Afghan rebels and do not seem likely to do so in the near future. On the other hand, the Afghan rebels do not have any real possibility of driving the Soviets out of their country. The rebels have obtained most of their arms by capturing them from the Soviets, but they have also received some from Pakistan. The rebels would like to receive more sophisticated Western arms, especially surface-to-air missiles with which to shoot down Soviet aircraft and helicopters. The United States and other countries have given a substantial amount of aid to the Afghan *mujahidin*, but Pakistan is understandably reluctant to allow too much aid to the rebels for fear of how the Soviets might retaliate. In March 1986, though, it was reported that the Reagan administration was sending Stinger shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles to the Afghan guerrillas.<sup>36</sup>

At best, the Afghan rebels can hope to maintain or even expand their control over as much of their country as possible. They really cannot defeat the Soviets, though, and fighting is likely to continue for a long time.

#### Nicaragua

The pro-American regime headed by Anastasio Somoza and based on the National Guard was driven from power by the Sandinistas in 1979.<sup>37</sup> Although Marxists, the Sandinistas were supported in their effort to get rid of Somoza by a broad range of Nicaraguan society, including the Chamber of Commerce. In the final battles with the National Guard, they apparently received some Cuban military assistance, though exactly how much is uncertain.

The Carter administration reacted to the new regime by giving it economic assistance in hopes that the Sandinistas would not become strongly pro-Soviet and that they would eventually allow free elections. Citing Sandinista assistance to the Marxist rebels in El Salvador, the Reagan administration ended economic assistance to Managua soon after coming to office, and by the end of 1981 the United States had begun a program of covert assistance to the "Contras" fighting against the Sandinistas.<sup>38</sup>

The Sandinistas claim that the United States is completely responsible for the Contras, but in reality Sandinista policies have sparked internal discontent. Like many other radical regimes when they first come

<sup>36</sup> Ottaway and Tyler, "U.S. Sends New Arms to Rebels." As of June 1986, though, Afghan rebel leaders claimed that they had not received any Stingers (unlike UNITA which claimed to have received them); David B. Ottaway, "Controversy Grows Over Giving Afghan, Angolan Rebels Missiles," *Washington Post*, June 21, 1986.

<sup>37</sup> "Evolution of U.S. Policy," *Congressional Digest*, November 1984, pp. 260-61.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 288; "Action in the Current Congress," *Congressional Digest*, November 1984, pp. 264-65.

to power, the Sandinistas tried to socialize the economy too quickly, and economic chaos resulted. They have imposed press censorship and have periodically closed down the independent *La Prensa* (which supported them before Somoza's overthrow). In addition, the Sandinistas did not allow opposition candidates much freedom to campaign in the 1983 elections, and their imposition of conscription was highly unpopular.<sup>39</sup>

There are four separate opposition movements. By far the largest is the Nicaraguan Democratic Front (NDF), with 15,000 men. This group has bases in Honduras and operates in northern Nicaragua. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency gave the NDF approximately \$80 million in covert aid from 1981 until June 1984, when Congress cut off funding. The NDF is led by former officers of Somoza's National Guard, and this fact alone seems to limit its appeal inside Nicaragua. Another group, the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), which was led by former Sandinista guerrilla leader Eden Pastora ("Commander Zero"), has 2,000 to 3,000 men, and operates out of Costa Rica. In May 1986 most of Pastora's forces deserted him and joined the NDF. Finally, there are two resistance groups among the Miskito and other Indians of eastern Nicaragua, whom the Sandinistas treated especially badly. Together these two groups are said to have anywhere from 1,000 to 6,000 men under arms (the two groups agreed to form an alliance in June 1985).<sup>40</sup>

The Sandinista army has 60,000 men. The Reagan administration put the total number of Contras at 15,000 meaning that Managua has a 4-to-1 force advantage over the guerrillas. With this ratio, the White House expects that the Sandinistas do not have enough men to defeat the Contras. Assisting the Sandinistas are fifty Soviet and 3,000 Cuban military advisers.<sup>41</sup>

Should the Contras ever be in a position to seriously threaten the Sandinistas, the Soviets are not in as geographically advantageous a position to help them as they are with the Marxists in Afghanistan. Despite the claims of the Reagan administration, the Soviets have not provided Managua with all that much military assistance, and they do not seem

<sup>39</sup> For critical accounts of the Sandinistas by two former admirers, see Piero Gleijeses, "Resist Romanticism," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1984, pp. 122-38, and Robert Leiken, "Nicaragua's Untold Stories," *New Republic*, October 8, 1984, pp. 16-22. For a strong argument that U.S. hostility did indeed lead to Sandinista intransigence, see Roy Gutman, "America's Diplomatic Charade," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1984, pp. 3-23.

<sup>40</sup> Forrest D. Colburn, "Nicaragua Under Siege," *Current History*, March 1985, p. 108; *The Military Balance 1985-1986*, p. 153; Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Commandante Zero . . ." *Washington Post*, June 7, 1985; Bernard Nietschmann, "The Unreported War Against the Sandinistas," *Policy Review*, Summer 1984, pp. 32-39; Joanne Omang, "Nicaraguan Indians Form Alliance," *Washington Post*, June 22, 1985; "C.I.A. Role Reported in Contra's Fall," *New York Times*, May 30, 1986.

<sup>41</sup> "White House Clarifies Tally of 'Contras,'" *Washington Post*, March 21, 1985.

willing to do so. Indeed, Fidel Castro was reported to be annoyed with Moscow for not increasing its aid to Managua.<sup>42</sup>

It is doubtful, though, that the Contras will soon be in a position to actually overthrow the Sandinistas. The NDF's leadership, consisting of ex-Somoza National Guard officers, has not come up with a political program beyond overthrowing the Marxists. Many fear that they would want to restore the old order, including reclaiming land taken from large landholders. Eden Pastora was able to accomplish little and gave up the struggle altogether after most of his small army defected to the NDF. The Indian groups' appeal is strong among the Indians, but not among the rest of the population, so they cannot be expected to grow into a national movement. Thus, while it is not impossible for the Contras to overthrow the Sandinistas, they will probably have to become much stronger, especially in terms of internal support within Nicaragua, in order to oust the Marxists.

### The Soviet Response

For the most part, Soviet writers have not seen the phenomenon of anti-Soviet insurgencies as a permanent or growing problem faced by the Soviet Union. Instead, they have tended to discuss these conflicts as problems in the consolidation of socialism in the Third World. The blame for them is placed firmly on the Western "imperialists" as well as on their Chinese and reactionary Third World allies; the internal causes are usually overlooked. Whether they really believe it or not, Soviet writers portray these conflicts as only temporary, and they appear to have no doubt that the pro-Soviet Marxist regimes will eventually prevail.

One of the premier Soviet military theorists, Colonel E. Rybkin, did discuss this type of conflict as early as 1978. In an article attempting to classify into specific types all the various conflicts occurring in the world, Rybkin took note that there were several of these insurrections going on. Instead of calling them anti-Soviet insurgencies, he termed them "wars of nations on the path of socialist development in defense of socialism." In other words, these were conflicts in which pro-Soviet Marxist governments in the Third World — with which the Soviet Union did not have (and perhaps did not desire to have) a full-fledged defense commitment as with the East European states — are defending themselves against armed opposition. Rybkin did not acknowledge that the opposition to these governments could be widespread internally or result from such

<sup>42</sup> Dusko Doder, "Castro Faults Soviets on Managua Aid," *Washington Post*, March 24, 1985.

a government being unpopular in a given country. Instead, external forces were the cause of this armed opposition.<sup>43</sup>

This refusal to acknowledge the internal causes of revolt against Marxist Third World dictatorships is in sharp contrast to Rybkin's earlier writing about revolts against conservative Third World dictatorships. In these, he saw the entire basis for the conflict not in the overall East-West competition but in strictly local causes. He also made distinctions within the opposition to conservative dictatorships, seeing it as containing both communist and noncommunist elements.<sup>44</sup> This was more sophisticated than the U.S. view of such conflicts, where the actors were portrayed as a noncommunist government facing an externally backed communist opposition. But all this sophistication disappeared when Rybkin discussed revolts against Marxist dictatorships. In this case, the conflict was also seen strictly in terms of communist versus anticommunist, though the actors are reversed.

How the Soviet Union should respond to these anti-Soviet insurgencies appears to be a matter of debate among Soviet writers. Several Soviet military writers (who probably reflect the ideas of the military leadership) have concluded that intervention in local war can be successful. There has been a marked evolution in Soviet military thinking about the utility of external intervention in Third World insurgencies. During the Vietnam War, the standard Soviet military judgment about U.S. involvement was that while U.S. forces were militarily superior to the Vietnamese Communists, the Americans were "doomed to failure," because their fight was morally unjust.<sup>45</sup> After the war, however, Soviet military writers began to see the U.S. failure as resulting less from moral factors than from the poor use of military force. In the late 1970s, some Soviet military writers began to see certain U.S. military actions in Vietnam (such as the use of helicopters in mountainous countryside for counter-insurgency purposes) as having been effective. And while they did not favor Israel in either the 1967 or 1973 Middle East wars, they saw Israeli strategy and tactics as extremely effective and responsible for the Israeli victories.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Colonel E. Rybkin, "YOK s'yezd KPSS i osvoboditel'nyye voiny sovremennoi epokhi," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, November 1978, pp. 11-12.

<sup>44</sup> Major General K. Stepanov and Lt. Colonel E. Rybkin, "The Nature and Types of Wars of the Modern Era," *Voennaya Mysl*, February 1968, CIA FB FPD 0042/69, pp. 76-79; see also Mark N. Katz, *The Third World in Soviet Military Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 39-51, 69-79, 98-102.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Major General V. Matsulenko, "Lokal'nye voiny imperializma (1945-1968 gg)," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, September 1968, p. 47; and Lt. Colonel T. Kondratkov, "Organichennaya volna — prудie imperialisticheskoi agressii," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, April 1969, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> Colonel N. Nildin, "Nekotorye operativno-takticheskie uroki lokal'nykh voyn imperializma," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, December 1978, p. 66; and Colonel A. Sinitskii, "Nekotorye takticheskie

Since late 1983, one of the most important Soviet military journals, *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, has published many articles under the general heading "local wars." These articles have not been general theoretical treatments of local wars or propaganda blasts at the U.S. role in them, as have most articles on this subject in the past (but these types of articles have not disappeared). Rather, these articles deal with specific tactical and battlefield questions with regard to local war. Almost all the discussion focuses on the success or failure of Western tactics in local conflicts. Occasionally, the successes and failures of present or former Soviet allies (such as Syria and Egypt) are examined, but the military operations of the Soviet Union or its socialist allies are not.

These articles discuss such subjects as air defense, air tactics against air defense, air tactics against enemy aircraft, air tactics against airfields, armed forces organization for local wars, use of helicopters in local wars, and naval attacks against the shore. The detailed conclusions on what specific lessons the Soviet military should learn in planning its own tactics and weapons procurement are not spelled out, but the overall conclusion in most articles is clear: these tactics can be used successfully by intervening forces in local wars.<sup>47</sup> Because many of these articles discuss intervention against insurgents, it is evident that these Soviet military writers believe that the Soviet Union and its allies can successfully use such tactics in anti-Soviet insurgencies.

In a major study edited by General I. Shavrov, commandant of the General Staff Academy, lip service is given to the importance of moral factors in war, but the bulk of the book examines several case studies of local conflicts and looks carefully at the question *why* the United States and/or its allies were or were not successful.<sup>48</sup> Another study by two civilian scholars closely examines the Soviet experience with the Muslim insurgencies that took place in Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. The authors state openly that this experience has relevance to Afghanistan now. They note that Muslim insurgents were defeated then and imply that they can be defeated again now.<sup>49</sup>

vybory iz opyta agressivnoi voiny SShA protiv V'etnama," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, June 1979, p. 57. See also Katz, *The Third World in Soviet Military Thought*, pp. 29-30, 55-56, 83-84, 109-13.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Colonel General G. Dol'nikov, "Razvitiye takiki aviatcii v lokal'nykh voynakh," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, December 1983, pp. 34-43; Major General M. Fesenko, "Ognevoe porazhenie nazemnykh sredstv PVO," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, May 1984, pp. 66-73; Major General V. Maksimov, "Udary po aerodromam," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, June 1984, pp. 79-84; Colonel R. Loskutov and Colonel V. Morozov, "Nekotorye voprosy takiki vooruzhennogo konfliktu v Livanе v 1982 godu," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, July 1984, pp. 75-80; Admiral P. Navoitsev, "Deistvilia VMS protiv berega," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, August 1984, pp. 47-52; and Colonel V. Odintsov, "Tylovoe obespechenie voisk s primeneniem aviatcii po opyту lokal'nykh voyn," *Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, February 1985, pp. 81-86.

<sup>48</sup> General of the Army I. E. Shavrov, *Lokal'nye voiny: istoria i sovremennost'* (Moscow: Voentdat, 1981).

<sup>49</sup> A. I. Zevelev, Iu. A. Pofakov, and A. I. Chugunov, *Basmachestvo: Vozniknovenie, sushchnost'*,

There are other Soviet writers, though, especially in the international institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who seem to have doubts about too much military involvement in Third World insurgencies. One wrote an article emphasizing the theme "the revolution must defend itself," indicating that Marxist Third World governments must bear the brunt of any fighting necessary to put down armed opponents,<sup>50</sup> that the established socialist states could not be expected to do this for them. There are even signs that some in the Soviet military think that way. For example, in an interview with the British publication *Détente*, a Soviet officer identified only as "Colonel X" admitted that Moscow's military intervention in Afghanistan "does not serve our interests" and proposed that "non-alignment pacts" be signed in countries where conflict is occurring and that the great powers exert pressure on their clients to form coalition governments between government and insurgent forces. The superpowers should then work to halt all outside assistance to any of the insurgent forces that refused to join the coalition as well as give economic assistance to the new government. It is evident that he mainly thought of this arrangement for anti-Soviet insurgencies when he states, "Instead of paying these hooligans to make war, let us pay them to keep the peace" — not the sort of language the Soviets use to describe pro-Soviet forces of "national and social liberation."<sup>51</sup>

One could conclude from this argument that the Soviets would welcome the opportunity to withdraw Soviet, Vietnamese, or Cuban forces from conflicts and see Marxist rule somewhat diluted by giving the insurgents a share of power. If they did this, of course, the Soviets would not be in a position to prevent the insurgents from seizing full power except through renewed intervention by one of the established socialist states. But it is not at all clear that the Soviets are willing to take this risk. In the one conflict — Afghanistan — where "Colonel X" discussed what a "nonalignment pact" would look like specifically, he called for a coalition government with both insurgents and guerrillas but insisted that a nonalignment pact be agreed upon for Pakistan first to ensure that aid to the insurgents could no longer be channeled through it.<sup>52</sup> In other words, strict guarantees against the West helping the insurgents must be in place before the Soviets agree to stop backing the Kabul government (if they

*krakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), esp. p. 6, where an analogy between the activities of the "Basmachi" in the 1920s and 1930s and the Afghan rebels now is explicitly made. See also B. Lunin, ed., *Basmachestvo: sotsial'no-politicheskaia sushchnost'* (Tashkent: Iz. "Fan" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1984), p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> P. Shastiko, "Revoliutsiia dolzhna umet' zashchishchat'sia," *Azija i Afrika Segodnia*, January 1982, pp. 2-5.

<sup>51</sup> "Colonel X's Peace Proposals," *Détente*, February 1985, pp. 2-4.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* Soviet statements about the desire to see the Afghan conflict brought to a peaceful political resolution were greeted with skepticism by U.S. officials at the time of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in November 1985. See Gary Lee, "Soviets Voice Concern over Afghan War," *Washington Post*, November 18, 1985.

ever really would) and the Marxists would remain in power with a few former guerrillas. What those Soviets who do not want continued large-scale Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan really want, then, is to be able to withdraw but to keep their allies in power, preferably with Western consent.

The Soviet response to these anti-Soviet insurgencies has been varied, not only in their writing but also in types of actual foreign and military policies. At one extreme, Moscow has sent 115,000 of its own troops to defeat the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan and has supported both the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the Cuban intervention in Angola. At the other extreme, none of the established socialist states has sent nearly as many advisers to either Nicaragua or Mozambique; the Soviets have sent only relatively limited military assistance to these two countries as well.

The Soviet Union can project force into a country bordering it, such as Afghanistan, more easily than it can into one that is far away. The same is true for Vietnam in Cambodia. But distance is not necessarily a barrier to military force projection, as Cuban intervention in Angola and Ethiopia (against Somalia) shows. It is not surprising that Cuban and Soviet involvement in Nicaragua has been limited, since Nicaragua is so close to the United States and very far from the Soviet Union. It is close to Cuba, but if large numbers of Cuban forces entered Nicaragua, and the United States responded with military intervention, there is little that the Soviets could do to help their allies. What does seem unusual is the relatively limited amount of Soviet and Cuban military assistance that has been given to Mozambique, compared with Angola and Ethiopia. But Zimbabwe has sent troops there instead, thus relieving the established socialist states of the need to do so.

In addition to geographic accessibility and the likely response of the United States, the degree to which the insurgents threaten the pro-Soviet Marxist government must be an important factor in deciding what degree of military support from the established socialist states is necessary. In Afghanistan, the guerrillas would quickly overthrow the Marxist government without Soviet forces present. In Cambodia, the Heng Samrin government came to power only because the Vietnamese invaded and so could not be expected to survive long if they withdrew. There is a strong though less certain probability that the MPLA would be ousted by UNITA if the Cubans left Angola. In Ethiopia, the insurgents do not actually threaten the government in Addis Ababa, and so a considerably smaller military presence from outside is needed. Perhaps the reason more help has not been given to Mozambique is that the Soviets and Cubans judge that while the MNR is a nuisance it does not really threaten FRELIMO's

rule. The Sandinistas, too, have been able to hold the Contras at bay without much Soviet and Cuban assistance.

At present, none of these six anti-Soviet insurgencies seems about to succeed in toppling a pro-Soviet Marxist government, not only in those countries where there is a heavy military presence by the established socialist countries (Afghanistan, Cambodia), but even in those where there is a moderate (Angola, Ethiopia) or light (Mozambique, Nicaragua) presence. But what would the Soviet Union and its allies do if the insurgents where they do not have a strong military presence suddenly grew more powerful, or if anti-Soviet insurgencies broke out in other countries, such as might have happened in South Yemen if the fighting that erupted between the Marxist factions there had been prolonged and non-Marxist forces had seized the opportunity to rebel? The Soviet Union and its allies would then be confronted with the choice of (1) undertaking another large-scale military intervention that would risk alienating other Third World countries (as the Afghan adventure has worsened Soviet relations with many Muslim countries) as well as inducing the traditional allies of the United States to cooperate more closely with the United States, but without any more guarantee of being able to crush the rebels than they have had in Afghanistan; or (2) giving only so much military aid and no more to the besieged Marxist government and risking that it be overthrown. The latter would be especially unwelcome to the Soviets, because if a pro-Soviet Marxist government were actually overthrown by its internal opposition (not simply by an external power, as the government of Grenada was), not only would a Soviet ally be lost but also the anti-Soviet guerrillas in other countries could be greatly encouraged. They might redouble their efforts to overthrow the Marxist government once they saw that it had successfully been done elsewhere.

These developments would be most unwelcome to Moscow, and so if confronted with a stronger or a new anti-Soviet insurgency, the Soviet Union is most likely to react by seeking to help the Third World Marxist government militarily defeat the rebels. However, if this could not be done with arms transfers or a relatively small number of military advisers, but required another large-scale military intervention, the Soviets could be faced with a serious problem. The intervening forces would have to come from somewhere. But the Vietnamese are probably not willing to become involved in operations outside Southeast Asia. Their forces already have major commitments in maintaining internal security in Vietnam, occupying Laos and Cambodia, and being prepared to defend against another Chinese attack.

Soviet forces are now in Afghanistan, but Moscow has never before attempted a large-scale overseas military intervention. This would

be much more difficult for the Soviets than launching an invasion across their own border. An overseas Soviet military intervention would be regarded as extremely threatening by the West and could severely jeopardize Soviet goals of achieving arms control agreements and keeping Western defense expenditures and cooperation from growing rapidly. Finally, the Soviets do not want to risk a military confrontation with the United States, which an overseas military intervention by Soviet forces could lead to.

The one country remaining that has the capability of militarily intervening in anti-Soviet insurgencies is Cuba. Castro did not anticipate that, once the MPLA had driven UNITA, FNLA, and South Africa away from Luanda in 1975-76, Cuban forces would still be there a decade later on the defensive against UNITA. Cuba intervened in the Horn of Africa to help the Ethiopians fend off the Somali attack, but Castro refused to become heavily involved in fighting the Eritrean guerrillas. Would Castro be willing to send forces elsewhere? And even if he is, there is a limit to the number of counterinsurgency struggles Cuba can send forces to at any one time. Cuba, after all, is a nation of only 10 million people with total armed forces of 161,500 (of whom 99,500 are conscripts). Finally, Moscow can hope that other leftist but not fully Marxist-Leninist governments might use their troops to help a neighboring pro-Soviet regime, but as Zimbabwe's faltering commitment to Maputo shows, this is not something Moscow can rely on.

Should any of the present anti-Soviet insurgencies intensify or more break out, the Soviets will face difficult choices. Their decision whether to intervene themselves or to support an ally such as Cuba in doing so will depend on geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, proximity to any other socialist or socialist-oriented country, the seriousness of the internal opposition, the amount of outside support the opposition receives, proximity to the United States and likely U.S. response to socialist intervention in a given country, and in some cases the willingness of Moscow's allies to undertake military intervention at the Kremlin's behest.

Of course, it is the Soviet goal not just to prevent pro-Soviet Marxist regimes from being overthrown but also to defeat completely the guerrillas attempting to do so even when these guerrillas cannot succeed due to strong socialist military presence, as in Afghanistan. When in March 1985 Pakistani President Zia al-Haq went to Moscow for Chernenko's funeral and met with Gorbachev, Gorbachev threatened to give aid to Pakistani rebels unless Pakistan stopped aiding Afghan rebels. Further, the Soviets threatened to aid Pakistani rebels if the United States continued

to assist Nicaraguan rebels.<sup>53</sup> It is probably not coincidental that government forces launched offensives against the rebels in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique during the summer of 1985. This could be an ominous sign that Gorbachev is much more willing than his predecessors to undertake confrontational measures in order to protect Moscow's weak allies in the Third World.

How far the Soviets will actually follow through on their threat to Pakistan is not yet clear. What is dangerous, though, is the implication in the threat that the Soviet leadership believes its own propaganda about the anti-Soviet insurgents in Afghanistan and elsewhere being supported mainly by external and not internal forces. In Afghanistan, the rebels really are supported by the Afghan people, but if Moscow insists on blaming Pakistan for their actions, Moscow may be tempted to take some form of military action against Pakistan and thus widen the war. (This would be similar to Nixon's widening the Vietnam War by attacking communist sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia.) Another example of this tendency is Vietnam's attacks on Thai territory where Cambodian rebels have their camps.<sup>54</sup>

### U.S. Policy Options

One crucial element in determining the ability of anti-Soviet insurgents to succeed, or even just to avoid defeat, is the level of external military assistance they receive. To what extent should the United States become involved in aiding them?

As anti-Soviet insurgencies are a problem for Moscow's foreign policy, so they are an opportunity for Washington's. The United States would benefit if indigenous forces in a Third World nation overthrew a pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist regime, for several reasons. First, the Soviet Union would lose an ally in the government that was overthrown, and the United States would probably gain an ally in the new government. Second, unlike Egypt, Somalia, or other not fully Marxist Third World governments that have asked the Soviet Union to leave, the overthrow of a strongly pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist government by indigenous forces would be a serious ideological loss for the Soviets. In the Soviet view, once a Marxist revolution occurs it is not supposed to be reversed. If, as in Grenada, the Marxists are overthrown by the United States, this is a

<sup>53</sup> Dusko Doder, "Gorbachev Warns on Afghan Aid," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1985; "Zia Confirms Soviet Warning," *Washington Post*, March 24, 1985.

<sup>54</sup> In 1983, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa reportedly warned the ASEAN nations that Vietnam would begin aiding rebels in Southeast Asian nations if they continued to aid Cambodian rebels; see Justus M. Van der Kroef, "Kampuchea: Protracted Conflict, Suspended Compromise," *Asian Survey*, March 1984, pp. 314-34.

loss, but an understandable one due to overwhelming "imperialist" force. But for a Marxist government to be overthrown by indigenous forces is simply not supposed to happen. If such a thing occurred, it would show that even now, when the Soviet Union is stronger than ever before, Marxism is not irreversible. This may have two concrete benefits: (1) Third World leaders attracted to the Soviet Union and Marxism-Leninism because Moscow has a better record of helping pro-Soviet Marxist regimes stay in power than the United States has of helping pro-American anti-communist ones will have to question just how worthwhile the Soviet Union actually is in this regard; and (2) the overthrow of one pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist regime may encourage anti-Soviet insurgents elsewhere to improve and expand their own efforts and perhaps eventually succeed as well.

There is no guarantee that, besides the loss of an ally, the overthrow of a pro-Soviet Marxist Third World regime would lead to these other problems for Moscow. But just this alone, and the prospect of the Soviets suffering further adverse consequences, provides an incentive for the United States to support anti-Soviet guerrillas in the overthrow of a Marxist-Leninist regime. At this time, however, guerrillas have at best only an uncertain chance of victory in Mozambique, Angola, and Nicaragua; they cannot win in Afghanistan and Cambodia, and probably not in Ethiopia either. Yet supporting anti-Soviet guerrillas even where they cannot win may be seen as in the interests of the United States, since the continuation of these struggles demonstrates that Marxist governments are not popular. If the Soviet Union and its allies are going to be militarily active in the Third World, the United States is better off if they have to struggle just to remain in the nations where they already are instead of concentrating all their efforts on expanding their influence elsewhere in the Third World at U.S. expense. But besides such great power calculations for supporting anti-Soviet insurgents, there is also a moral dimension. If the United States is really committed to helping other nations be independent and to determine their own system of government, then it should give some help to people, such as the Afghans, who have demonstrated that they do not want either Soviet troops or a Marxist government in their country by fighting against both for many years.

Yet while giving U.S. aid to anti-Soviet insurgents might appear to be an easy way to bring about a foreign-policy failure for the Soviet Union, or at the minimum discomfit Moscow by making it more difficult for it to protect weaker Marxist allies, there are several dangers for Washington that could arise from this policy. One of the foremost is that if the United States gives arms or sends military advisers to the insurgents, and the Soviets greatly increase their military assistance to their clients, the

conflict could widen and the superpowers themselves be drawn into it. Both the United States and the Soviets want to avoid this, and such a consideration will serve to limit the kind of assistance the United States would be willing to provide insurgents. In the past, when one superpower has sent its own forces to fight in a Third World conflict the other has limited its involvement. The United States, then, is not going to undertake actions, such as sending advisers to Afghanistan, that could lead to a wider conflict. The types of assistance the United States is ordinarily limited to in order to avoid a wider conflict are arms transfers, funding, and training either in the United States or in Third World countries.

But there are problems for the United States in undertaking these forms of aid as well. United States aid to the Contras in mining the ports of Nicaragua led to a public outcry from Americans and the world which contributed significantly to Congress's cutting off funds to the rebels. The kind of U.S. military assistance to anti-Soviet guerrillas that may be acceptable to Congress and the American public in general, though, might be so limited that it would not be sufficient to help the rebels overcome the Marxist-Leninist government or even to avoid defeat.

Yet even if American public opinion changed and decided that these groups should be supported, there is another problem. As the Soviets have already learned, it often takes guerrillas a long time to actually succeed even when they do receive military assistance. The Vietnamese Communists fought the French from 1945 until 1954 before ousting them, and then they won only North Vietnam. They needed another twenty-one years to gain the south. Guerrilla forces in Angola and Mozambique began their operations in the early 1960s but accomplished little until the 1974 Portuguese coup brought to power in Lisbon a government that declared it would pull out of Africa the following year. The Sandinistas came to power in 1979 after a relatively short struggle, but the Somoza regime they replaced had been in office for more than forty years. In addition, some insurgencies failed even though they may have lasted for many years. Marxist guerrillas were defeated in Greece (1944-48), Malaya (1948-61), Oman (1965-75), North Yemen (1978-82), and elsewhere. So the United States should not expect that simply starting or increasing military aid to anti-Soviet insurgents will result in a quick seizure of power. Supporting insurgents is a long-term policy that can take years to succeed, if at all.

Finally, should insurgents ever succeed in toppling a pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist Third World government, a strategy of backing anti-Soviet guerrillas could not be regarded as successful until a stable, domestically popular regime emerges. Should the policies of the anti-Soviet insurgents-turned-government prove unpopular or even brutal, the world may judge

that the United States is interested not in helping nations free themselves of a government or foreign influence the local populace does not want, but merely in seeing left-wing dictatorships replaced by right-wing ones. The worst result would be if anti-Soviet insurgents succeed in ousting a Marxist government but the new U.S.-backed government became so unpopular that the former Marxist rulers were able to rally the populace against the anti-Soviet regime and return to power. This is a situation the United States should take care to avoid, because if it ever occurred the Soviets and their allies would be able to argue that no matter what sort of "mistakes" the Marxists may have made they had proved they were better than the non-Marxists. In addition, domestic and international support for further U.S. efforts to aid anti-Soviet insurgents would probably be greatly reduced, perhaps making it impossible for the United States to help other such groups at all.

Thus, while the phenomenon of anti-Soviet insurgencies provides an opportunity for U.S. foreign policy, it also poses serious dangers that could result from a poorly conceived policy of aiding anti-Soviet guerrillas. How, then, can the United States take advantage of Moscow's problems most effectively? Based on the above discussion, several guidelines seem appropriate.

(1) Direct U.S. military involvement or sending U.S. military advisers into a country to aid anti-Soviet insurgents should not be undertaken in order to avoid (a) escalation or expansion of the conflict, (b) potential domestic opposition in the United States and among its allies that might force a withdrawal before the goal was achieved, or (c) legitimizing the Marxist regime by allowing it to claim that instead of fighting against domestic opponents it is defending the country against foreign aggression and thereby to appeal more to its own populace than it did before.

(2) The United States should support only those insurgent groups which have a strong basis of internal support inside the country where they are fighting. Washington should not support forces associated mainly with an unpopular right-wing dictatorship that has been ousted and/or a foreign power, because these are not likely to command internal support and hence not likely to come to power even if they receive a great deal of aid.

(3) The United States should consider sending arms and perhaps even giving training in the United States or Third World countries to popularly supported anti-Soviet insurgents. However, it should not attempt to organize and lead the rebel movement, because this will only allow the regime it is fighting to claim that the rebels are U.S. puppets. Nor should the United States expect anti-Soviet insurgents to be able to

succeed rapidly; it should expect that even under advantageous circumstances guerrillas will take a long time to triumph. Even if they do not seem likely to win but are popularly supported, as in Afghanistan, the United States should consider sending them arms so that they can expand and maintain control over as much of their country's territory as possible.

(4) U.S. policy makers should realize that any covert aid they give to anti-Soviet groups will probably become public knowledge sooner or later. It is virtually impossible to keep knowledge of a sizable military operation secret, since the target government it is directed at has every incentive to publicize the fact that its opponents are receiving U.S. assistance. If U.S. policy makers would judge the desirability of all aid to guerrillas as if that aid were overt, perhaps highly damaging incidents — such as U.S. support for the Contras' mining of Nicaragua's harbors which led to congressional restriction of U.S. support to the Contras (as well as to cancellation of the operation itself) — would be avoided.

(5) Washington should keep in mind that the overthrow of a pro-Soviet government is not the only benefit that can result from an anti-Soviet insurgency. Another benefit is that if the Marxist government is at all independent of the Soviet Union, it might modify its internal policies to become more popular domestically, as well as cease supporting Marxist insurgents in neighboring countries, if it is doing so. The United States should be open to friendly relations with such Marxist governments and be prepared to exploit differences between such a government and Moscow, especially where the guerrillas do not appear to be supported domestically. To support a guerrilla movement that is not domestically popular is unproductive, because the guerrillas are not likely to succeed and the government they are fighting is likely to become closer to the Soviet Union in the face of U.S. hostility.

What has the record of the United States been so far? The United States was prevented from aiding UNITA by the Clark Amendment, but after its repeal in July 1985 the United States began sending UNITA some aid in the spring of 1986. The United States has not aided rebels in Ethiopia or Mozambique either, nor do there appear to be any plans to do so at present. In Ethiopia, the United States did not support the Eritrean rebels before the revolution, and because the main Eritrean rebel group is Marxist, Washington has not supported it since. This restraint, however, has not helped the United States improve ties with Addis Ababa or prevented the latter from becoming even closer to the Soviet Union. U.S. relations with Maputo have improved in recent years; the Reagan administration has even proposed giving some military aid to FRELIMO, and the president of Mozambique, Samora Machel, was received at the White House in September 1985. In Afghanistan, the United States has

given about \$400 million in military aid to the *mujahidin* since 1979, and in late 1985 the administration and Congress agreed to increase greatly the level of U.S. support to them. The Afghan rebels are not tainted by association with a previous government and are fighting a Soviet invasion, so Congress favors aiding them. There has also been a movement in Congress to provide the noncommunist Cambodian rebels with some assistance, which up to now the United States has not given. In Nicaragua, the United States gave covert aid to the Contras, but Congress cut it off. The Reagan administration has tried to get this restored, and in June 1986 the House of Representatives voted to provide the Contras with \$70 million in military aid as well as \$30 million in non-military aid (the Senate is expected to concur). The Reagan administration has mainly supported the Nicaraguan Democratic Front — the group led by ex-Somoza officers whose popular support in Nicaragua is doubtful.<sup>55</sup> This could well prove to be a mistake, not only because an unpopular guerrilla movement is unlikely to succeed no matter how much aid it is given, but also because the possible failure of the NDF may negatively affect the political climate for this or a future administration to seek congressional support for an anti-Soviet insurgent group that has domestic internal support. The Reagan administration may be better off in the long run by not attempting to support the NDF now and by waiting to see if it can build significant internal support for itself within Nicaragua. This is the policy that the Soviet Union pursues before making large contributions to Marxist guerrilla movements.

Whether the phenomenon of anti-Soviet insurgencies is a great historical change signaling the inability of the Soviet Union to maintain pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist regimes in the Third World, or whether it is only a temporary problem that Moscow and its allies will soon be able to overcome, is not yet certain. A well-planned, effective U.S. strategy for assisting anti-Soviet insurgents can help them be successful, but a poorly planned, ineffective U.S. policy can contribute to their failure.

<sup>55</sup> For a summary of U.S. policy toward each of the anti-Soviet insurgent movements, see Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "The Guns of July," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1986, pp. 698-714. See also the text of President Reagan's U.N. speech in the *Washington Post*, October 25, 1985; and Ronald Reagan, "Freedom, Regional Security, and Global Peace," March 14, 1986 (published by the White House).