

# **FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA" submitted by Ms RUCHITA VOHRA in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M. Phil.) degree of this University, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university. This is her own work.

We recommend this dissertation be placed before examiners for evaluation.

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## INTRODUCTION

After World War II, there have been approximately 125 to 150 conflicts throughout the World.<sup>1</sup> Except a few most of them have taken place in the developing regions of Asia, Africa,<sup>2</sup> the Middle East and Latin America. Further more, although the interstate wars were the main form of combat in earlier periods majority of conflicts after the World War II were some form of internal war.<sup>3</sup> In nearly two-thirds of these regional conflicts direct external or rather extra-regional intervention was an important factor. Hence, most of these conflicts were 'regional' only in the context that they took place in a particular region for they certainly have global linkages. Sub Saharan Africa has been plagued with regional conflicts. In the 1960s

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1. Caesar D, Sereseres. "Lessons from Central America's revolutionary wars, 1972-1984" in Robert Harkavy and Stephanie G. Neuman. The Lessons of Recent Wars in the Third World (Lexington, 1985) vol.1, p.161
  2. Throughout this study Africa is used synonymously with Sub Saharan Africa.
  3. Istvan Kende. "New features of the armed conflicts and armaments in the developing countries". Development and Peace Vol. 4, Spring 1983, pp.35-51

most of these conflicts took place over a variety of issues ranging from the location of boundaries, larger territorial claims, the course of the liberation struggle in southern Africa, ideological rivalries and the mistreatment of alien workers from other African countries. However, the seventies witnessed the internationalization of the conflicts in Africa. The conflicts in Southern Africa and in the Horn of Africa have witnessed a large scale of external involvement. This involvement has often come in the guise of military assistance. It is agreed that there are a number of factors which are responsible for the persistence and escalation of conflict in Africa<sup>4</sup>, but foreign military assistance is the vital one.

The term military assistance implies transfer of arms and/or training and other related services from one country to another. This could be either in the form of a sale or a grant. While transfer of

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4. There are some analysts who argue that the underdevelopment of African states is the basic cause of conflict in the region. See Raymond W. Copson. "African international Politics : Underdevelopment and Conflict in the Seventies". Orbis Vol. 72, No.1 Spring 1978 pp 227-45.

arms represents only one part of military assistance, it forms the most significant portion in terms of both expense and political influence. Over the years arms transfers have become the major instruments of foreign policy for the great powers. Arms transfers help in building up alliances, procuring bases in the region, intervening in local conflict, excluding the other power from the region, steering the internal affairs of the recipient country and finally lead to use of proxies by the great powers. In short as Andrew Pierre has written,

"Arms sales have become more than ever before, a crucial dimension of world politics. They are now major strands in the warp and woof of international affairs. Arms sales are far more than an economic occurrence, a military relationship, or an arms control challenge - arms sales are foreign policy writ large"<sup>5</sup>

The arms transfers to Africa have increased steadily over the last few decades. Whatever may be the root causes for this increase, it certainly has expanded the political influence of the supplier(s)

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5. Andrew J. Pierre. "Arms Sales : the new diplomacy" Foreign Affairs Vol. 60, No.2, Winter 1981/82, pp. 266-67.

on the African nations. The recipients of arms in Africa are very well aware of the significance of military assistance and the fact that it effectively ties supplier nations to them. As Julius Nyerere has said,

"the selling of arms is something, which a country does only when it wants to support and strengthen the regime or group to whom the sale is made whatever restrictions or limits are placed on that sale, the sale of any arms is a declaration of support - an implied alliance of a kind"<sup>6</sup>.

Arms transfers by great powers have led to linking up of regional conflicts in the third world with the global great power rivalry. Sub-Saharan Africa is no exception. It is this linkage which is mainly held responsible for the perpetuation of conflicts in the region. In this study the role of military assistance in the regional conflicts in sub-saharan Africa has been examined. The influence of the suppliers, particularly the great powers has also been

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6. Julius K. Nyerere, Freedom and Development : A selection from writings and speeches 1968-1973. (Dar es Salaam, 1973) pp. 277-304. As cited it Bruce E. Arlinghaus, ed., Arms for Africa : Military assistance and foreign policy in Developing World .(Lexington, 1983) p.6.



evaluated. Apart from this introductory chapter there are four chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of military assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The flow of weapons is examined in detail. An analysis is also done of the recipient and supplier considerations which may have led to these arms transfers.

The impact of military assistance on the Angolan conflict is taken up in the second chapter. For the last fourteen years, a conflict has been going on in Angola. The role of military assistance in the perpetuation of the conflict is looked into detail.

In the third chapter, we are considering an inter state war as opposed to an internal war in the previous chapter - the Somalia - Ethiopia conflict of 1977-78. Nowhere else in the world could we find a better example of super powers using the arms transfers as an instrument of influence. The course of the conflict was indeed influenced to a great extent by the arms transfer policies of the super powers who were the major suppliers to either of the countries.

In the last chapter the conclusions drawn out after studying the two case-studies have been given. The impact of the recent changes in global political scenario, particularly the changing US -Soviet Relations on regional conflicts and arms transfers have been dealt with.

#### A Methodological Note

In this study the data is mainly used from the Stockholm Institute of Peace Research (SIPRI) annual publication, World Armament and Disarmament Sipri Year Book, for the years 1971 to 1985. Infrequently the other sources like the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency's (ACDA) 'annual publication' "World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfers" and certain government documents where available are used. However since each source used different definitions of "arms" their measurement and aggregation formulas, it is not possible to compare them. Each year ACDA reports the actual transfer, under grant, credit or sale, of a wide range of conventional weapons, military equipment and supporting materials computing both dollar values and weapon exports by

type. On other hand SIPRI records annual deliveries of major weapon system, (Ships, Aircraft, Armoured Vehicles, and Missiles) and estimates their dollar values as a composite of actual costs plus relevant military criteria such as Weight, Speed, Combat role and cost of supporting material. Further there are inconsistencies in reporting military aid, sales and deliveries. There are different assignments of nations to regional groups so that Africa may include or exclude; Egypt, North Africa or South Africa. In this study the definitions by the respective sources have been retained where appropriate only making occasional changes as far as the data is concerned. However, "military assistance", "arms transfers" and similar terms are employed throughout as generic short-hand expressions to cover all forms of military transfers.

## Chapter 1

### Overview of Military Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa

Virtually all the states in Sub-Saharan Africa excluding South Africa are dependent upon external sources for supplying the bulk of their weaponry. Most states are totally dependent on arms imports and those states which are moving towards indigeneous production of arms are still dependent on imports for the major weapon systems. There is nothing new in this situation, for since precolonial times, arms were imported from regions beyond Africa. In the colonial period the arms trade was closely controlled and sophisticated weapons were not allowed to reach the African hands due to the danger of "rebellion" by the "natives". John Ellis has described this situation quite lucidly :

."As was common at this time (the late nineteenth century) almost all the troops used in this campaign were Africans, only the officers being British. one of the most important duties of these officers was to operate the Maxim guns.

It would clearly be too dangerous to teach natives, even though they might be wearing a British uniform, the secrets of the white man's ultimate weapon..... Once again one sees the central place of the machine gun in the Africans' analysis of the reasons for their conquest and subjugation..... The Europeans jealously guarded both the machine guns themselves and the secrets of their operation."<sup>1</sup>

This secretiveness of the Europeans exists till today and is manifested in their hesitation in supplying sophisticated weapon systems like fighter planes, Main Battle Tanks and missiles. Hence so far as the suppliers are concerned, these sophisticated weapons are supplied only for fulfilling certain foreign policy objectives. The fact that most of the African nations cannot afford arms purchases on anything less than grants-aid basis or on concessional terms, makes military assistance an even more potent instrument of political influence. Now let us have a look at the pattern of arms transfers to Sub-Saharan Africa.

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1. John Ellis, The Social History of the Machine Gun (New York : Patheon, 1975) p. 95 cited in Bruce E. Arlinghaus. Military Development in Africa : the political and economic risks of Arms transfers. (Boulder, 1984) p.22.

### THE FLOW

During the last four decades arms imports by the African countries have increased considerably. Between 1971 and 1985, major conventional weapons valued at \$18576 million in constant (1985) US Dollars were imported by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. That is more than eight times the value recorded for the previous two decades. In period 1951-70, \$2200 million worth of major weapons were imported. The share of sub-saharan Africa in the total imports to third world shot up from 2.4 percent in the period 1951-70 to approximately 7 percent in the period 1971-85.

Throughout 1971-85, the most important category in terms of values transferred to Sub-Saharan Africa was Aircraft, accounting for more than 50 percent of the trade in major weapons of the Armour and Artillery were the second most important category in Africa accounting for around 22% of the share. Ships came next taking around 12 percent of the share. Guidance and radar systems accounted for around 10 percent, while the missiles were the last accounting for around 6 percent of the total share.

Looking at the flow of arms transfers to the region we find that they were negligible in the 1950's, started rising in the 1960's and peaked in the late 1970's tailing off and eventually falling in the early 1980's. (See Table 1 and Table 2). During the period 1951-70 the largest importers were Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Sudan. The other sizeable importers have been Zaire, Somalia and Nigeria. During 1971-85, the main importers were Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Somalia, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe (See Table 3 and Table 4). So far as the suppliers are concerned. During 1951-70 period, the main suppliers were the ex-colonial powers - U.K. and France, followed by the two superpowers.. However during the period 1971-83, the arms transfers by the Superpowers increased, particularly, by the Soviet Union (See Table 5).

For explaining the flow of Arms transfers to Africa we have to consider both the demand and the supply factors or what are known as the 'pull' and the 'push' factors.

## THE DEMAND FOR WEAPONS

The establishment of armed forces in the newly independent states has been the primary factor responsible for the growth of arms transfers to sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s. The arms transfers increased from (See Table 1) \$94 million in 1959 to \$247 million in 1969. Coincidentally it was in the early and the mid-sixties that most of the African countries got their independence. Armed forces are seen by the African nations as a symbol of their independence and sovereignty. This fact was substantiated by President Hamani Diori on the inauguration of the army of Niger : "Henceforth, in the eye of the world and of the whole of our people, you are the visible sign of our political independence and of our proclaimed will to defend it against all aggression."<sup>2</sup>

Another factor which affected the demand for arms transfers in the 1960s was the liberation movements in Southern Africa. A number of states in Southern Africa had been aiding the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia and South Africa. Their

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2. Quoted H.J.V. Bell, "The Military in the new states of Africa", in J. Van Doorn, ed., Armed Forces and Society (Hague, 1968) p.267.



support to the liberation movements had left them vulnerable to armed attacks from Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa. Thus to protect themselves from this aggression they started building their armed forces.

The arms imports to Africa have been to a large extent caused by the conflicts in Africa - both internal and external. There have been numerous armed conflicts in Africa. In the 1960s, one saw the conflicts in Zaire, Nigeria. There have also been border clashes between Ethiopia and Somalia where Kenya has been involved and a civil war in Sudan. In the 70's and the 80's the most notable conflicts in Africa have been those in the Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa. In Southern Africa, the ex-Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique have been plagued with conflict ever since their independence. Their economies lie in a ruin due to these conflicts - external intervention has fuelled these conflicts, South Africa's destabilisation policy in the region has further intensified the conflicts. Zimbabwe which attained independence in 1979 has also been a victim of South Africa's destabilization policy. Thus giving support to the certain insurgents in Zimbabwe. There have also been a number of across the border raids, of the South African armed forces.

Thus, due to this continuing conflict these countries were forced to modernize their armed forces after independence.

Another region smitten by conflict is the Horn of Africa. In 1977, Somalian territorial claims led to a war with Ethiopia. Moreover, both the countries are infested with internal conflicts. Eritrea, is the perennial problem for the government of Ethiopia

The secessionist movements going on in Ethiopia have brought the Ethiopian armed forces in conflict with the guerilla movements a number of times. Similarly Somalia is faced with insurgency in the north by the Issaq dominated Somali National Movement. Thus Somalia apart from developing an army to fulfil its claims of greater Somalia had to import arms to tackle the growing insurgency in the north.

The role of military in politics has also been a factor affecting the demand of arms by Africa. In the mid 80's almost half of Africa's 52 countries were ruled by governments of military origin (22 countries) or mixed civilian and military origin (3 countries). Eighteen have been under military rule for more than

a decade. In addition to these in South Africa the military and security apparatus though formally excluded from politics were the central political actors. Thus, we find that there has been a trend of militarization of politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Army plays a critical role in the politics. It has been argued that since army officers obtained similar education and were drawn from the same social groups, they felt competent enough to intervene whenever the civilian rulers were found lacking in competence<sup>3</sup>. In such a situation arms imports were seen as an adequate method to pacify the demand of the military and prevent them from intervening. An example of such a case can be found in Ethiopia. After the coup attempt in December 1960 one finds that the US military assistance to Ethiopia increased to a great extent.

While in the case of military regimes it has been found that they pursue their own corporate interests and in general buy more armaments than the civilian regimes<sup>4</sup>.

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3. See for instance A.R. Zolberg "Military rule and political development in Tropical Africa in J. Van Doorn, ed., Armed Forces and Society (Hague, 1968).

4. Eric Nordlinger, Soldiers in Politics : Military Coups and Governments (New Jersey, 1977) pp.65-71.

As corollary to the previous arguments it may be added that the levels of political instability may further influence the amount of arms transfers to Africa. One of the foremost indicator of the political instability in Africa are the frequent military coup d'etats. Between 1963 and 1988 there have been 61 coups in Africa<sup>5</sup>. This political instability could also take the form of power struggle between political groups. While it may be argued that there is no relationship between political instability and arms purchases<sup>6</sup>, arms imports have been used by some governments to quell dissident groups. In Kenya for example the rift between the radical followers of vice-president Oginga Odinga and the more conservative members of the Kenyan government in 1964-66 led to an unofficial influx of military assistance from socialist countries, which was only halted after the deposition of Odinga in March 1962. Finally, A study

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5. This figure was calculated after going through various issues of Keesings contemporary Archives : Record of World Events of the period taken into consideration.

6. Robert Mathews "Domestic and interstate conflict in Africa". International Journal Summer, 1970, pp. 459-485.

done by Avery and Picard suggests that the availability of economic resources was the primary factor for the African arms imports.<sup>7</sup>

### Role of Suppliers

The pattern of arms transfers to Sub-Saharan Africa has changed during the last two decades compared to that of the earlier two decades. (See Table 5 & 6) The share of super powers has increased in the period 1971-85 compared to 1951-70. It was 49 percent in 1951-70 and it has increased to 54 percent in 1971-85. Among the superpowers there has been a sharp increase in the arms transfer by USSR. Its share increased from 27 percent in 1951-70 to 42% in 1971-85. While the share of United States dropped from 22.7% in 1951-70, UK was the largest arms supplier however during 1971-85 it has been replaced by Soviet Union. On the other hand the share in arms exports of the other ex-colonial power, France seems to have risen from 7.5. percent in 1951-70 to 11.6 percent in 1971-85.

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7. William P Avery and Louis A Picard, "Pull factors in the transfer of conventional armaments to African". Journal of Political and Military Sociology 1980, Vol. 8, Spring pp 55-70

The arms transfer pattern of Sub-Saharan Africa is different compared to the third world as a whole. (See Table 5) First of all the share of superpowers is larger in Sub-Saharan Africa as compared to the Third World. The superpowers account for around 68% of the Arms transfer to the third world, as a whole as compared to 54% for Sub-Saharan Africa in the period 1971-85. Similarly though USSR is the leading exporter capturing 36.6% percent of the total share, United States is not far behind with 31.3 percent. However as already mentioned in Sub-Saharan Africa the situation is a bit different. Though Soviet Union is the leading supplier, United States is far behind, their respective shares being 42 percent and 12 percent.

This pattern reflects that superpower interest in the Africa is less compared with other regions of the world. Another interesting facts which can be drawn out from their figures is that ten main<sup>8</sup> recipients of major weapons from one or the other superpowers account for more than 60% of the major arms imports of the 45 sub-Saharan African countries.

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8. Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zaire.

Moreover the fact that these ten recipients also includes countries in which armed conflicts have taken place/<sup>is a clear</sup> indication of superpower influence on these conflicts.

### United States

Although United States is one of the leading arms supplier to the third world, its arms transfers to Africa have never reached notable proportions. In this section we shall first give a brief description of the United States military assistance programmes, followed by a discussion of the trends of the US arms transfers/military assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally an analysis of the motives for transfers these weapons would be done.

The Main component of US arms transfer programmes have been first. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) which are government to government sales of defence articles or services.<sup>9</sup> Second are the commercial arms sales (CS) which are direct contractor to recipient sales of military articles. The US

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9. For the exact definitions of there terms see United States, Department of Defence, Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Construction Sales, and Military Assistance Facts, 1983 (Washington D.C., 1983) p. v-vi

government does not normally function as an intermediary in these cases it is the Military Assistance Programme. (MAP). Till 1982 MAP transferred military equipment and services to foreign countries to foreign countries on a grant basis. Since then funds granted under MAP are merged with credits extended under the Arms Exports control Act, and are used to finance FMS Purchases. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program which was carried out as a part of MAP until 1976 provides grant education and training to foreign students.

When US Military transfers to Sub-Saharan Africa are examined by program, as indicated in Table-7 the FMS in particular surged sharply since 1970s to 267.3 million dollars in the period 1976-80. The MAP in contrast showed a growth till 1970 and declined after that the IMET Programme increased sharply in the sixties and dropped by half in the mid seventies rising again in the late seventies. The commercial sales increased by four folds in the late seventies compared to the previous years. The arms transfers by US to Africa have been subject to specific statutory



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restrictions since the 1960s<sup>10</sup>. Section 508 of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) imposed \$25 million annual ceiling on military assistance and sales for Sub-Saharan Africa. This limitation was raised to \$40 million in 1967. Although Section 508 was repealed in 1973 section 33 of FMS Acts of 1968 (Predecessor of AECA) restricted the aggregate of military grants, credits, loan guarantees, and cash sales (excluding training) to \$ 40 million annually, However in 1974, the President was authorised to waive the ceiling whenever it was determined 'important to the Security of the United States' and promptly reported so to the Congress.

Generally the US arms transfers are justified on the grounds that they promote US security regional stability and world peace "Arms transfers" Under Secretary Buckley affirmed in 1981."

"should be viewed as a positive and increasingly important component of our global security

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10. See Joseph [redacted] arms transfer and Security - Assistance Programme in Africa : A review and policy perspective" in Bruce E. Arlinghaus, ed. Arms for Africa : Military Assistance and foreign policy in the developing world. (Lexington, 1983) pp.180-20.



posture and key element of our foreign policy"<sup>11</sup>. Occasionally the US Officials have hinted at certain other motives influencing the arms sales. Francis J. West, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs wrote in an essay in 1983 that the FMS Programme "

" is often the key to the co-operation of strategically important countries in such significant realms as securing lines of communications and assuring access to critical raw materials" <sup>12</sup>

As far as Africa is concerned traditionally United States has not viewed Africa as critical to its security interests<sup>13</sup>, however it has certain particular motives for supplying arms to the African countries.

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11. James L. Buckley, Testimony before the Sub-Committee on International Security and Scientific Affairs, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington D.C., March 19, 1981 (as quoted in Michael T. Kiare American Arms Supermarket(Austin 1984) p. 27.
  12. Francis J. West Jr. "The US Security Assistance Programme give away or Bargain?" Strategic Review (Winter 1983) p.51.
  13. See Bruce J. Palmer, Jr., "US Security Interests and Africa South of Sahara", AEI Defence Review Vol. 2 No.6, 1978.

## POLITICAL FACTORS

### Political Influence and Leverage

Military assistance can provide the supplier with considerable influence over the political behaviour of the recipient. The supply of arms creates a bond between the recipient and the supplier country and makes it obligatory on the recipient to follow the policy objectives of the supplier. Moreover the supply of sophisticated weapons makes the recipient dependent on the supplier for continued deliveries of spare parts. In this sense the military assistance can lead to ties of coercive character. This motive is not restricted to Africa and can be applied to US Military assistance to any of the third world countries.

### Super Power Competition

United States Arms transfer to Africa have also been a part of the global East-West Competition for superemacy. As Andrew Pierre has elucidated :

"Arms Sales have become a major component of the American governments approach to the,

competition with Soviet Union on a global basis..... perhaps the major instrument for action overseas"<sup>14</sup>. The arms transfers play an important role by augmenting the US relations with its existing allies. They also help in winning over new friends, which may be presently aligned with the Soviet Union. In case of Africa the United States has often justified its arms transfers to Sudan and Zaire on the grounds that it was required to keep the pro-western orientation of these countries intact. Moreover the promotes of providing military assistance was the major instrument which the United States used to induce Somalia to leave the Soviet orbit.<sup>15</sup>

### STRATEGIC FACTORS

#### Access to Bases

Military assistance has also been provided by United States to gain access to military bases. Often military assistance is given as a quid pro quo for US occupation of bases on their territory. With the

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14. Quoted in US News and World Report, March 4, 1982, p.27.

15. See Andrew J. Pierre. The Global Politics of Arms Sales (Princeton, 1982) pp. 136-86.

formation of the US CENTCOM (earlier known as the Rapid Deployment Force) the US was in need for docking facilities and overflight rights for its forces in Africa. The availability of bases was the main attraction of US military assistance to Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. Though it is not military bases but "rather stand by base access agreements" which have been negotiated with Somalia and Kenya.<sup>16</sup>

#### Safeguarding the Sea Lanes

US arms transfers to Africa have also been justified as a tool for safeguarding the sea-lanes around Africa. Traditionally control over African coast had been strategically important to protect sea borne commerce, particularly at sensitive choke points as the eastern and western ends of the Mediterranean and the Cape<sup>17</sup>. Therefore it was considered

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16. Helen Kitchen "US interests in Africa" Washington Papers Vol. 9, No.98 p. 58
  17. See William J. Foltz "Africa in great power strategy" in William J. Foltz and Henry S. Bienen ed., Arms and the African : Military influences on Africa's international relations. (London 1985) p.3

important that the countries on the coast and near the choke points should remain US allies. The arms transfers were used for strengthening the bonds with the allies. Further protection of these strategic sea lanes was also seen as a factor for acquiring bases in the territory. The US interests in South Africa and its arms transfers to South Africa in the early 1960s had stemmed to some extent for protecting the Cape Sea route. The case for the Cape route was built on the fact that more than half of the Western European and a fifth of US oil supplies pass around the Cape of Good Hope. A prolonged cut off of these supplies would have severe impact on the Western security and economies. A related assumption was that the Soviet Union might try to block <sup>the</sup> Cape Sea route and the blocking of this oil flow might lead to conventional war of the World War II level. However recent studies made by US Navy have negated the importance of Cape Sea route. And that the "real <sup>at</sup> choke points for Western oil supplies are/the source and the destination points - the Strait of Hormouz and the approaches to European ports<sup>18</sup>. Moreover the war scenario was created on certain assumptions about Soviet behaviour. However, nowhere in Africa

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18. Kitchen n. p-61

have close relations with the Soviet Union led to abrupt break off of economic relations. Perfect example of this case is Angola where US multi-national co-operations continue to operate despite the Socialist orientation of the government and close co-operation with Soviet Union.

### Strategic Minerals

It has been argued by some that it is the American dependence on African strategic minerals and the perception of many officials in Washington that Southern Africa is the "Persian Gulf of minerals" that has led to the meeting of African demands for arms and military assistance<sup>19</sup>. Most of the Southern African countries have rich deposits of strategic minerals. South Africa leads the countries in the region with rich deposits of four minerals chromium, manganese, vanadium and platinum which have both industrial and military significance. The importance of these reserves to the West is that the Soviet Union is the principal alternative source of Vanadium, Platinum and an important

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19. James Ridgeway, "Strategic Minerals Down Under", Defence Week, 3 August 1981, p.5.

alternative source of manganese. Among the other countries in the region Namibia has vast deposits of Uranium. Its one Uranium mine, Rossing in a year produces 5,000 tons of Uranium Oxide which is 16.6 percent of the West's total production. Zaire has large deposits of Cobalt and Copper. While Zimbabwe, mines a large amount of Chromium. However recent authoritative surveys suggest that American dependence on Southern African is not final. Stockpiling of one of three years supply is feasible and costlier substitutes can be purchased. Another study done by Andrew M. Kamarack suggests that the known reserves of the minerals in the region are a tiny fraction of the total minerals in existence.<sup>20</sup> That the economic and technical constraints of the African governments has restricted the exploring activity in the region. Thus alternative supplies could be available, if proper scanning of region is undertaken.

The conclusion that emerges after going through all these factors is that the US Military assistance programs in Africa have been determined principally by the political and military strategic importance of the recipients to US global and regional interests.

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20. Andrew M Kamarack, "The resources of tropical Africa" Deadahus Vol. 3, No.2, Spring 1982 pp. 149-163



Soviet Union

As mentioned earlier the Soviet Military Assistance to Africa increased dramatically in the last half of 1970s . Though it can be argued that this increase could be part of Soviet policy to accelerate its arms transfers throughout the World in the same period, the arms transfers to Africa compared to those to the third world were certainly more dramatic. In the decade 1967-76, the average annual value of arms transfers was \$2,200 million, whereas during the half decade 1976-80 the comparable figure was \$7,700 million, a multiple of 3.5 (see Table 8). Much of the attraction of Soviet Military assistance to the African countries has been due to the comparatively low prices and favourable terms offered by Moscow<sup>21</sup> On the whole, Soviet prices have been substantially below Western prices for comparable equipment. Moreover it has offered attractive financial terms to its recipients for repayment. Charging very low interest around 2% with repayment in ten years. Soviet Union has also offered discounts from its list prices.

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21. Roger F. Pajak, "Soviet Arms Transfer as a instrument of influence" Survival Vol. 23 No.4, July/August 1981 p. 167.

However these discounts are offered only in the cases where clients are supposed to be politically suitable.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from offering attractive prices and terms of repayment, the Soviet Union also transferred more sophisticated weapons compared to the US or the other Western countries during the 70s and the 80s. This was quite a change from the 60s when Soviet Union only transferred obsolete though still effective military equipment. (See Table 9). The Western arms suppliers though keeping the level of arms transferred into the region relatively low have emphasised on military training and education (See Table 10).

There have been various explanations offered by analysts to explain the Soviet Arms transfers policy to Africa.

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22. *ibid.*

### Political Factors

It has been argued by some that the main motive of Soviet military assistance to Africa was not only to undermine the Western influence and strategic interests in the region but also a desire to expand its own influence.<sup>23</sup> In Africa in the cases of Angola, Somalia (until 1977) and Ethiopia the provision of military equipment and technical support has been one of the most important means employed by the Soviets in gaining a presence and in attempting to influence the course of political events in the recipient country. In the view of Roger Kanet, one of the important elements of the Soviet Military Assistance Policy to Africa has been to provide stability for countries which have turned to the USSR for support.<sup>24</sup> The Soviet Union and its Cuban and East European allies have not only provided military equipment but also military personnel needed for consolidated power by progressive Marxist - Leninist governments

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23. A major proponent of this view is Christopher Stevens, The Soviet Union and Black Africa. (London 1976)
24. Roger E. Kanet. Soviet and East European arms transfers to the third world : Strategic, Political and economic factors. Un-published paper presented at a colloquium on "External Economic relations of CMEA countries their significance and impact in a global perspective" organised by the NATO Economics Directorate at Brussels from 6-8 April 1983. p.17

governments like Angola and Ethiopia. Related to this factor is the Soviet goal of providing military assistance to various national liberation movements. As it did in the case of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa (to the African National Congress). Finally Soviet Union was also motivated by desire to compete with China, which had also entered in the African arms transfer scene.

#### MILITARY - STRATEGIC FACTORS

The Soviets have often provided military assistance to African countries with certain military strategic objectives in mind. The Soviets have in recent years employed military assistance as a part of an overall policy of competition with the West for the acquisition and maintenance of military bases or access facilities. Robert E. Harkavy has argued that the Soviet Union

"has accelerated the use of arms transfer for acquiring strategic access, expanding a once limited basing network to near global dimensions during an era which is witnessing the withering of previous ideological bars to many arms transfers

clients relationships".<sup>25</sup>

Soviet Union has access to air facilities in Benin, Congo, Guinea in West Africa. Moreover it also has both air and naval access facilities in Angola and Mozambique in Southern Africa - while it has a military base in Ethiopia. All the countries that have provided the Soviets with military facilities over which they have substantial control are the major recipients of arms assistance. Similarly all the countries which have provided Soviet Union with limited naval and air access facilities have received military assistance from Soviet Union, though may be in a lesser amount than the previous lot.

Thus on the whole we can conclude that the Soviet military assistance programmes to the Sub-Saharan Africa have been motivated primarily by strategic concerns. They have been related more to Soviet support for ideologically compatible allies, the search for strategic benefits than to economic motivations.<sup>26</sup>

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25. See Robert E. Harkavy, "The New Geopolitics : Arms transfers and the Major powers competition for overseas bases", in Stephanie G. Neuman and Robert E. Harkavy, eds. , Arms transfers in the Modern World. (New York, 1979) p.132

26. Some analysts have argued that the Soviet arms transfers to the third world countries have been prompted by Kremlin's desire to make money, particularly hard currency, out of a very profitable, arms trade. See Adam, B. Ulam, Dangerous Relations the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1970-1982. (New York, 1983), pp. 145-208.

FRANCE AND UNITED KINGDOM

The arms transfer trends are indicative of the African countries relations with their former metropolises. The French arms transfers were quite low during the period 1951-70 though they increased slightly during 1971-85. Britain's share on the other hand declined quite drastically during the 70s and the early 80s. During the period 1951-70 Britain's share in the arms transfer to Africa was the largest.

This difference between the French and British arms transfers is reflective of the differing nature of the ties between France and Britain and their respective colonies. A Sunday Times (London) Columnist has summarized the contrast between Britain's and France's postcolonial role in the following terms :

"For Britain, decolonisation meant going away. Some felt humiliated by this retreat; others after a century of trying to run the world, breathed a half smothered sigh of relief. Some individuals - businessmen, teachers, clergy - stayed and the Commonwealth has provided a new diplomatic network. But the old official apparatus was swept away. The French never saw it that way.

If the British had been the champion colonisers the French have proved the great decolonisers".<sup>27</sup>

France has made extensive defence commitments for the defence of its ex-African colonies. Its policy for intervening militarily when the need arose has limited the necessity for countries concerned to develop large, heavily equipped defence forces. The arms transfer to most of the ex-French colonies during the period 1951-1970 was therefore negligible. This restrictive arms transfers by France have whether wittingly or not has had the effect of enhancing the relative strength of French armed forces stationed on the African continent vis-a-vis the local armed forces. As elucidated by Kolodziej and Lokulutu,

"One of the ironic consequences of what might be termed a policy of chasse garde'e is that French political and military influence has been greatest where it has delivered the fewest number of weapons".<sup>28</sup>

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27. Peter Calvocoressi, "French Lessons in Africa", Sunday Times (London) October 10, 1982.

28. Edward A. Kolodziej and Bokanga Lokulutu, "Security interests and French arms - transfer policy in Sub-Saharan Africa". in Arlinghaus, ed., n.4

The increase in the French military assistance in the late 1970s can be explained by the following factors. The French military interventions in Africa in Zaire, Chad and Mauritania have involved the possibility of outside support from the Soviet Union or its allies to the dissident elements opposed to French intervention. As Soviet Union and other suppliers increased their deliveries in the late 70s, these fears increased. Moreover the chances of the Francophone states diversifying their arms supplies had increased. In such circumstances<sup>29</sup> France bowed to these pressures and increased its military assistance to Africa.

Britain on the other hand made very few direct military commitments like France.<sup>30</sup> Only one agreement similar to the French was signed with Nigeria

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29. *ibid*, p.147

30. For details of British policies see SIPRI. The Arms trade with the third world (Stockholm, PP. 609-11.



but it was cancelled in 1962. While Britain did not enter into any formal defence agreements with its former colonies it did provide them with large quantities of military aid. This perhaps explains the high figure of arms transfers by United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, in the 1970s and 1980s the ex-British colonies have tended to diversify their sources of military assistance to a much greater degree than the ex-French colonies.

#### CHINA

China's military assistance to Africa is miniscule if it is compared with that of Soviet Union. Nevertheless a slight increase from 1% in 1951-70 to 6% in 1971-85 is noted. Chinese arms transfers to Africa have been made with certain foreign policy objectives in mind, First was to gain international recognition and support. Second Africa served as a battlefield against the superpowers. This has been especially true with regard to combating the Soviet Union. Finally providing aid to liberation movements in Africa served the vital function of establishing and upholding China's revolutionary credibility. As Joseph Smaldone notes, "Peking has no immediate

strategic interest in Africa, nevertheless, Africa is regarded as a major theatre in the global struggle against 'Western imperialism and Soviet 'hegemony', where Peking can enhance its revolutionary credentials by supporting 'people's war' and liberation movements".<sup>31</sup>

As is clear from the figures, China has not fully utilized arms transfers as a foreign policy instrument. However, the increase in the last two decades indicates a belated recognition of the fact. In view of some analysts though the Chinese arms transfers have not been significant militarily, they have helped in "winning friends and gaining influence among African nations and groups"<sup>32</sup>.

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31. Smaldone, Joseph P. "Soviet and Chinese military aid and arms transfers to Africa : a contextual analysis", in Warren Weinstein and Thomas H Henriksen, ed. Soviet and Chinese aid to African nations. (New York 1980)

32. George T. Yu, "Chinese Arms Transfers to Africa" in Arlinghaus, n.4, p;116

Thus we can conclude that Chinese military assistance though, marginal has been effective in fulfilling certain goals set by it.

Now which of the factors discussed above, i.e. the demand and the supply or as some call it the "pull" and the "push" factors discussed above can be a greater influence in so far as the arms transfers to Africa and concerned. The study Avery and Picard<sup>33</sup> is often cited by analysts as conclusive about this issue. These two scholars conclude in their study that the pull factors were mainly responsible for the arms transfers to Africa. However there are certain weaknesses in this study which effect the conclusions derived. First they have included the North African states. Secondly the period covered is from 1965-71. The main variable on which they reached their conclusion was availability of economic resources. Among the major arms importers from Africa apart from Nigeria none other countries could possibly fall in this category. Moreover the inclusion of the oil rich North African States perhaps helps in reaching such a conclusion. The economic situation of the Sub-Saharan African countries has gone from bad to worse over the years and data covered does not reflect this

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33. Avery and Picard n.7

change because the period is limited to 1971. However as we have seen there has been a tremendous increase in military assistance to the Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1970s. This increase cannot be just explained by demand factors. The policies suppliers played an important role in the increase.

TABLE - 1

VALUE OF IMPORTS OF MAJOR WEAPONS BY SUB SAHARAN AFRICA, 1951-70  
(US \$ m, at Constant 1985 prices)

YEAR	YEARLY VALUES	FIVE YEAR MOVING AVERAGES
1951	10	..
1952	9	..
1953	33	20
1954	29	19
1955	20	18
1956	3	13
1957	5	35
1958	10	62
1959	135	94
1960	156	110
1961	162	129
1962	185	140
1963	108	145
1964	189	157
1965	183	180
1966	221	190
1967	198	178
1968	161	213
1969	126	247
1970	357	260

Source: SIPRI. Arms trade with the Third World  
 (Stockholm, 1971)

T A B L E - 2

VALUES OF IMPORTS OF MAJOR WEAPONS BY FIGURES ARE IN US\$ m, SSA,  
1971-85 at constant 1985 prices

YEAR	YEARLY VALUES	FIVE YEAR MOVING AVERAGES *
1971	393	322
1972	266	465
1973	468	638
1975	645	1089
1976	968	1502
1977	2523	1519
1978	2532	1659
1979	929	1839
1980	1341	1637
1981	1872	1360
1982	1511	1560
1983	1145	1534
1984	1930	
1985	1212	

\* Five year moving average are calculated as a more stable measure of the trend in arms imports than the often erratic year to year figures.

SOURCE: Compiled from SIPRI World Armament and Disarmament Yearbooks from 1971 to 1986

TABLE - 3

## VALUES OF IMPORTS OF MAJOR WEAPONS BY SUB SAHARAN AFRICA BY COUNTRY (1951-70)

US \$m at Constant (1985) prices

RECIPIENT	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
ETHIOPIA	4	8	16	13	1	1	-	8	13	47	27	4	4	1	17	69	17	26	9	15
NIGERIA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	3	6	5	70	44	53	59	15	2
SOMALIA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	3	1	20	-	20	29	15	7	-	-
SOUTH AFRICA	-	61	13	15	57	170	98	71	137	16	128	104	127	107	212	226	310	169	67	275
SUDAN	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	2	2	16	8	21	7	40	12	7	-	10	27	277
ZAIRE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	7	9	39	90	12	14	50	-	22	15
ZIMBABWE	6	1	17	17	19	2	3	-	112	6	-	23	19	7	-	-	6	0	-	-

Source : Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson. Arms transfers to the third World, 1971-85 (SIPRI, 1986)

TABLE - 4  
VALUES OF IMPORTS OF MAJOR WEAPONS BY THE SSA BY COUNTRY<sup>a</sup> (1971-85)

Figures are in US \$m, at Constant (1985) prices

RECIPIENT	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
ANGOLA	-	-	-	2	52	227	363	254	18	132	213	233	420	448	319
ETHIOPIA	42	16	3	125	44	19	1456	632	102	239	73	192	19	99	105
KENYA	13	6	9	32	15	1	71	163	-	12	-	-	4	8	8
MOZAMBIQUE	-	-	-	-	9	-	99	645	15	20	16	22	46	421	12
NIGERIA	3	134	31	44	58	278	47	123	139	104	704	356	145	392	585
SOMALIA	-	29	197	209	80	18	35	45	58	112	108	140	223	2	47
SOUTH AFRICA	104	292	459	533	232	371	171	343	102	109	4	4	232	5	6
SUDAN	6	16	-	15	-	-	24	160	12	12	141	87	11	87	21
TANZANIA	20	5	90	137	10	-	35	41	103	27	32	86	-	47	-
UGANDA	13	6	36	63	111	84	129	-	-	-	-	8	4	-	1
ZAIRE	100	11	8	45	146	45	39	28	24	15	9	20	13	8	-
ZAMBIA	104	3	12	53	-	74	46	78	12	160	170	33	2	34	-
ZIMBABWE	1	5	5	1	19	29	26	17	4	0	23	63	23	72	-

a Recipients with import  $\geq$  0.1 percent of total third world imports for 1971-85.

- Nil

0 < \$0.5m

Source : Michael Brozoska and Thomas Ohlson. Arms transfers of the third world, 1971-85. (SIPRI, 1986)



T A B L E - 5

SHARE OF MAJOR SUPPLIERS TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA 1951 - 1985

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<u>YEAR WISE</u> <u>%</u>	<u>U.S.S.R.</u>	<u>U.S.A.</u>	<u>FRANCE</u>	<u>U.K.</u>	<u>PRG</u>	<u>ITALY</u>	<u>CHINA</u>	<u>THIRD</u> <u>WORLD</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>
1951-70	27%	22.7%	7.3%	33.5%	2%	4%	1%	1.3%	12.75%
1971-85	42%	12%	11.6%	9%	4.6%	3.3%	6.3%	4.3%	8%

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SOURCE: Compiled from data in Appendix 7 of Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson.  
Arms transfers to the third World 1971-1985 (SIPRI, 1986)

T A B L E - 6

SHARES OF MAJOR SUPPLIERS IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA 1951-1985

Period	Supplier									Total in 1985 US \$m.
	USSR	USA	FRANCE	UK	FR GERMANY	ITALY	CHINA	THIRD WORLD	OTHER	
1951-55	-	25	-	61	-	-	-	-	13	101
1956-60	16	23	5	46	-	2	-	2	6	309
1961-65	21	23	7	22	4	2	-	1	21	727
1966-70	44	20	10	5	0	8	1	1	11	1063
1971-75	27	18	13	12	3	3	12	4	9	2613
1976-80	59	8	7	7	2	2	3	4	7	8293
1981-85	40	10	15	8	9	5	4	5	5	7671

SOURCE: Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson.  
 Arms Transfers to the Third World (SIPRI, 1986)  
1971-85

T A B L E - 7

U.S. MILITARY TRANS-FERS TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, 1950 - 1980 (million current dollars)

	1950- 1955	1956- 1960	1961- 1965	1966- 1970	1971- 1975	1976- 1980	Total 1950 - 1980
AFRICA	5.72	39.7	120.6	192.9	191.5	1,329.7	1,880.1
WORLD WIDE (Percentage)	a	a	1.1	1.2	a	d	1.5
SUB-SAHARA	5.6	33.9	77.2	99.1	114.1	377.5	707.4
AFRICA (Percentage)	98	86	64	51	60	28	38
FMS	.59	1.2	7.6	4.2	36.4	267.3	310.5
MAP Excess	.086	2.8	14.8	10.2	7.7	.58	36.1
IMET	.2	2.7	8.3	13.8	7.9	13.8	46.6
COMMERCIAL	NA	NA	NA	NA	18.2	78.5	96.7

SOURCE : U.S. Defence Security Assistance Agency, Fiscal Year Series, 1980

NA = not available

a = less than 1%

T A B L E - 8

SOVIET ARMS TRANSFERS BY VALUE 1967 - 76 AND  
1976 - 80 (In million dollars)

Receipient	1967-76	% of World	1976-80	% of World
World	22,053		38,600	
Third World	15,490	70	32,900	85
Africa	4,416	20	11,320	29

Source: US Arms control and Disarmament Agency,  
World Military Expenditures and Arms transfers,  
1967-1976 (Washington D.C., 1978) PP 157-9 and world Military  
Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1976-80 (Washington, D.C., 1983), P.117.

T A B L E - 9

NUMBERS OF WEAPONS DELIVERED BY MAJOR SUPPLIERS TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, 1975-82

	USA	USSR	WESTERN EUROPE <sup>a</sup>
Tanks and self-Propelled Guns	54	1580	110
Artillery	287	3450	300
APCs and Armored Cars	121	2350	1210
Major Surface Combatants	0	6	16
Minor Surface Combatants	0	63	77
Submarines	0	0	0
Supersonic Combat Aircraft	25	335	55
Subsonic Combat Aircraft	0	130	46
Other Aircraft	40	80	200
Helicopters	4	140	200
Guided Missile Boats	0	10	1
Surface to Air Missiles (SAMS)	0	1830	210

SOURCE: Richard F Grimmet, Trends in Conventional Arms Transfers to the Third World by Major Suppliers, 1975-1982 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 1983) P.20. <sup>a</sup> Western Europe Includes France, Italy, U.K. and West Germany.

T A B L E 10

MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TRAINED BY THE MAJOR POWERS

	NUMBER TRAINED	PERIOD
USSR	10,840	1955-79
EASTERN EUROPE	1,205	1955-79
FRANCE	19,905	1960-79
U.S.A.	7,785	1950-83
GREAT BRITAIN	15,000-20,000	1950-82

SOURCE : Joachim Krause, " Soviet Arms Transfers to Sub-Saharan Africa" in  
R. Craig Nation and Mark V. Kauppi. eds,  
The Soviet Impact in Africa P.138

## Chapter 2

### Angolan Conflict

Angola has been at war for 27 years now. Thirteen years of anti-colonial war plus 14 years of a more complicated conflict after independence. Since independence the rebels of the group Union (UNITA) for Total Independence of Angola have maintained a bush war which has had a disastrous effect on the daily life of the people of Angola and has shattered the economy. Angola is potentially one of the richest countries in Southern Africa with vast a array of minerals and substantial oil reserves. Its economic richness had earned it the title of the "Jewel of the Portuguese Empire" in the colonial times. However the former "jewel of the portuguese empire" has lost its shine. What has been the role of arms transfers in the conflict? Did the arms transfers increase the influence of superpowers in the region? These are a couple of questions which will be addressed during the course of discussion. In this chapter at first a background of the conflict in Angola is given.

The motives of the various suppliers would come next and finally the impact of the arms transfers on the conflict would be reviewed.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

The roots of the ongoing conflict in Angola can be traced back to the war of independence from the Portuguese rule. The artificial frontiers of Angola are drawn around a mosaic of ethnic linguistic, cultural and often rival groups whose members are scattered from Zaire in the north to Namibia in the South. Throughout their rule, the Portuguese had employed the imperial technique to divide and rule to control them. Like, the fellow subjects in Portugal's other African colonies, nearly all Angolans were united in the wish to be rid of their white masters. But differences of personality, political philosophy and ethnic and regional interests - all painstakingly deepened by the Portuguese - fractured the independence movement into three main groups.<sup>1</sup> Each of the three liberation movements had different domestic and external supporters. The Popular Movement for the

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1. Arthur Gavshon, Crisis in Africa : Battle-ground of East and West. (Boulder, 1981), p. 235.



Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was formed in Luanda in 1956 from the fusion of several anti-colonialist organizations. The MPLA drew its support from the urban black, mulatto and white intellectuals and the Kimbundu living around the capital of Luanda. From the late 1950s Moscow displayed an active interest in the MPLA, expressed first in terms of political support and then materially. Cuba also extended its support towards MPLA. However, Agostinho Neto, the leader of the group had explored the possibility of working with the Americans only to be rebuffed by them.<sup>2</sup>

Holden Roberto formed the National Front for Liberation of Angola (FNLA) in 1962. Roberto's power base rested mainly on the Bokango refugees in the neighbouring Zaire. Although the movement was active in the northern provinces, it seemed to gain little popular support. This group was backed mainly by Zaire and USA, though it had also get support from North Korea and China.

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2. *ibid*, p. 238

Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA had been a member of the FNLA. He broke with it in 1964 after accusing it of tribalism and ironically, serving American interests and formed his own group. The main internal support for this group came from the Ovimbundu and was backed by external powers like China, Tanzania, Zambia and later on by South Africa and United States.

The war for Liberation came to an abrupt conclusion as a result of 1974 coup in Portugal. In January 1975, an agreement was reached at Alvor - a resort town in the Portuguese Algarve, between Portugal and the three liberation movements active in Angola to facilitate the transition to independence. The Alvor agreement envisaged a tripartite coalition government leading to an election and independence on November 11, 1975. However even before the ink was dry on the signatures fighting broke out between the various factions. After the breakdown of the Alvor accord the external intervention increased. The external intervention took in the form of military support and military assistance to the rival groups.

In fact in the same month January 1975 when a tenuous platform of unity was being sought to avoid bloodshed, the US, CIA decided to give \$300,000 of military assistance to the FNLA. The National Security Council's (NSC) 40 committee which supervised the CIA Had approved this aid.<sup>3</sup> Neither the Russians nor the Cubans were supplying arms to Angola at this time. Though they had provided the MPLA with arms estimated at \$55 million during the period of arms struggle (1958-74).<sup>4</sup> But the Soviet arms transfers started from April, 1975. According to Kissinger, the USSR supplied \$200 million worth of arms between April and June.<sup>5</sup> At the same time in July, President Gerald Ford of United States sanctioned a CIA Plan for a \$14 million covert action programme to buy arms for the

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3. The Times(London) 7, January 1976. as cited in Marga Holness, "Angola the struggle continues" in Phyllis Johnson and David Martin ed., Destructive engagement : Southern Africa at War(Zimbabwe, 1986) pp. 83-84.
  4. Colin Legum, "Angola and the horn of Africa" in Stephen S Kaplan. Diplomacy of power : Soviet armed forces as a political instrument (Washington D.C., 1981) p.583
  5. ibid

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FNLA and UNITA. Thus there was a deluge of arms transfer during this period by the superpowers. The CIA funded arms were to be channelled to UNITA and the FNLA via Zaire. Zaire was actively involved, its combat troops were fighting with FNLA in Angola against MPLA. Towards the end of October South Africa also started shipping material to FNLA and UNITA. In October and November reinforcements of men and material were rushed on both sides. Last of all the Cuban combat troops, a total force of 650 men landed in Angola on November 7.<sup>7</sup> Finally it was with the help of the Cuban troops that MPLA was able to contain the South African-UNITA - FNLA attack. Consequently, MPLA was able to hold Luanda and declare independence at the scheduled date on November 11, 1975 - naming the new state as the People's Republic of Angola. Simultaneously UNITA and FNLA proclaimed the independence of their state calling it the Social Democratic Republic of Angola.

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6. Nathaniel Davies, "The Angola Decision of 1975 : A Personal memoir" Foreign Affairs Vol. 57, no.1(1978) pp.110-11.

7. There is a lot a controversy regarding the exact date of arrival of Cuban troops in Angola. Some analysts have professed that the Cuban troops were seen as early as August in Angola. Those cubans were mainly instructors who had come to train the MPLA forces, the Cuban combat troops did not arrive in Angola before November. See Johanson and Martin, n..3. pp. 88-89

While the MPLA government was at once recognised by the African countries, the Soviet bloc and Cuba, UNITA and FNLA Republic received no official recognition.

However, despite the independence the conflict in Angola continued. After the Angolan independence, South Africa started a massive program of reconstitution of UNITA. South Africa started training and providing both financial and logistical support to UNITA.<sup>8</sup> Thus the UNITA insurgency gradually spread northward up the eastern interior of Angola with the South African assistance, external military training in Morocco (seemingly secretly encouraged by the United States), petro dollars from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf sources reaching a reported \$US 60-70 million a year.<sup>9</sup> By mid 1986, South African assistance to UNITA had reportedly totalled approximately \$ US 1 billion.<sup>10</sup>

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8. For details see Joseph Hanlon. Beggar Your neighbours : apartheid power in southern Africa. (London, 1986) pp.151-172.

9. John A. Marcum. "Regional security in Southern Africa". Survival Vol.30, no.1, January-February, 1988 p.6.

10. *ibid.*

Besides resurrecting UNITA, the South African Defence Forces launched a number of major offensives in the Angolan Territory. The excuse given by South Africa while launching these attacks was that they were aimed at destroying the bases of South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress (ANC). The continuous conflict had shattered the Angolan economy<sup>11</sup> and the MPLA government decided to seek a military solution to the conflict. In august-september 1985 the FAPLA (Angolan Armed Forces) mounted a major offensive against UNITA's principal south-eastern strongholds. However the SADF intervened on behalf of UNITA and repulsed the attack. Shortly after this battle (known as the Battle of Mavinga). UNITA got a new supplier of weapons. The Reagan administration in 1985 decided to provide covert military aid to UNITA. This assistance, constituting a total of \$15 million included portable Stinger anti - aircraft missiles.<sup>12</sup> However this new induction of weapons on the UNITA side, led to the escalation

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11. Bruno Dethomas, "Angola teeters on the brink of famine. Guardian Weekly vol.137 no.15, 4th October 1987 p.11

12. Keesings Record of World Events, vol.33, no.6 1987, p.35176.

of war. The first indication of impending escalation of the conflict came through the news reports of massive military deliveries estimated at about \$ 1 billion from the Soviet Union to Angola.<sup>13</sup>

This included anti-aircraft missiles with infra-read guidance systems, mobile radar units, MIG-23 aircrafts, T-54 and T-55 tanks. It seemed Angolan government had decided to exercise the military option again. The fighting began in mid-september 1987, however the result was similar as the previous year and South African Defence Forces. covering UNITA with air, artillery and ground support managed to repulse the attacking forces. This debacle led to a major military reshuffle in the Angolan side.

A new strategy was charted out and this involved for the first time since independence the deployment of the Cuban troops at the war front. This strategy paid off. The combined Angolan and Cuban forces were able to neutralize the South African attack.<sup>14</sup> In this last battle of Cuito

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13. Hongkong Standard, May 13, 1987

14. Summary of World Broadcasts (BBC) part 4, July 2, 1988).

Cuanavale, the so-called 'invincible SADF'<sup>15</sup> lost its air superiority. The South African Air force was not able to repulse the joint Angolan-Cuban air attack. The extremely demoralised SADF troops were forced to retreat, ending one of the bloodiest battles in Africa. South African defeat in Angola, the rising hue and cry over the Pretoria's Angola's policy among the white South Africa,<sup>16</sup> the high economic cost of the war<sup>17</sup> led the Pretoria regime to the negotiating table. On the Angolan side also the war weariness and ruined economy weighed as the factors leading one towards a negotiated settlement. Subsequently the New York accord was signed on December 22, 1988 leading to Namibian independence. This accord also dealt with the Angolan conflict. It provided for simultaneous withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops from Angola. At the same time mutual pledges were made by Angola and South Africa not to aid rebels against each other. Which implied South Africa would stop aiding UNITA, and Angola the ANC.<sup>18</sup>

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15. International Herald Tribune (Singapore) June 25-26, 1988. Hereafter referred as IHT.

16. See Financial Times (London) August 6, 1988  
See also Guardian Weekly August 21, 1988.

17. Economist Vol. 308, no.7561 July 30, 1988.

18. See IHT December 23, 1988.



This agreement has not led to the resolution of conflict, the conflict is thus continuing. Part of this could be explained due to the US military assistance to UNITA. The United States was not a party to the agreement and still continues to provide military assistance to UNITA. There were reports that United States had in fact doubled the aid to UNITA from \$ 15 million to \$ 40 million per year by 1989<sup>19</sup>. Hence the end of the Angolan conflict is still not in sight.

#### RATIONALE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

It is clear from the background that there were a number of countries providing military assistance to various parties in the Angolan conflict. Therefore it becomes imperative to understand the motives for supplying this assistance, by each supplier.

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19. Harold Wolpe, "Seizing the Southern African opportunities: Foreign Policy no.73 Winter 1988-89, p.66.

UNITED STATES

The US military assistance policy towards the Angolan crisis particularly during pre-independence period seems to have been dictated primarily with the motive to deny any significant political or military gains to the Russians. As Garthoff has pointed direct strategic and economic interests of the US in Angola were minimal.<sup>20</sup> Regarding this issue Henry Kissinger, the secretary of state in that period had stated in November 1975, "The United States has no national interest in Angola"<sup>21</sup>. In fact United States did not particularly object to the MPLA. The major reason for Soviet Union supplying military assistance to FNLA & UNITA and

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20. Ramond L Garthoff, D'etente and confrontation American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan. (Washington D.C., 1985) p. 520. The only economic interest of United States in Angola was to protect the Gulf oil establishments in Cabinda province of Angola.

21. quoted in *ibid*.

nuturing Holden Roberto was to counter the Soviet influence in Angola. The testimony made by the Director of Central Intelligence Agency, William E Colby in December 1975 clarifies this point. He stated that "there was little difference among the contending Angolan groups - all were 'independents' and leftists. When asked why, in that case, the United States favoured the side it did, he replied : 'Because the Soviets are backing the MPLA is the simplest answer!'" <sup>22</sup>

Thus the main aim of the covert military assistance to FNLA and UNITA in 1974-75 was to prevent a perceived victory of a soviet "client" which was emboldened with the Soviet arms. Thus Angola was seen as a battleground of global East - West competition. The US military assistance to Angolan rebels was banned in 1976. And it was restarted only in 1985 when President Ronald Reagan got the congressional approval and repealed the Clarke amendment. The revival of US Military assistance to Angola should be seen in the overall context of "Reagan Doctrine". The Primary aim of the Reagan Doctrine was to assist themovements

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22. *ibid.*

fighting "communist" regimes in the third world. Thereby weakening the links between radical Third World regimes and the Soviet Union. It also aimed at supporting the overthrow of these regimes.<sup>23</sup>

The guiding principle of Reagan doctrine when applied to Angola was to support the UNITA "freedom fighters" to "roll back" communism from Angola.<sup>24</sup>

The conservatives in the Reagan administration aimed at overthrowing the "illegitimate" government in Luanda. While the moderates saw the Reagan doctrine assistance to UNITA as a means to pressure the MPLA to accept UNITA into a coalition government. Finally and most importantly the Reagan doctrine and the subsequent military assistance to UNITA was seen<sup>as</sup> a tool to pressure the Cubans to leave Angola.

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23. For most comprehensive articulations on Reagan doctrine see President Reagan's 1985 state of the Union address, reprinted in Department of State Bulletin, April 1985 p.9

24. See Herbert Howe, "United States policy in Southern Africa" Current History Vol. 85 No.511 pp. 206-208, 232 see also Michael Mcfaul, "Rethinking the Reagan Doctrine in Angola". International Security, Vol. 14 no.3 Winter 1989-90.

### South Africa

The South African military assistance to the rebel forces in Angola should be seen in the context of its overall regional strategy. Until the mid 1970s, the fundamental bedrock upon which South Africa's regional policy was based, was to reinforce the surrounding 'buffer states' as a protective layer for South Africa itself.<sup>25</sup> This involved forging alliances with and supporting neighbouring colonial regimes. These alliances included provision of military assistance to the rulers after the onset of armed liberation struggles in these.<sup>26</sup>

However when South Africa saw that the tide was turning and the liberation struggle was becoming stronger (Particularly in Angola) it started to aid

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25. See Robert Davies and others. The struggle for South Africa Vol. I (London, 1984) pp.43-44.

26. There are reports that the South African intelligence agency BOSS, co-operated with CIA and the Portuguese secret police is charting out strategies against the liberation struggles. See H.E. Newsum and Olayiwola Abegurin, United States Foreign Policy towards Southern Africa: Andrew Young and beyond. (London, 1987) pp. 52-54.

one of the them, the UNITA. With the independence of Angola and Mozambique, the two key 'buffers' had fallen. The collapse of the Portuguese empire, the humiliating military defeat in Angola in 1975, and finally the forming of South African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) aimed at reducing economic dependence on South Africa led to an overhauling of the regional policy of South Africa. The new policy called the Total Strategy<sup>27</sup> had three main goals. The first was to reassert economic and political hegemony to use pressure to bring the neighbouring states back into line. The second goal was to create chaos in the neighbouring countries, particularly who do not follow the South African line. This aimed at neutralising the neighbours,

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27. Architect of this strategy also known as the "destabilization policy" was the South African President P.W. Botha. For details on this policy see Robert Davies and Dan O' Meara "Total Strategy in Southern Africa : an analysis of South African regional policy since 1978". Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.11, no.2, April 1985, See also Hasu H Patel. "South Africa's destabilisation policy" Mainstream Annual, 1986. pp. 81-87.

forcing them to concentrate on their own troubles and thereby a lesser threat to Pretoria. Finally the third aim which was used as a public justification for destabilization was to prevent the neighbouring states from harbouring any ANC and SWAPO guerillas. This destabilization policy when applied on Angola meant extending military support to UNITA.

Angola definitely posed a credible threat to the apartheid regime. In view of some scholars South Africa was afraid that the multiracial and Marxist government might shake the foundations of the apartheid capitalism with its influence.<sup>28</sup> Secondly unlike the other landlocked Southern African countries Angola was not dependent on South Africa economically. With its vast economic resources Angola had the potential to become the leading economic force of the region. Finally Angola openly supported ANC and SWAPO. Thus South Africa wanted to create as much economic chaos and disruption as possible to prevent development in the country.

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28. Hanlon, n.3 p.153

SOVIET UNION

There are a number of factors which can explain the Soviet military assistance to Angola. In the initial phase President Brezhnev's policy of supporting movements engaged in "wars of national liberation" played an important part. From Moscow's viewpoint MPLA was the only genuine national liberation movement in Angola. MPLA fulfilled the key criterion of a genuine liberation movement. "An inalienable part of the MPLA's democratic policy is its determination to co-operate with the progressive forces of the world above all the countries of the socialist community"<sup>29</sup> Sino-Soviet rivalry also played an important role in the provision of military assistance to MPLA. As Garthoff states "The Soviet leaders were very much concerned that they not appear less able and willing than China to aid national liberation movements"<sup>30</sup> Further, the Soviet Union also believed that there was Sino-American collaboration for competing in third World.<sup>31</sup> The fact that both China and United States

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29. Radio Moscow March 31, 1975.

30. Garthoff n.19. p.527.

31. ibid p.528



were supporting FNLA increased their conviction and therefore took steps to challenge it. After independence the military assistance was provided mainly to support an ally which has been facing continuous aggression from the imperialist forces. Though there are some who feel that primary motive of USSR arms transfers to Angola has been to advance its own political influence in the region starting from Angola, and Mozambique to Zimbabwe and finally to South Africa and thereby controlling the entire Southern African region, along with its Persian Gulf of minerals and the strategic sea routes.<sup>32</sup> Lastly gaining facilities for access to air basing and berthing of ships in Angola could be a motive for supplying arms. The Luanda port is now the main Soviet naval base on the West African Coast with guided missile destroyer and several accompanying craft stationed here. It also enjoys the facilities of naval reconnaissance access, and airbase access in Angola.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Karl P. Magyar. "Darkness in a dark landscape". Defence and foreign affairs. Vol. 18, no.10 October 1989.

33. See Robert E. Harkavy. Bases abroad : the global foreign military presence. (SIPRI, 1989) pp.53, 88-95.

Cuba

There are different reasons provided for Cuba's provision of military assistance.<sup>34</sup> Some feel that ideology was the principal motivator of Cuban policy in Angola. This implied that supporting national liberation movements and propounding socialism was the main objective of the Cuban policy. However, there were other factors besides ideology. Like striving for effective leadership over the third world. Finally the lessening of Cuba's one way dependence upon Soviet Union and creation of a new relationship with USSR as a highly valued ally. After the Cuban forces landed in Angola, Cuba was promptly lumped as a 'proxy' or a "surrogate" of Soviet Union. However there is evidence to prove that Cuba had decided to intervene on its own in Angola in 1975 and not at the Soviet command.<sup>35</sup> In the words of the Cuban foreign minister, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez.

"Look, its obvious that we have an close relationship with the Russians. But when we first sent troops to Angola, we did not rely on a possible Soviet participation in the

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34. The number of Cuban troops stationed in Angola at the time of New York Accord was around 50,000.
35. William M. Leogrande, "Cuban - Soviet relations and Cuban Policy in Africa". in Carmelo Mesa-Lago and June S. Belkin, ed. Cuba in Africa (Pittsburg, 1982) pp. 25-26

operation.....Eventually the operation was co-ordinated with Russians, who were beginning to send military supplies to help President Agostinho's MPLA government in Angola. But the thing started off, as a purely Cuban operation"<sup>36</sup> Thus rather than acting as a 'proxy' the Angolan assistance to MPLA in Angola made it strike an independent line.

#### ZAIRE

The other external actor is Zaire. Zaire's President Mobutu's main objective was to prevent the extension of Soviet influence on his borders. This objective helped him, in gaining friends abroad and within Africa. The other major interest was continued access to the Beneguala railway, which normally carried the bulk of copper exports from Zaire. Finally the possibility of gaining control of Cabinda, the oil rich Angolan province which forms an enclave within Zaire and Congo. The last

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36. Kaplan. n.4, p.379

objective was most probably been dropped over the years.

Hence we find that each supplier had its own particular set of objectives to fulfil a different rationale for supplying the arms.

Impact of the Military assistance on the conflict<sup>37</sup>

After tracing the events of the conflict in Angola it is obvious that military assistance did play a vital role in the escalation of the conflict. During the period between 1974-75 it was the American assistance of around \$300m to FNLA which led to the subsequent arms transfers by Soviet Union to the MPLA . . . This was the beginning of the arms race which flared the conflict to new heights.

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37. One of the handicaps while evaluating the impact of military assistance on the conflict is the non-availability of data on military assistance by South Africa. Only figure available is that given by Marcum, n.9 of approx. \$ 1 billion by 1986. No break up of the South African aid is available either in SIPRI or the ACDA sources. The SIPRI sources just take the Soviet and US arms transfers that too after 1976.

In the conflict after the independence too we find that military assistance to the two parties of the conflict intensified the fighting. During the course of events which led to the independence UNITA, as a movement was almost wiped out. And the credit for its resurgence goes to the South African military assistance and training. The UNITA insurgency in the South and Central parts of Angola, and destruction wreaked by it on the economy in turn led the arms transfers from Soviet Union to Angola. The subsequent armed offensives launched by the SADF in Angola from 1980 led to more imports of weapons and further intensification of the conflict. From 1980 to 1984, the Arms transfers to Angola increased from \$ 132 million to \$ 448 million.<sup>38</sup> However there was a drop in the arms transfers in 1985 to \$ 319 million. But in 1986 the United States started providing covert assistance to the UNITA rebels. It

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38. Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson. Arms transfer to the third world. (Stockholm, SIPRI, 1986) p.334-335. See Table 11 for detailed description of arms transfer to Angola.

used the Kamina airbase in Zaire to drop its arms supplies. Turning Zaire into a conduit for weapons transferred to UNITA. This revival of US military aid to UNITA led to the subsequent increase in arms transfers from Soviet Union to Angola. This again intensified the fighting in 1987. Thus we find that the military assistance provided by South Africa to the Angolan rebels set a chain reaction and which in turn increased the level of fighting in the conflict.

The Angolan conflict also provides an example of the superpowers steering the conflict in the direction they wanted. Angola had become a battle ground of the East-West conflict. If United States government had wished to do so it could have stopped the South African government from aiding the UNITA rebels. However it has been revealed by Johan Marcum that United States secretly encouraged South Africa in training and providing military assistance to the UNITA. Later on during the Reagan administration in the guise of "constructive engagement",<sup>39</sup> the United

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39. For details about constructive engagement see Chester Crocker, "South Africa : Strategy for Change" Foreign Affairs Vol. 59 no.2, (Winter 1980-81), pp.323-351.

States improved relations with South Africa tacitly sanctioning and subsidizing the South African operations in Angola.<sup>40</sup> However the December 22, 1988 New York Accord can be taken as a perfect example of the superpower manipulation in steering the Angolan conflict. One of the primary factors in the achievement of this accord and thereby the reduction in the level of conflict in Angola was the change in US-Soviet relations. The US-Soviet relations underwent a drastic change since the arrival of President Gorbachev on the Global political scene.<sup>41</sup> The initiatives of Gorbachev have led to an end of the cold war. The superpowers now have moved from confrontation to co-operation. It was this co-operation which led to the New York Settlement. Both US and Soviet Union urged its allies to reach a negotiated settlement of the conflict. Thus the superpowers still play a dominant role in controlling the conflict.

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40. There were reports of flights from Honduras delivering US weapons to Johannesburg. See David Keys "US said to resume arms flights to Angola rebels". The Independent March 23, 1987

41. See Phil Williams : "US-Soviet relations : beyond the cold war". International Affairs (London) Vol.65, no.2, Spring 1989, pp. 273-288.

T A B L E = 11

ARMS TRANSFERS TO ANGOLA 1971-85

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUPPLIER</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
<u>A I R C R A F T</u>				
1975	27	AOP-9 Light Plane	Portugal	Handed Over out independence
1975	2	C-45 Expeditor Transport	Portugal	Handed over at independence.
1975	3	C-47 Transport	Portugal	Handed over at independence,
1975	2	DO-27 Transport	Portugal	Handed over at independence
1975	14	G-91R-3 Fighter/ground attack	Portugal	Handed over at independence
1975	6	Noratlas 2501 Transport	Portugal	Handed over at independence.
1975	12	SA-316 B Helicopter	Portugal	Handed over at independence
1976	4	PC-6 Lightplane	Portugal	Handed over at independence.
1976-77	40	MiG-21 MF Fighter	USSR	
1977	6	An-26 Curl Lightplane	USSR	



YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENTS
1977	3	MiG-15 UTI Fighter/trainer	USSR	
1977	20	MiG-17F Fighter	USSR	
1978	19	Mi-8 Hip Helicopter	USSR	
1978-79	8	BN-2A Defender Lightplane	ROMANIA	
1979	6	An-2 Transport	USSR	
1980	4	Nord-262A-2M Maitine Patrol	ALGERIA	
1980	1	F-27, Maritime Maritime Patrol	NETHERLANDS	
1980	6	SA-316 B Helicopter	FRANCE	
1980	1	C-130 H Hercules Transport	USA	
1981	4	Tak-40 Codling Transport	USSR	
1982-84	23	MiG-23 Fighter/Interceptor	USSR	Unconfirmed, Acc. to South African report.
1983	1	An-2 Transport	USSR	
1983	2	SA-316 B Helicopter	PORTUGAL	
1983-85	13	PC-7 Trainer	SWITZERLAND	

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENTS
1979	1	Polnocny Class Landing Ship	USSR	
1982-83	6	OSa-2 Class FAC	USSR	Armed with SSN-2 Styx Missile
<u>ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES</u>				
1974	5	AML - 90 Armoured Car	PORTUGAL	Left behind at independence
1974	10	M-3 APC.	PORTUGAL	Left behind at independence
1975	25	T-59 MBT	CHINA	Originally delivered via Zaire, for FNLA.
1976	50	OT - 62 APC	CZECHOSLOVAKIA	Supplier unconfirmed
1976-77	60	PT-76 Light Tank	USSR	
1976-77	85	T-34 Medium Tank	USSR	
1977-78	200	BRDM-2 Scout Car	USSR	Some possibly BRDM-1 Version
1977-78	200	BRDM-2 Scout Car	USSR	Some Possibly up graded BTR-50 version.
1977-78	150	BTR - 60 P Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC)	USSR	
1977-78	150	T-54 MBT	USSR	Some Possibly up-graded T-55 Version

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENTS
1978-79	20	ZSU-23-4 Shilka Anti Aircraft vehicle (AAV)	USSR	
1978-79	20	ZSU-57 - 2 AAV	USSR	
1981	40	SU-100 Tank Destroyer	USSR	
1981-83	30	ZSU-23-4 Shilka AAV	USSR	
1981-85	175	T-62 ABT	USSR	
1982	10	BRDM-2 Spigot TD (M)	USSR	
1983-85	17	BRDM-2 Gaskin AAV (M)	USSR	
<u>ARTILLERY</u>				
1976	40	M-46 130 mm Towed Gun	USSR	
1976	72	AA-2 Atoll Anti Aircraft Missile	USSR	Arming MiG-17/215
1976-77	100	BM-21 122 mm Multiple Aocket system	USSR	
1976-78	6000	SA-7 Grail Portable Surface to Air Missile (SAM)	USSR	
1977-78	1000	AT-3 Sagger Anti Tank Missile	USSR	
1980-81	100	M-1974 122 mm Self Propelled Howitzer (SPH)	USSR	

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENTS
1980-81	8	SA-2 SAMS Mobile SAM System	USSR	
1980-81	40	SA-2 Guideline Landmobile SAM	USSR	Unconfirmed; may be confused with SA-35 Also reportedly used in Southern Angola
1980-84	16	SA-6 SAMS. Mobile SAM System	USSR	
1980-84	84	SA-6 Gainful Landmob SAM	USSR	SA-2/6 sites in Angola destroyed Prior to south African attack Aug/Sep. 1981
1981-85	25	SA-3 SAMS Mobile SAM System	USSR	
1981-85	120	SA-3 Goa Landmobile SAM	USSR	
1982	40	M-1974 122 SP	USSR	
1982	30	AT-4 Spigot ATM	USSR	
1982-83	6	SSN-2 STYxL Ship to Shore Missile Launcher	USSR	
1982-83	72	SSN-2 Styx Ship to Shore Missile	USSR	Arming to Osa-2 class fast attack craft

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1983-85	12	An-12 Cub A Transport	USSR	
1983-85	42	Mi-8 Hip Helicopter	USSR	
1983-85	22	MiG-21 bis Fighter	USSR	
1983-86	30	An-26 Curt. Lightplane	USSR	
1984	4	An - 32 Cline Transport	USSR	
1984	5	Su-22 Fighter - J Fighter/ Ground Attack	USSR	
1985	6	Su-22 Fighter - J.Fighter/ ground attack	USSR	
<u>NAVAL VESSELS</u>				
1975	1	Shanghai Class Patrol Craft (PC)	CHINA	
1975	1	Alfange Class Landing Craft (LC)	PORTUGAL	Handed over at independence.
1975	5	Argos Class PC	PORTUGAL	Handed over at independence.
1975	1	Flower Class Frigate	PORTUGAL	Handed over at independence.
1977-83	5	Shershen Class Fast Attack Craft (FAC)	USSR	Armed with tropedoes

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENTS
1983	100	AA-2 Atoll AAM	USSR	Arming Migs.
1983	40	D-30 122mm Towed Howitzer	USSR	
1983-85	8	SA-8 SAMS Mobile SAM System	USSR	
1983-85	96	SA-8 Gecko Landmobile SAM	USSR	Unconfirmed; reportedly manned by Soviet Personnel
1983-85	216	SA-9 Gaskin Landmobile SAM	USSR	
1985	144	SA-13 Gopher Landmobile SAM	USSR	Unconfirmed; to 4 SA-13 TELAR Vehicles
1986	100	FIM-92A Stinger Portable SAM	USA	reportedly delivered via Zaire for UNITA

SOURCE: Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson. Arms Transfers to the Third World, 1971-85 (SIPRI, 1987)

## Chapter 3

### Ethiopia Somalia Conflict (1977-78)

The Ethiopia Somalia War of 1977-78 also known as the Ogaden War, broke out in Mid-1977 when regular Somali troops launched an attack to gain control of the Ogaden province in the neighbouring Ethiopia. Within two months, by mid July, the Somali troops had occupied much of the Ogaden. The age old Somali dream of Somali reunification was about to be realised. However this irredentist dream of Somalians was shattered within a few months when the Somali troops were forced to beat a hasty retreat. The result of the Ogaden War and the defeat of Somalia cannot be just analysed by looking at the local factors i.e. weakness or strength of the armed forces etc. During this period the Horn of Africa had become the cockpit of the East-West rivalry. Before the war United States was the major arms supplier to Ethiopia while Soviet Union supplied most of the arms to Somalia. However while the fighting was going on in Ogaden, another drama was being enacted in the Horn of Africa.

This was the period of shifting alliance. During the war Soviet Union switched its alliance from Somalia to Ethiopia while United States switched over from Ethiopia to Somalia. Thus the outcome of the war was dictated not only by the military commanders on the field but also by factors over which they had no control. The great powers politics. How far were the superpowers able to exert their influence on the conflict through the arms transfers? What was the effect of the arms transfers by the superpowers on the conflict? Were the superpowers able to exert their influence through arms transfers? Before searching the **answers** for these questions we would give<sup>a</sup> brief sketch of the conflict.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

Ethiopia and Somalia both fall under the geographical region called the Horn of Africa.<sup>1</sup> Located on the eastern tip of Africa, the Horn today

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1. Includes Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti.



conjures up images of famines, civil wars, and homeless refugees. Destitute and embattled Horn has nevertheless attracted great power interest. The chief reason for this attraction is the Horn's strategic location. Geographically, the horn region is a hinge between the middle east and Africa. Strategically, it dominates the entrance to Red Sea an important route for oil and other trade between Europe and Asia. Thus this region has in past been a centre of great power rivalry.

One of the major causes of the conflict in Horn of Africa has been Somali irredentism. Eversince independence Somalia has been absorbed with its aim of uniting all Somali people in a "Greater Somalia". The present Democratic Republic of Somalia, a union of two colonies, British and Italian Somali-lands had attained independence in 1960. Even then nearly 1 million Somalis lived outside the Somali republic, occupying areas of Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. The issue of a single Somali state had been the proclaimed goal of Somali Youth League, the movement which had led the struggle for the independence of Somalia. After independence this mission was

intensified when the aspiration was incorporated in the Constitution of the Somali Republic. The Article 6(4) of the 1961 Somali Constitution stated "The Somali Republic promotes, by legal and peaceful means, the union of Somali territories"<sup>2</sup>. The five pointed star on the Somali flag has symbolised the colonial division of Somalia into five parts and served also to remind them that they might one day be united in a single nation-state. The Somali viewpoint is reflected in a statement made by Somalia's President Mohammed Siad Barre in January, 1981, he had said "As far as Somalia is concerned the roots of the conflict (in the Horn) must be sought in the colonialism which split the country into five parts - two under Britain, one under Italy, one under France and one under Ethiopian occupation"<sup>3</sup>. However it is known that no unified Somali State existed in past, the only time that the Somalia including Ogaden united under the British Administration during and after the Second World War.<sup>4</sup>

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2. Cited in RR.Ramchandani. "Conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Western Sahara" IDSA Journal Vol.9, no.9. April-June 1977.
  3. African Index, Vol.4, no.1, January 1981, p.2 as cited in Samuel M. Makinda Super Power diplomacy in the Horn of Africa (London 1987) p.18.
  4. Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux. The Ethiopian Revolution (London, 1981) p.199

Besides the irredentist appeals there were other reasons<sup>5</sup> behind Somalia's claim for Ogaden. Economically, Ogaden was beneficial because the region afforded grazing during the rainy season. Further, the reports of oil deposits in the region added to its attraction. Moreover the claim of Ogaden served to unite the highly fragmented Somali Society together. Finally the claim to Ogaden served the interests of one of the four tribal confederacies inside Somalia, the Darod, to whom the Ogaden tribes belong. The Darods have dominated the post-independence Somalia. Upto 30% of the armed forces constituted of Ogadeni tribesmen. The President Said Barre has an Ogadeni mother, and therefore he had taken deep interest in the issue.

Somalia's territorial ambitions were encouraged at least in part initially by Britain.<sup>6</sup> After World War II, Britain had toyed with the idea of Greater Somalia. First it proposed a Union of British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the Ogaden and Haud

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5. *ibid*, p.207.

6. Marina Ottoway. Soviet and American influence in the Horn of Africa. (New York, 1982) pp. 23-24.

provinces of Ethiopia. But had to withdraw this proportion after pressure from Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. Secondly as late as 1962, Britain had considered the possibility of ceding the NFD of Somalia. Kenya was very close to independence at that time and the Kenyan leadership bitterly opposed this plan. Faced with this opposition Britain dropped the plan. However all this diplomatic hedging had a deep impact on Somalia and had spurred Somalia's ambitions of forming the Greater Somalia.

Shortly after Somalia achieved independence it got involved in armed conflicts with its neighbours. Skirmishes with Ethiopia in the Ogaden started as early as 1961, there was also fighting on the Kenyan-Somalian border after 1962. In 1964 again a war erupted between Somalia and Ethiopia. During this war Ethiopia and later on Somalia had requested the OAU to settle the dispute. The OAU both the parties to negotiate keeping in view the Article III(3) of the OAU charter which urged each member to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other member states.<sup>7</sup> Consequently

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7. See Vijay Gupta. "The Ethiopia-Somalia conflict and the role of the external powers." Foreign Affairs Reports Vol.27, no.3, March 1978 p.41.

there was a ceasefire and normalcy was restored. However this was not the end of the conflict. Somalia, though peacefully continued to voice its claims on the Ogaden.

Moreover throughout the 1960s and the 1970s a Somali Nationalist Movement which came to be known as the West Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), had operated in the Ogaden and had frequently harassed the Ethiopian rulers. Somalia had never tried to hide its sympathy and support for the WSLF although it had denied charges of direct involvement in anti-Ethiopian activities in the Ogaden.

In early 1974 an event occurred in Ethiopia which acted as a catalyst for the change in the Horn of Africa. It was the overthrow of Haile Selassie's ancien regime in Addis Ababa and its replacement by a military government controlled by the Provisional Military Administrative Committee, better known as Dergue. The Dergue found itself divided on the basis of policies and personalities and its leadership locked in a power struggle which resulted in a series of purges until in early 1977

Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as the leader. Under Mengistu, the Dergue moved towards setting up of a socialist state.<sup>8</sup>

These dramatic changes in the government had an effect on Ethiopia's relations with United States. During Haile Selassie's regime US-Somalia relations were very close. The United States was the major source of arms supply and military assistance. The new governments avowal to the Marxist-Leninist principles did not fall within the American overall American interests. Apart from Ethiopian government's changing political inclinations there were other reason responsible for the growing disenchantment of the United States, with Ethiopia. The nub of the US-Ethiopian relations over the previous two decades had been the Kagnew communications base which Ethiopia had made available for the US use. With the transfer of the most important functions of the Kagnew communications base to Diego Garcia, strategic significance of Ethiopia had been considerably reduced for the Americans. The growing US links with the

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8. For the detailed analyses of causes and events of the 1974 revolution see n.4.

Saudi Arabia also prevented Washington from supporting Mengistu who had planned to wipe out the Eritrean rebels militarily.<sup>9</sup>

In the meanwhile the internal situation in Ethiopia was deteriorating at a fast rate. The secession-ist movement in Eritrea had become very strong, trouble was also brewing in the Somali inhabited Ogaden. Faced with these difficulties, Ethiopian government requested USA to increase its military assistance. Though US did eventually increase the assistance but it was not on grant aid but on payment of hard cash. This batch of assistance included sophisticated weapons like F5E fighter aircrafts, T-60 tanks etc. However, the Dergue was not pleased with US at its shift in arms transfer policy and started to look for alternative source - the Soviet Union.

At this juncture the strife ridden Ethiopia proved to be too tempting a target for Siad Barre to resist. He thought that this was the ideal time to

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9. Mohammad Ayoob, "The Horn of Africa" in Mohammad Ayoob, ed. Conflict and intervention in the third world (London, 1980) pp.146-147.

wrest Ogaden from the Ethiopian control. Another reason for Somalia launching an all-out offensive against Ethiopia, was the desire to take advantage of Somali military superiority while it lasted.

Table 12 gives the military balance between Ethiopia and Somalia during the period before the War.

The Ethiopian armed forces were better trained than Somalia, with a quarter century of US training arms and indoctrination. However, there were other factors which counter balanced this advantage of the Ethiopian defence forces. For the last 15 years it had not been successful in suppressing the insurgency in the country. In the Ogaden it had proved unsuccessful in tackling the local insurgent force WSLF. Further, troop morale had diminished markedly as a result of lengthy field service and family separation.<sup>10</sup>

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10. Robert E Harkavy and Stephanies G Neuman. The lessons of recent wars in the third world. Vol. 1 (Lexington, 1985) p.108.



In comparison with Ethiopian armed forces, the Somali armed forces had a number of advantages. The commanders of Somali army were familiar with the combat terrain. For they had been sent frequently across the border to assist and train the WSLF guerillas. The troops morale was very high because the main objective of the war was to liberate Ogaden, which was<sup>a</sup> very popular goal among them. Moreover Somali's would be fighting in a territory where the local support was with them. Finally (as we shall discuss later on) Somalia had tacit support of United States to supply it with weapons if USSR its traditional supplier refused.

Apart from taking advantage, the military balance, which was tilted in favour of Somalia, Said Barre, also thought that this offensive might lead to a demise of Dergue from power in Ethiopia may in future also lead to a balkanisation of Ethiopia, which would be in favour of Somalia. In view of some there also might have been a secondary objective of replacing Mengistu's regime with "either a right wing or an extreme left wing government"

which would in turn force Soviet Union to mend its fences, with Mogadishu and this time on his terms rather than Soviet Union's.<sup>11</sup>

This was the background to the conflict which began with the WSLF guerillas intensifying their operations in Ogaden in early 1977. By May the Somali troops had joined WSLF in the offensive. On May 25, 1977, both Addis Ababa and Mogadishu confirmed that around 3000 to 6000 heavily armed WSLF guerillas had invaded Ogaden.<sup>12</sup> By mid July almost whole of Ogaden was under the WSLF & Somali control. It was only then the Ethiopia declared that Somalia was waging a full scale war against it.

After isolating most of the Ethiopian units in the South and the Central parts of Ogaden, the Somali military planned their invasion further. It was decided that Harara and Diredawa would be the main targets. The control of these two cities was very important, for they were the Ethiopian strongholds in Ogaden. The strategy was very sound and

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11. Ayob, n.8. p.151

12. Keesings Contemporary archives, October 28, 1977, p.28633.

by November Jijiga was in Somali hands and so were the key northern towns of Fianbiro and Harrawa. Only Harar and Diredawa remain obstacles in path of success. These two key centres though encircled remained in the Ethiopian control.

At the juncture, there were a number of events and facts which worked against Somalia. First the Soviet supplied ground transport could not stand under the difficult terrain conditions, Air superiority was denied as a result of Soviet Union's refusal to supply, essential spare parts. Further, the troops morale went down, due to the long stalemate. Finally the Soviet decision to terminate arms supplies to Mogadishu.

The Soviet decision had come after months of ambivalence in the policy. Soviet Union had not wanted to antagonize either of sides. One was a ally, other had recently entered into the Socialist brotherhood. Further, Soviet Union hesitated in supplying weapons at their crucial time. If it did so, it would loose friends in the region if Somalia

won the war and Ogaden with it. Another factor which influenced Soviet decision was that the Soviet Union did not want to share the blame for spurring the Somali ambitions by supplying the weapons.<sup>13</sup>

After the abrogation of the Soviet-Somali treaty of friendship, the Soviet Union started supporting Ethiopia militarily. There was an emergency airlift of approximately \$ 11 million in arms and other war materials. They included light arms artillery, armour, and MIG-17 through MIG-23 fighter aircraft.<sup>14</sup> At the same time around 1000 advisors and two Soviet Genrals were despatched to Ethiopia to help the Ethiopians becoming familiar with the Soviet equipment. The Ethiopians also got support from Cuba and Cuban troops(around 12,000) landed up in Jan., 1978.<sup>15</sup> They were mobilized to provide training to the Ethiopian troops. The

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13. Makinda, n.3, p.118.

14. International Herald Tribune(Paris) September 22, 1977. Hereafter referred as IHT.

15. IHT, January 26, 1978.

joint Soviet - Cuban - Ethiopian defence was able to push back the Somalian attack. Thereby putting an end to the war. Through this was the end of the Ogaden war it was not the end of the conflict. Somalia still continued to harbour claims for regaining Ogaden. In May 1988, Somalia agreed to give up Ogaden. However there are still doubts that this would lead to the end of the conflict.<sup>16</sup>

#### RATIONALE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

The background, is indicative of the fact that military assistance played a vital role in fueling the conflict. Thus it becomes imperative to analyse the motives for providing this assistance by the suppliers.

#### UNITED STATES

United States was the main supplier of military assistance to Ethiopia from the period 1950-77. The embryo of the US-Ethiopia relationship can be traced back to the period of Italian occupation of Ethiopia from 1935-41. America vehemently opposed this occupation of Ethiopia by the Fascist forces.

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16. See Indian Ocean News-Letter No. 334, May 28, 1988.

Thereby winning the friendship of Ethiopia. The US desire to secure continuing base rights to operate the Italian built radio station at Asmara and the Ethiopia wish to establish a strong military force brought the two countries closer. In 1953 they concluded the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement (MDAA), In a seperate accord signed the same day, the US was given the right to develop the Asmara (later known as Kagnev) military facility. US responsibilities were clearly spelled out by the MDAA. Basically, it was to assume responsibility for developing, training and equipping the Ethiopian armed forces. A US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) was also set up in Ethiopia to organize and implement and supervise American Supplies. The MDAA was renewed in 1960 and an agreement was made that US would train a 40,000 man Ethiopian Defence force and would oppose any threat to its territorial integrity.<sup>17</sup> During the period between 1950 and 1973 arround \$ 161 million in military aid was programmed for Ethiopia.<sup>18</sup> As far as training goes between 1953 and 1975, 3,552 Ethiopian military personnel were trained in US itself.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Baffour Agyeman-Duah. "The US and Ethiopia: the politics of military assistance" Armed Forces & Society. Vol. 12, no.2, Winter 1986, page 289.

18. *ibid.*

19. Halliday and Molyneuse. n.4, p. 215

The US military assistance to Ethiopia was guided by one major interest at that particular point of time. And that was establishment of a communications base at Asmara, in Eritrea. Asmara was geographically located at a strategic position which was ideally suited for the development of a communication base. In a testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, John Spencer, for chief adviser to the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said:

"The US wanted the communications base at Asmara ..... because it was located in the tropics far from the north and the south magnetic poles..... and magnetic storms, in a zone where the limited degree of seasonal variations between sunrise and sunset reduced the need for numerous frequency changes. It was therefore, important to the world-wide network of US Communications through the Philippines, Ethiopia, Morocco and Arlington, Virginia and important as well for NATO Communications within Western Europe itself when electrical and magnetic disturbances upset communications in those higher latitudes. In other words, the base at Asmara had little to do with either Ethiopia or Africa."<sup>20</sup>

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20. Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, Hearings before the Sub Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate 4, 5 and 6 August 1976 in Makinda. n. 3

Mr. Spencer's statement makes it clear that the main interest of the US in Ethiopia was establishment of the communication base, and nothing else. And the military assistance was a 'payment' for the facility granted by Emperor Haile Selassie.

Hence the Asmara base was the key to the US military assistance to Ethiopia in the 1950's. Ethiopia's anti-communist position, was a peripheral factor. However certain developments in the region in the early sixties increased the importance of Ethiopia as an anti-communist ally. They were the beginning of Soviet Military aid to Somalia in 1963. The growing Soviet - Somalia relations and the fear that this was the beginning of Soviet strategy of establishing its hold over Africa turned United States towards Ethiopia. Ethiopia became the battleground for the containment of communism.<sup>21</sup>

Another reason why US was interested in Ethiopia was the active role played by the latter in African affairs. Ethiopia sent a contingent of more than 3,000 troops to help the UN in Zaire in 1960. In 1963 Haile Selassie mediated in the war between Morocco and Algeria. In 1963 Addis Ababa was made the site of the headquarters of the (OAU) Organisation of African Unity, a choice that gave Ethiopia a special place in

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21. *ibid.*



the diplomatic arena.<sup>22</sup>

Another incentive for supplying weapons to Ethiopians was the close relations between Ethiopia and Israel.<sup>23</sup> Israel has consistently supported Haile Selassie's regime and had provided counter insurgency training for operations against Eritreans. Israel in its turn had been interested in Horn due to the strategic importance to Israel of the Straits of Bal-el-Mandeb, the narrow waterway between the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula. In view of some due to America's commitment to Israel's conception of 'absolute' security, Israeli conceptions are allowed to maintain the US policy towards Middle East and the regional conflicts in the Horn are viewed by the West as an extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>24</sup>

The above explanations have provided with the main aims of US military assistance from 1950-74 period. However there was a shift in the assistance policy in 1974. Till/<sup>then</sup> the aid had come under military assistance

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22. n.4. p.216

23. Olusóla Ojo. "United States policy in the Horn of Africa ." Problems of non-alignment. Vol.2, no.1, March-May, 1984

24. Ayooob, n.9. p.141-42.

programme (MAP). However after 1973 this aid under MAP dropped from \$ 2mn to a mere \$114,000 in 1976. During the same period FMS financing previously non-existent in the US - Ethiopia relations was introduced. In 1974, the FMS was \$11mn and was increased to \$61.5mn in 1977<sup>25</sup>. The decrease in the MAP figures may be indicative of the displeasure of the US with policies of the new regime in Ethiopia. The increase in FMS implied that after grant aid provided till 1974 the US government had now turned to cash purchases. However the sudden increase in the military assistance in 1974<sup>26</sup> is explained by Marina Ottoway 'geopolitical considerations'. These implied, that the US felt that the military regime would eventually collapse, and to have good relations with the 'would be' new government it was essential that United States continued to provide the military aid.

However as the data given above shows the US military assistance had changed from grant aid to cash purchases, specially at a period with the Ethiopian government was in dire need of military supplies because of the continuing

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25. US, Department of Defense. Foreign Military Sales Foreign military construction Sales and Military Assistance facts as of September, 1981.

26. Ottoway, n.6 p.101.

conflict in Eritrea & the threat of war with Somalia. Thus it was "economic realism." which would explain the policy of United States at that point of time.<sup>27</sup>

Another explanation given for the US policy at that juncture was the conventional anti-Soviet stand. Kissinger's view at that point of time was that so long as the Dergue retained some - pro-western orientation it was important to back it in face of the growing Soviet influence<sup>28</sup>. At the same time growing Anti-US stand of the Dergue led to a debate in the US, to reduce American presence at the Kagnev Station. But before an action could be taken, in April 1977 came the announcement from the Ethiopian government of the expulsion of the entire MAAG mission and the closing down of all US facilities and the Kagnev Station in Ethiopia.<sup>29</sup> These events led to the end of the 25 year old military assistance relationship between Ethiopia and US.

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27. Agyeman - Duah, n.17 p.198.

28. Halliday and Molyneux, n.4. p.221.

29. Steven David, "Realignment in the horn : the Soviet advantage," International Security Vol.4 Fall 1989, p.75.

However even before US had 'lost' Ethiopia, it had started showing interest in developing relations with Somalia.

It was against the traditional anti-Soviet Stand which made United States turn to Somalia when it sent feelers for changing its alignment. Immediately after coming to office President Carter had showed his intention to woo Somalia away from the Soviet Union. This new foreign policy approach of Carter hinged on "agressively challenging" the Soviet Union in its own sphere.<sup>30</sup> On July 15, 1977, USA officially announced that it was 'in principle willing to supply defensive arms to Somalia'.<sup>31</sup> However within a few weeks on August 4 to be exact a new announcement of US refusal to sell arms to Somalia was announced.<sup>32</sup> This change was most probably due to Somalia's attack on Ethiopian territory in the Ogaden and OAU support to Ethiopia and the Kenyan objection to Somalia being given US arms.

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30. International Herald Tribune. April 17, 1977.

31. Department of State Bulletin. Vol. 77  
(December 12, 1977) p. 845.

32. Ibid.

Whatever the reasons were US showed restraint in not supplying weapons to Somalia during the period of Ogaden war. And it was only in 1980 that the formal military assistance agreement between Somalia and US, of providing \$44 million worth of weapons in exchange for the use of Berbera port was finalised.<sup>33</sup>

### SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union was the principal arms supplier to Somalia during the period 1963-1977. Between the period 1967-76 Soviet Union supplied arms with the value of \$181mn. Further it trained around 2,400 Somali personnel during the period 1955-76. Soviet Union entered the Horn a decade after the United States had established itself firmly as Ethiopia's major arms supplier and external supporter. In 1963 it reached an agreement with Somalia to provide military aid of \$33 million to train and equip a force of 10,000 troops.

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33. Ojo, n.22, p.118.

34. Joseph P Smaldone. "Soviet and Chinese military aid and arms transfers to Africa : a contextual analysis" in Warren Weinstein and Thomas H. Henriksen. ed. Soviet and Chinese aid to African Nations. pp.93-94.

There were several factors which motivated Soviet Union to supply arms to Somalia.<sup>35</sup> Soviet Union to some extent was governed by the cold war politics. Somalia was seen by Soviet Union as a strategic counter weight to a pro-American Ethiopia. Moreover the happenings in the Middle East also effected the Soviet position. After the death of Nasser in 1970, the Soviet position in Egypt weakened, and eventually led to expulsion of Soviet advisers from the country. The Souring of Soviet relations with Sudan also turned it towards Somalia. In 1968, the Soviet Union had signed an agreement to provide military assistance to Sudan with the government of Mohammed Ahmed Mahgoub. However a coup in 1969, brought Gaafor Numeri into power. For some time Soviet Union continued to have good relation with Sudan however in 1971 there was a coup attempt against Numeri & Numeri suspected Soviet hand behind it. Numeri's hostility towards Soviet Union after the coup made Soviet Union look for an alternative ally in the region.

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35. Makinda, n.3

The progressive developments inside Somalia had also attracted Soviet Union towards Somalia. In 1972 Said Barre declared that Somalia would follow the path of 'Scientific Socialism'. Thus the ideological affinity had certain role to play into Soviet Union providing military aid to Somalia.

Finally Somalia was ready to grant military facilities to USSR. Thus to some extent the Soviet military assistance could be seen as a reward for giving Soviet Union the access to the port of Berbera. The Soviet Union's interest in Somalia is also seen by some as an extension of the Soviet role in the Indian Ocean.<sup>36</sup> The Soviet Union had acquired an active role in Indian Ocean since the late 1960's and the access to Berbera helped the Soviet Union in its "quest for parity with US in the Indian Ocean"<sup>37</sup>. The Berbera facilities included storage for ammunition, fuel, spares, stores and repair equipment. The ready access to these facilities enabled the Soviet Navy deployed in the region to support forward deployed combatants with fewer support vessels and prolong combatant deployment significantly.

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36. Ayoob, n.9, p.142.

37. Makinda, n.3, p.75.

The Soviet shift from Somalia to Ethiopia was a gradual affair. Soviet Union had welcomed the revolution in Ethiopia but had hesitated in providing military assistance to the Dergue because it was not clear about the nature of the regime and its staying power. However the Dergue's decision to form a Vanguard party affected Soviet Union's policy towards Ethiopia and convinced them about its political and ideological affiliations.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand Somalia appeared to be moving towards conservative Arab States. Russians also saw strategic advantage in having Ethiopia as an ally. And finally it did not support Somalia's claim to Ogaden. While Soviet Union was hesitating the decision was taken out of its hands by Somalia. On November 13, 1977 Somalia expelled all Soviet advisors and abrogated the treaty of friendship. After Soviet Union immediately took steps to move in as an ally of Ethiopia and airlifted weapons which helped it in deterring Somali offensive.

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38. Ottaway, n.6, pp.104-105.



CUBA

The Cuban involvement in the Horn was minimal before 1976.<sup>39</sup> In 1974 Cuba sent half a dozen military technicians to Somalia, and in 1976 this presence was expanded by several hundred men. As the Dergue moved towards the left in 1976-77 Cuba came to regard the Ethiopian revolution as genuine Cuba became directly involved in the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict in March 1977 when Castro acted as a mediator at a Summit between Mengistu and Barre in South Yemen. However this mediation effort failed and Ethiopia and Somalia went to war in 1977. During this conflict Cuba got heavily involved by providing military assistance in the form of Combat troops to the Ethiopian government. And the Cuban troops went into Combat against the troops of Somalia which itself had been a recipient of Cuban military aid less than two months prior to Cuba's involvement. Another significant aspect about Cuban role in this conflict is the nature of Soviet - Cuban collaboration. Unlike Angola where both Cuba and Soviet Union had evolved independent policies and cooperated at the later stage, in Ethiopia Cuba and Soviet Union cooperated from the

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39. William M. Leogrande. "Cuban policy in Africa" in Carmelo Mesa & Lago, June S. Belkin ed. Cuba in Africa (Pittsburg, 1982), pp.36-45.

outset. in the provision of their military aid.

What could have been the motives of Cuba in providing military assistance to Somalia and then switching over to Ethiopia later on?

There have been a number of motives identified for Cuba's involvement in the conflict<sup>40</sup>. The first one being ideology i.e., the commitment to international solidarity. Supporting the newly emergent Marxist - Leninist governments. Some have played down the role of ideology in Cuban involvement. It is felt that Cuba's national interest had also been a major factor. This explained the Cuban policy of withdrawing its support from the national liberation movements of Somalis in Ogaden and of Eritrea. While Ethiopia was under imperial rule of Haile Selassie Cuba endorsed the right of self determination of these two groups. But when Ethiopia moved toward a more pro-socialist philosophy, Cuba withdrew its support and sided with Ethiopia in war. And later on rejected the Somali right for self determination.

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40. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "Causes and effects of Cuban involvement in Africa." *ibid*, pp.197-98.

Besides the countries discussed above there was an influential role played by some of the Middle Eastern countries during the conflict. Somalia was given military assistance by Saudi Arabia and Egypt primarily to support an Arab brethren. Ethiopia under Haile Selassie regime had got Israeli support for counter insurgency operations in Eritrea. Eritrea was important for Israel strategically and it did not want it to fall into the Arab hands. However one of the interesting situations developed in Ethiopia, when Cubans and Israelis worked side by side fighting against Somalia. As late as 1977, some Israeli technicians had still remained in Ethiopia servicing the US provided fighter planes.

#### IMPACT OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE ON THE CONFLICT

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that military assistance played an important role in the expansion of the conflict. Though Soviet Union had denied that it had never encouraged Somalia's irredentist ambitions it must have been aware of Somali dreams at the time of advancement of the military assistance. Nevertheless whether Soviet Union was aware or unaware of this fact, it had indirectly, may be inadvertently fuelled

the Somali desires of Greater Somalia by building up its armed forces. Similary United States decision to supply arms to Somalia 'in principle' in July 1977, and the approaches made by Saudi Arabia on its behalf earlier, had convinced Somalia of US support at the time of war. And had encouraged it in escalating its support to the WSLF guerillas and later launching an all out offensive against Ethiopia.

Coming down to the actual conflict as mentioned earlier Somalia enjoyed a numerical advantage over Ethiopia as far as equipment was concerned at the eve of the war. Compared with Somalia Ethiopia maintained about one-half the number of combat aircrafts (36), and one-third the number of tanks (78).<sup>41</sup> However Ethiopia's inventory though smaller was more modern compared with Somalia's.<sup>42</sup> Thus the size of Somalia's inventory diminished rapidly at the war front. Becoming one of the important factors in its defeat.

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41. See Table 12.

42. For details see Table 13 and 14.

On the Ethiopian side its numerical disadvantage was wiped when USSR started its air and sea lift operation delivering 50 MIG 21 and 20 MiG 23 fighter aircraft and hundreds of tanks in less than a year. And in a matter of time the Ethiopian inventory became larger than Somalian. However despite these large deliveries Ethiopians were not able to push back the Somalian attack in Ogaden initially. Primarily because Ethiopian were unfamiliar with the Soviet equipment and it was only when the Cuban troops arrived in January-February 1978 that the Ethiopians were able to attain victory.

In so far as the role of super powers is concerned, they were definitely in control of the situation. For example at the beginning of the Ethiopia - Somalia war, both the super powers had shown restraint. For example when the Dergue approached USSR for military assistance in 1975, the Soviet Union reacted cautiously "far from convinced that.....a convergence of interest yet existed between Moscow and the Dergue".<sup>43</sup> And didnot start weapons supply till October/November 1977 when Carter

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43. See Harkavy and Neuman, n.10, pp.102-106.

Administration denounced the Mengistu regime on human rights grounds and announced an end of its military aid to Ethiopia. So far as United States is concerned, its indecision regarding providing military assistance to Somalia continued through out the war period and it began its military assistance to Somalia only in 1980.

On the other hand while United States didnot itself supply weapons to Somalia during the war there are reports which point to the fact that US indirectly helped in supplying weapons to Somalia through proxies. There were reports that US had permitted Saudi Arabia to purchase new US weapons for Egypt in exchange for delivery of Egypt's older Soviet built weapons to Somalia. Ethiopia had also accused the US of secretly collaborating with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypet to supply weapons to Somalia.<sup>44</sup> Hence we can conclude that super powers influence was quite strong during the Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict.

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44. Stephanie G Neuman, "Military Assistance in the recent wars" Washington Paper, no.122, p.120

Table-12

Indicator	Ethiopia	Somalia
Armed Forces		
Army	47,000	22,000
Navy	1,500	300
Airforce	2,300	2,700
Reserves	28,000	20,000
Combat Aircrafts	36	66
Tanks	78	250
Artillery Pieces	310	330
Paramilitary	22,400	6,000

Source : Military Balance 1976-77 (London 1977)

T A B L E 13

ARMS SUPPLIES TO ETHIOPIA 1950 - 1985

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUPPLIER</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
		<u>Aircraft</u>		
1946-52	47	Saab B-17	Sweden	
1952	8	Fairey Firefly P.1	UK	
1952	1	Fairey Firefly trainer	UK	
1953-55	17	Saab 91B Safir	Sweden	
(1954)	(5)	Avro Anson Mk. 18	UK	
(1955)	(3)	DH Dove	UK	
(1955)	2	Convair L-5 Stinson	USA	
(1957-58)	10	Douglas C - 47	USA	
1959	5	Lockheed T-33	USA	
1960	14	NA F-86F Sabre	USA	
1960	(5)	NA T-28 A	USA	
1960	14	Saab 91C Safir	Sweden	
(1961)	2	Douglas C-54	USA	
1961	6	Convair PBV-5A Catalina	Norway	
(1962)	7	Lockheed T-33	USA	



YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
(1964)	2	Sud Alouette II	France	
(1964-65)	5	Sud Alouette III	France	
1965	1	DH Dove Mk. 8	UK	
1965	1	Il-14	USSR	
1965-66	12	NA T-28D	USA	
1966	12	Northorp F-5A Freedom Fighter	USA	MAP
1966	2	Northrop F-5B Freedom Fighter	USA	
(1967-68)	(5)	Bell UH-1H	USA	MAP
1968	(5)	Agusta Bell 204 Iroquois	Italy	
1968-70	12	BAC Canberra	UK	Ex-RAF
<u>NAVAL VESSELS</u>				
1958	2	Patrol Boat	USA	Ex-US. Displacement: 101 t.
1960	2	Torpedo boat	Yugoslavia	Built 1951. Displacement: 60 t.
1961	1	Training ship	USA	Completed 1944. Displacement: 1766-2800 t.
1961	2	Patrol boat "MGM"	USA	Displacement: 101 t.

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1962	1	Patrol boat "MGM"	USA	Displacement: 101 t
1963	2	Landing craft "LCM"	USA	
1963	2	Landing craft "LCVP"	USA	
<u>ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES</u>				
1953-54	54	M-41	USA	Part of 1953 aid
1953-54	39	(M-75) APC	USA	Part of 1953 aid
(1955)	(10)	M-24 Chaffee	USA	
<u>AIRCRAFT</u>				
1970-71	17	C-119 Packet Transport	USA	
1971	3	F-5A Fighter	USA	
1971	1	Model F337 Trainer	FR Germany MAP.	
1971	1	Model F 337 Trainer	FRG	
1972	5	T-33A Jet trainer	Canada	Unconfirmed
1972	2	T - 33A Jet trainer	USA	
1974	6	F-5E Tiger - 2 Fighter	USA	Unconfirmed
1975	4	DHC-3 Otter Transport	USA	
1975	2	Do-28D-1 Transport	FRG	

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1977	2	An - 12 Cub-A Transport	USSR	
1977	6	An - 26 Curt Light plane	USSR	
1977	50	Mig-21 MF Fighter	USSR	
1977	20	MIG-23 Fighter/interceptor	USSR.	
1977-78	17	MIG-17 Fighter	USSR	
1978	15	Mi-8 Hip Helicopter	USSR	
1978	10	Mi - 6 Hook Helicopter	USSR	
1979	2	Do - 28D - 2 Transport	FRG	
1980	10	Mi-24 Hind D Helicopter	USSR	
1980	10	Mi - Hip Helicopter	USSR	
		<u>AIRCRAFT</u>		
1981	2	DHC-6 Transport	Canada	
1982	10	An-12 Cub-A Transport	USSR	
1982	12	Mi-24 Hind - D Helicopter	USSR	
1982	12	Mi-8 HIP Helicopter	USSR	
1982	12	MIG-21 MF Fighter	USSR	

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1982	6	S4-20 Fitter Fighter/ground attack	USSR	
1984	10	L-39 Albatross Jet trainer	Czechoslovakia	
1984	10	SA-316B Chetak Helicopter	India	
1984	10	SA-316B Helicopter Romania	ROMANIA	
1984	2	Mi-14 Haze Helicopter	USSR	
1984	1	Yak-40 Codling Transport	USSR	
<u>NAVAL VESSELS</u>				
1973	1	Dokkum Class Mine Sweeper Coastal (MSC)	NETHERLANDS	
1975	1	Kraljevica cl. Patrol craft (PC).	Yugoslavia	
1977	4	Swift type PC	USA	
1977	1	EDIC/EDA Type Landing Craft (LC)	FRANCE	
1978	2	Mol. Class Fast Attack Craft	USSR	
1978-81	4	OSa-2 Class Fast Attack craft	USSR	
1981	1	Polnocny Class Landing ship (LS)	USSR	
1983	1	Polnocny Class LS	USSR.	In addition to 1 delivered 1981
1983	1	Petya - 2 Class Fright	USSR	
1984	1	Petya - 2 class Fright	USSR	In addition to 1 delivered 1983

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YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
<u>ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES</u>				
1971	12	M-114-A1 Reconnaissance (Recce Armoured car AC)	USA	
1972	56	AML - 60 Armoured Car (AC)		
1974-75	90	M-113 A 1 Armoured Personal carrier (APC)	USA	
1974-76	72	M - 60 A 1 Main Battle Tank (MBT)	USA	
1976	72	V-150 Commando APC	USA	
1977	100	BMP-1 Mechaniged infantry combat vehicle (MICV)	USSR	
1977	40	BRDM-1 Scout car (SC)	USSR	
1977	50	BRDM - 2 Scout Car (SC)	USSR	
1977	100	BTR-60 P APC	USR	
1977	30	M-47 Patton MBT	USSR	USSR reportedly got on black market
1977	31	T-34 Medium Tank (MT)	USSR	
1977	20	T-62 MBT	USSR	Unconfirmed
1977	50	M-47 Patton MBT	YUGOSLAVIA	Unconfirmed
1977-78	100	BTR-152 APC	USSR	



YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1977 -78	115	T-34 MT	USSR	
1977-79	300	T-54 MBT	USSR	
1977-82	320	T-55 MBT	USSR	
<u>ARMOVERD FIGHTING VEHICLE</u>				
1978	40	T - 72 MBT	USSR	Unconfirmed
1980	50	T-62 MBT	USSR	
1980-81	200	BTR - 60P APC	USSR	
1984	90	T - 55 MBT	Libya	
1985	50	T-72 MBT	USSR	
<u>ARTILLERY</u>				
1971	52	M-101 A1 105 mm Towed Howitzer (TH)	USA	Delivery shedule unconfirmed.
1975	12	M-109 - A1 155 m self propelled Howitzer (SPH)	USA	
1975-76	36	AGM-12 B. Bull Pup. Air-to-surface MISSILE (ASM)	IRAN	
1976	4	55-12 Ship to shore missile (Sh shm)	FRANCE	Unconfirmed
1977	100	D-20 152 mm TH	USSR	Unconfirmed

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1977	150	D-30 122 mm TH	USSR	
1977-78	25	SA-3 SAMS Mobile SAM System	USSR	
1977	100	S-23 180 mm Towed Gun (TG)	USSR	
1977-78	2000	AT-3 Sagger Anti Tank Missile (ATM)	USSR	
1977-78	500	SA-3 Goa Landmobile surface to Air Missile (ASM)	USSR	
1977-78	3000	SA-7 Grait Portable surface to Air Missile	USSR	

SOURCE : For 1950-70 : SIPRI. Arms trade with the third World (New York, 1971)  
 For 1971-85 : Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson,  
Arms transfers to the third world 1971-85 (New York, 1987)

TABLE 14

ARMS SUPPLIES TO SOMALIA 1950 - 85

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUPPLIER</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>AIRCRAFT</u>				
1960	8	NA F-51D Mustang	Italy	Transferred from Italian Controlled Cuerpo Aeronautico della Somalia.
1960	(3)	Douglas C-47	Italy	As above
(1960)	(4)	Beech C-45	Italy	As above
1961	2	Gomhuriah	Egypt	
1962	8	Piaggio P. 148	Italy	Gift
1962	2	Agusta-Bell 47-G2	Italy	Sold to "Guardia di finanza", anti-smugglers corps.
1963	6	Mig-15UTI	USSR	
1965	3	MIG-15	USSR	
1965	7	MIG-17	USSR	
(1966)	(2)	MIG-15	USSR	
(1965)	20	Yak-11	USSR	
1966	2	An 24	USSR	

Contd.....



YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1968	1	An 24	USSR	
		<u>Naval Vessels</u>		
1966-67	2	Patrol boat, "Pobuchati" class	USSR	Ex-USSR P-6 type; completed 1957. Displacement: 50t
..	12	Patrol boat, "P-6" class	USSR	On order
		<u>Armoured fighting vehicles</u>		
1960	(20)	Armoured vehicles	Egypt	
(1961)	(15)	Ferret	UK	
1962	5	(Stuart) medium tank	UK	Obsolescent
1965	65	T-34	USSR	
1965	65	(BTR 152) APC	USSR	
(1966)	(17)	T-34	USSR	Total of 82
		<u>AIRCRAFT</u>		
1973	2	An-24 cargo Transport	USSR	
1973	2	An-26 Curt Lightplane	USSR	

Contd.....

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMENT
1973	2	I1-18 Transport	USSR	
1973	3	I1-28 Bomber	USSR	
1973	6	M1 - 4 Hound Helicopter	USSR	
1973	5	M1 - 8 Hip Helicopter	USSR	
1973	6	Mig-15 Fighter\ground attack	USSR	
1973	18	MIG-17 Fighter/Strike	USSR	
1974	7	MIG-15 UTI FighterpTrainer	USSR	
1974	13	MIG-17 Fighter/Strike	USSR	
1974	6	MIG-19 Fighter/Ground atack	USSR	
1974	7	MIG-21F Fighter	USSR	
1979	1	Do-27D-1 Transport	FRG	
1979-80	14	SF-260 Warrior Trainer\COIN	Italy	
1980-81	20	F-6 Fighter	China	Unconfirmed
1980-82	4	G-222 Transport	Italy	
1981	1	Model 150 Lightplane	USA	
1981	4	P-166 Transport	Italy	
1982	4	AB-212 Helicopter	Italy	
1982	6	SM-1019 E Lightplane	Italy	

Contd.....

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMENT	
1983	4	BN-2A Islander	Transport	United Arab Emirates	Possibly some from Oman
1983	8	Hunter FGA-9	Fighter/ ground attack	United Arab Emirates	Possibly some from Oman
<u>NAVAL VESSELS</u>					
1972	7	P-6 Class	Fast Attack Craft	USSR	
1975	2	Osa-2 Class	Fast Attack Craft	USSR	
1976-77	4	Mol Class	Fast Attack Craft	USSR	
<u>ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES</u>					
1972-73	200	BTR-152	Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC)	USSR	
1973	60	BRDM-2	Scout Car (SC)	USSR	
1973	30	BTR - SOP	APC	USSR	
1973-74	100	T-54	ABT	USSR	
1974	10	BRDM-2	Gaskin Anti-Aircraft Vehicle (Missile armed) (AAV(M))	USSR	
1975	10	BRDM-2	Sagger Tank Destroyer (Missile Armed) (TD(M))	USSR	

Contd.....

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
1975	50	T - 55 Main Battle Tank (MBT)	USSR	
1976	10	BTR - 60P APC	USSR	
1976	10	ZSU-23-4 Shilka AAV	USSR	
1977	35	T-54 MBT	Egypt	
1978-79	270	Type 6614 APC	Italy	
1978-79	30	Type 6616 AC	Italy.	
1980	40	Centurion MBT	Italy	
1981	50	T-55 MBT	Egypt	
1982	20	T-55 MBT	Egypt	
1982	24	M-113-AI APC	USA	Armed with TWO ATMs.
1983	12	M-163 Valcan AAV	USA	Order includes 3 TPS/ 43 defence radars, in exchange for US base rights in Berbera and Mogadishu.
1984	20	AML-90 Armoured lar (AC)	Saudi Arabia	
1985	100	M-47 Patton MBT	Italy.	

Contd.....

YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT
<u>ARTILLERY</u>				
1973	70	M-1931 122mm Towed Gun (TG)	USSR	
1973	2	SA-35AMS Mobile Surface to Air Missile (SAM) System.	USSR	
1974	80	M-1938 122 mm TG	USSR	
1974	25	M-1944 100 mm TG	USSR	
1974	25	M-1955 100 mm TG	USSR	
1974	3	SA-2 SAMS Mobile SAM System	USSR	
1974	30	SA-2-Guideline Landmobile SAM	USSR	
1974	10	SA-3 Goa Land mobile SAM	USSR	
1974	60	SA-9 Goskin Land mobile SAM	USSR	
1975	4	SBN - 2 Styx L Ship to shore Missile launcher	USSR	
1975	60	AT-3 Sagger ATM	USSR	
1975	48	SSN-2 Styx. Ship to shore Missile	USSR	
1978	2	SA-3 SAMS Mobile SAM System	Egypt	
1978	20	SA-3 Goa Landmobile SAM	Egypt	

Contd.....

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YEAR	NUMBER	ITEM	SUPPLIER	COMMENT	
<u>ARTILLERY (contd)</u>					
1979	100	Milan	ATM	France	Supplier an confirmed.
1980	3	AN/TPS-43	3D Rador	USA	
1982	431	BGM-71A TOW	ATM	USA	Arming M-113 - A1 APCs.
1982-83	8	I-Hawk SAMS	Mobile SAM System	USA	
1982-83	48	MIM-23B Hawk - Landmobile SAM		USA	Began arriving Aug. 1982 as part of US emergency aid.

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Source: For 1950-70 : SIPRI. Arms trade with the third world  
(New York, 1971)

For 1971-85 : Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson.

Arms transfers to the third world 1971-85 (New York, 1987)

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

Over the last few years there has been a sea change in the Super power relations. From confrontation they are now on the path of cooperation. This major transformation has been possible due to the initiatives of Mikhail Gorbachev, the president of Soviet Union. Since 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev has doggedly pursued a course of ending Soviet-American confrontation and improving their bilateral relation. As a result, Gorbachev who was dubbed as the head of the 'evil empire' by the former US president Ronald Reagan has now become a hero in the eyes of the American public. The Washington Summit of December 1987 was a landmark in this context. In this cordial atmosphere a common ground was reached for the first time between the Super powers regarding the resolution of the Third World conflicts. The policy makers on both sides realised that their regional confrontations had poisoned the US-Soviet relations. Therefore, a resolution of these conflicts would be beneficial towards improving relations. The first step in this direction was taken at the Moscow Summit in 1988.

It was decided to work for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts going on in Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Nicaragua, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of this new US-Soviet detente was immediately felt in Southern Africa. The spectacular Angola/Namibia accord signed in December 1988 had the blessings of both the Superpowers. The United States had brokered the agreement. Though Soviet Union was not an official participant in the Angola/Namibia talks, a Soviet representative was always present as an observer.

The effect of the Superpower detente was also felt on the Horn of Africa. Moscow had started urging Ethiopia to search for a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the region, particularly, the Eritrean issue and with the neighbouring Somalia. These pronouncements were followed by a reduction in the military assistance.<sup>2</sup> Finally on

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1. See USSR-USA Summit Moscow, May 29 - June 2, 1988 : Documents and materials, (Moscow, 1988) p.89

2. Indian Ocean Newsletter No.347, September 10, 1988.



April 3 the Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam and Somalian leader Mohammed Said Barre, met in Mogadishu and signed a peace agreement.<sup>3</sup> It was later revealed, a part of issues agreed upon was Somalia's renunciation of all claims to the disputed Ogaden region. However the method used in signing the accord indicates that this was not the end of the dispute. First before signing the agreement Mogadishu secured an agreement from the Ethiopians not to make this part of the agreement public. Further this accord was not signed by the head of State but by a member of the government. This is undoubtedly a manoeuvre to enable the Somali President to deny or break such an agreement if circumstances made it necessary.

The cardinal issue, is whether there agreements would be followed by the reduction of Superpowers arms transfers to these countries. For it evident after analysing the relationship between military assistance and the conflict in these two case studies, the superpowers have been able to influence the direction of the conflict.

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3. Indian Ocean Newsletter, no.327, April 9, 1988.

There are some<sup>4</sup> who suggest that while the armed conflicts have declined after the agreements they have not been accompanied by decline in the arms transfers. If we take the example of Angolan conflict. The New York agreement has not led to a reduction of arms transfers at such a great level. Both the superpowers continue to provide military assistance to their allies. The US to UNITA and the Soviet Union to the Angolan government. It has been argued<sup>5</sup> that after the Cuban troops' withdrawal the Soviet Union will increase the level of arms transfers to Angola in an effort to prevent the South African forces from reclaiming local military superiority. However there is one weakness in this analysis and that is the fact that it is assumed Angola still faces aggression from South Africa. But after the independence of Namibia there is no route available for the SADF to attack Angola. Reinstallation of the South African military superiority via winning a war over Angola is not a feasibility now.

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4. See Ian Anthony, "International Arms trade." Disarmament, Vol.13, No.2, 1990, pp.231-256

5. *ibid.*

The reason of continuance of the same level of arms transfers by the Superpowers could also be the differing perspectives of both regarding the conflict. Each of the two nations believes it wrong for the other to continue aiding an ally in a conflict that has been supposedly been resolved. The Soviets continued to provide arms to Angola, Ethiopia and Cambodia to the chagrin of US. While Soviets also continue to express particular displeasure with continued US Assistance to rebels in Afghanistan and Angola.<sup>6</sup>

In so far as the future arms transfers by Soviet Union are concerned they would most probably be on the terms of gaining more cash. The deepening economic crisis in Soviet Union would prevent the Soviet Union to continue its policy of giving arms at subsidized terms.<sup>7</sup> In such a case in sub-saharan

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6. Mark N. Katz. "Can the superpowers plot peace"? Bulletin of Atomic Scientists May 1990, pp.38-39.

7. Donald Jameson and Evgeny Novikov. "Cash before communism" Defense & Diplomacy Vol.8, No.3, March 1990, pp.49-54.

Africa, Soviet military deliveries would go to only those countries which are willing to pay for it. Angola has in past paid for much of its deliveries from its oil revenues. But most of the arms transfers to Ethiopia have been on grant basis. Except for the oil rich countries other countries in Sub Saharan Africa donot have the capacity to provide cash for arms. Thus if Soviet Union follows such a policy reversal, the African countries would be the first to be effected.

Economic issues will dominate the US arms transfers to Africa and to the third world in general in the 1990's. The sale of M-1 tanks to Saudi Arabia was with the motive of reaping economic benefit. But the United States still has the luxury of putting the political interest first. The US intervention in Panama is indicative of the fact, that United States would continue to provide military assistance where its political goals are fulfilled.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Richard J Barnett, "US intervention : low intensity thinking" Bulletin of Atomic Scientist May, 1990, pp.34-37.

To sum up it can be stated that though arms transfers are not the direct cause of conflict, but they enable the conflict to continue. Certain weapons can make the conflict more intense and deadly for both the combatants and the general public of the country suffering from continuous warfare. The study of the conflicts in Sub Saharan Africa indicates that they would continue to grow till the Superpowers and the other arms suppliers find it necessary to stop the transfer of these deadly weapons.

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