

# **SOVIET POLICY IN THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA**

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## PREFACE

The period following the Second World War saw the rise of a number of new states on the world map. These were former colonies of the great powers and mainly comprised the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Termed the "Third World" or "developing nations", these states were characterised by uneven economic development. Consequently, they shared a deep resentment for their former colonial masters. These countries opened up fascinating studies in the field of international politics because they were 'young' states. There has been much research on the nations of Asia and Africa perhaps because we in India share a geographic proximity to them. Latin America still remains mysterious not only because of its physical remoteness but also because the continent continued to be dominated by the U.S.A. The continent is vast and complex, and for the purposes of research has been divided into sub regions. One such region is the Caribbean and Central America, comprising a group of littoral states lying south of the Rio Grande. The region thus, has been termed as the "strategic rear" and the "soft underbelly" of the U.S.A. and is still regarded as such.

The Moscow Declaration of 1972 conferred on the Soviet Union the status of a great power, at par with the U.S. in global capability. The status was recognized because of the growth of Soviet economic, military and naval power. Thereafter, the Soviet Union sought new areas of influence in the Third World, the Caribbean and Central America being one such area. The Soviet desire of playing a more assertive role in the Third World coincided with the attainment of independence by the countries in the Caribbean and Central America. The newly liberated countries of this region had to face harsh economic realities. Their deteriorating socio economic conditions following the process of decolonization created opportunities for the Soviet Union to enter the region.

The Soviet Union's global might would be of no avail if opportunities in the region for making its presence felt were not created and vice versa.

The purpose of this study is thus to analyse Soviet policy in the Caribbean and Central American region by chalking out the various objectives and the various instruments employed by the Soviet Union to exploit opportunities to their positive benefit. This study is a humble attempt to analyse the role of the Soviet Union

is an area of the Third World historically dominated by the U.S., to illustrate whether the motive is ideological or one of national interest. A study of Soviet policy towards this region would help us in understanding its policy elsewhere in the Third World.

The period covered in my study is the seventies. From 1972, the Soviet Union began its Caribbean policy after the countries in the region became independent and relaxation of East-West relations further facilitated the emergence of a policy towards the region. The study is divided into four chapters, the first one being the introduction. The second chapter deals with the objectives and instruments of Soviet policy while in the third chapter I have dealt specifically with economic relations. In the fourth chapter I have concluded with an analysis of Soviet policy in the Caribbean and Central America.

I wish to thank my supervisor and guide Dr. Nirmala Joshi. I am indebted to her for having painstakingly corrected my many errors and for her advice and guidance.

I am also indebted to Mr. Vijay Mehra and Mr. Sarkar who undertook the tiresome job of typing this work at short notice and yet made an excellent effort.

I am grateful for the moral support extended to me by my family throughout these two years. I also thank all my friends who have helped in editing and correcting my work at all stages. Needless to say, I am alone responsible for any short comings in this study.

21. July '84

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Soviet state following the October Revolution of 1917 was a historical political landmark. This is because the establishment of the first socialist state had global repercussions, the desired goal of the Soviet Union being, the creation of a new world socialist order. The Soviet Union consequently sought the disintegration of the world capitalist system.

The rapid disintegration of the Western Colonial system in the post World War II period resulted in the emergence of a large number of newly independent nations on the world scene over the period of two decades. These nations offered the possibilities for a new correlation of forces between the world's major competing systems, and in the process created new low risk areas, for great power rivalry. In the early period of decolonization, underdeveloped nations though nominally independent found their freedom of action circumscribed and undermined by their own economic backwardness. The interplay of superpower politics often left many of them in their familiar colonial roles as 'pawns' of established world powers. Thus,

in the immediate post war period true independence for many nations of the Third World proved elusive. The continuing subordination of Third World economies and what their leaders perceived as exploitative and unequal Western trade practices soon resulted in political frustration and sluggish uneven economic development. In this period, the economic and political affinity which might have been expected to exist between the former colonial and the metropolitan countries was replaced by a strong Third World hostility towards the developed capitalist nations of the west.

The hostility of some countries of the Third World towards the capitalist and former imperialist nations of the West gave the Soviet Union the leverage it required in its relations with these countries. The Soviet Union assigned a unique role to the countries of the Third World to forge an alliance with them in order to strengthen its security and to weaken its rivals.

#### Soviet Perception of the Third World

Of course, the Soviet interest in the Third World had its roots in the thought in Lenin who first realised its potential as an area of revolutionary and



nationalistic fervour which could under mine the West's economic and military power thereby, promoting socialist revolution within the capitalist world. Lenin perceived that it was here in (the colonial world) that the great historical struggle would take place between the forces of communism and imperialism. Imperialism, he asserted was "the highest stage of capitalism" that would hasten "the general crisis of capitalism", ultimately bring down the world capitalist system and make way for a new international socialist order.<sup>1</sup> In Lenin's view imperialism extended the class struggle on a global scale as the European metropolitan powers built colonial empires in Asia and Africa and exploited their peoples. Competition, rivalry and war among the capitalist states were inevitable as each attempted to seize new markets and expand its imperial system in a world of declining opportunities. The colonies, the "reserve of capitalism" were the main prop of the system. They enriched both the metropolitan capitalists and the proletariat. Thus, the proletariat in the imperialist countries were temporarily satisfied and forestalled inevitable revolution. However these colonies were also the "weakest link in the

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1. V.I. Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest stage of capitalism. (Moscow, 1978), pp. 1-4.

imperial system.<sup>2</sup> Exploited and abused it was expected that they would rise up in national liberation movements against their exploiters and in doing so, bring down the capitalist system. In the last article before his death in 1924, Lenin left this prophecy for future Soviet leaders:

"In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China and so forth account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe: as it is precisely this majority that during the past few years has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of a doubt concerning the final victory of socialism, which is fully and absolutely assured."<sup>3</sup>

However, under the leadership of Stalin the colonial question remained peripheral. It was only in the mid-fifties that Khrushchev renewed the earlier importance accorded to the colonial world, now emerging as independent nations. Among the newly emerging nations, the focus of Khrushchev's policy was towards those countries which had opted for nonalignment. The objective was to strengthen them so that they did not

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2. V.I. Lenin, *ibid.*, p.5

3. Quoted in Roger Kanet, "Soviet Union and the Colonial Question 1917-1953" in Roger Kanet ed., The Soviet Union and the Developing Nations (Baltimore, Md., 1974) p.6

succumb to Western pressure. In other words these countries were characterized as a "vast zone of peace". Consequently, Soviet analysts have perceived the relationship between the Soviet Union and the national liberation movements of the Third World as symbiotic. They have continuously stressed the "unvincible unity between the world socialist forces (led by the Soviet Union) and the national liberation struggles of the developing countries."<sup>4</sup> To elucidate further the following statement would clearly show the importance of the Third World for the Soviet Union:

"World socialism helps the national emancipation of the oppressed people while the liberation struggle contributes to the struggle for socialism and strengthens its positions. The national liberation movement deals heavy blows at the common enemy - imperialism. The national liberation movement bolsters up the socialist and democratic forces in the world arena, opens up new opportunities for launching an active struggle against the imperial policy of plunder and conquest".<sup>5</sup>

The above statement draws out that the Third World is not comprehended merely as part of the global struggle

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4. V. Lee, "The National Liberation Movement and the anti Imperialist Struggle" International Affairs, (Moscow) n.12, December 1971, p. 71.

5. Quoted in Morton Schwartz, "The USSR and Leftist Regimes in Less Developed Countries." Survey (London) vol. 19, spring 1973, p. 210.

against imperialism: it is also regarded as a likely stage for new socialist revolutionary transformation:

"Of paramount significance is the fact that after gaining national independence the former colonies and semi colonies are now moving in the direction of socialism, adding to and making more universal its experience."<sup>6</sup>

In the seventies Soviet analysts introduced a new concept vis-a-vis the Third World. In their view the basic interests of the Soviet Union and the Third World countries were coinciding a great deal. Hence the Soviet Union and the Socialist World, and the Third World countries were "Natural Allies" according to Soviet writers.

Although this is not the place to examine the various concepts propounded by the Soviet Union vis-a-vis the colonial world and later the Third World, it is important to bear in mind that this region was of considerable significance to the Soviet Union since its inception. In the post World War II period, the Third World has offered tremendous opportunities to the Soviet Union to pursue its objectives.

#### Soviet Objectives in the Third World

Apart from the ideological objectives an equally

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6. Ibid, p.210.

important, if not more, aspect of Soviet foreign policy is the pursuit of its own national interest. It may not be wrong to say that this aspect has become more pronounced in the seventies when the Moscow Declaration of 1972 conferred the status of a Super Power on the Soviets. From then onwards Soviet foreign policy acquired truly global dimensions and significantly acquired the capability to project this power in any part of the world. The Third World, as already stated, presented immense possibilities for the Soviet Union to pursue its status as a global power. Given the enormous land mass and population the Third World constituted an impressive constellation of power on the international scene.<sup>7</sup> In view of the rivalry between the two Super Powers it is obvious that the prime objective of Soviet policy is the reduction and elimination, if possible, of Western and Chinese influence from the region. Secondly, the Soviet Union strives to enhance its own influence in this region. In this regard the Soviet Union has not hesitated to use the tensions that exists between

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7. The Third World occupies over 40 percent of the globe's total land area of 51.4 million square miles excluding Antarctica. Its population constitutes almost half of the world total of 4 billion including China.

some of the Third World countries and the West. Any move by the Third World countries that is directed against the West has been supported and encouraged by the Soviet Union.

For instance, the socialist rhetoric of the developing nations has been used by the Soviet Union in International agencies like the UNO (where the Third World forms two thirds of the membership) and other affiliated agencies. In pursuit of its objectives the Soviet Union has gained a foothold in certain vital strategic areas for the West, most of which are located in the Third World countries. This development has been used by the Soviet Union in pursuit of its objectives in two ways.

Firstly, most Third World countries border the vital sea communications routes of the Western and industrial world. Particularly the straits or "choke points" as they are called in Naval terminology lie within Third World jurisdiction; for example, the Persian Gulf surrounded by developing countries of various sizes is the largest source of oil for the Western industrial nations and Japan. This gulf is enclosed in by the Straits of Hormuz; About 90 percent of Japanese oil passes through the Straits of Malacca

bounded by Third World countries. Soviet influence in these strategic sea lanes could become an important factor of leverage in East-West ties.

Third World Nations border vital Soviet sea communication routes as well, such as the Dardanelles, Bosphorus, the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian ocean which connect the Western parts of the Soviet Union with its eastern one. These routes are beyond direct Soviet control and the Soviet Union's interest in these countries is thus essential. Again, in keeping with the Soviet thrust towards a global status, the role of the Soviet Navy is an important instrument. To properly prepare for this mission, the Navy has required the building of an elaborate and carefully selected infrastructure of overseas bases, port facilities, and refueling stations in key strategic areas of the Third World.<sup>8</sup>

While discussing the strategic significance of the Third World for the Soviet Union it is equally important to remember its security dimension also.

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8. John Cooley, "Soviets step up Naval power in the Mediterranean." The Christian Science Monitor (Boston) June 22, 1976, p.4.

Many countries of the Third World like Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, share territorial boundaries with the Soviet Union in the South. To secure its Southern borders, the Soviet Union has had to pursue an active policy in Asia.

Yet another dimension must be remembered, this being the economic importance of the developing countries for the Soviet Union. It serves as a market for Soviet economic goods, military weapons, supplies and equipment. It has provided a source for raw materials and created an opportunity for economic integration to the Soviet advantage. During the Brezhnev era, particularly with the onset of economic rationalization in dispensing economic aid, the Soviets concluded trade agreements beneficial to Soviet economic development. Aid agreements in the 1970s, were designed largely to increase the importation of fuel, raw material and consumer goods from the less developed countries, and to create markets for Soviet machinery and equipment. Such a development strategy served Soviet political purposes in addition to the economic one by creating conduits for the inflow of materials, personnel and ideas from the Soviet Union into the Third World. This expanded the potential area of



Soviet influence and power. Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier observes in this context that "... closer economic co-operation involving as it does measures of integration is bound to bring the developing nations into the Soviet orbit."<sup>9</sup>

The developing countries being rich in raw materials which are necessary for the West, have themselves used this factor as a bargaining level with some countries such as during the oil embargo of 1973. The Soviet Union has understood that the Third World has considerable power if it is organised and united. To them the Third World is "a zone with colossal manpower and material!"<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet Union in the Carribbean and Central America:

The Third World mainly comprises of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Soviet policy towards each of these regions has differed. A glance at the map would easily highlight the importance of Asia. It may not be wrong

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9. Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "Soviet Economic Relations with Developing Nations" in Kanet ed., no.3, pp.235-36.

10. G. Apalin "Peking and the Third World" International Affairs No,3, March 1976, p.90.

to say that the Soviet Union accorded second priority to Africa.

Latin America, by its geographic remoteness to the USSR and proximity to the USA held limited interest for the Soviets until recently. Soviet involvement in this region leaped into significance only after the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and the Cuban subsequent turn toward radical nationalism and Marxism-Leninism.<sup>11</sup> The event gave Moscow its first foothold in North America's "strategic rear" and marked another event in the expansion of the "world socialist system" in the continuing struggle with capitalism and imperialism.<sup>12</sup> Cuba being geographically located in the backyard of the USA, became the fulcrum of which Moscow's Latin American policy. Until 1970, however, the USSR and Cuba had differences over the forms and methods of achieving revolution in Latin America and hence, the Soviet Union did not make much headway

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11. Moscow regularly praises the Cuban Revolution as a milestone in Latin American history that weakened imperialism and increased the liberation struggle of the Latin American people. See, S. Mishin, "Latin America: Current Trends of Development" International Affairs, no. 5, May 1975, pp. 54-55.

12. Leon Goure and Morris Rothenburg, Soviet Penetration of Latin America (Miami, Fl., 1975), pp. 1-7.

in this region because of diverging approaches with Cuba vis-a-vis other Latin American countries. It was only in the seventies that these differences of approach between Cuba and the Soviet Union were resolved in favour of the Soviet Union, that Cuba backed by the Soviet Union, began an active policy in the region.<sup>13</sup> Soviet-Cuban activity will be discussed at length in the next chapter. The second reason for increased Soviet involvement in the Caribbean and Central America lies in the internal developments of the region. The countries of the region were involved in perpetual strife in the 70's; civil war and terrorism in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua together with border demarcation differences between Guatemala and Belize, Honduras and Nicaragua created opportunities for Soviet penetration in the region either through political or military support for various faction groups. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter also. A third reason for the Soviet interest in Latin America may be the Soviet quest for new areas of influence following the disappointment of its policies in Asia and Africa. A fourth

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13. Hugh Thomas, "Cuba's Military Adventures" Christian Science Monitor, March 17, 1978, pp.14-15.

plausible reason could be that in the seventies Soviet resource capability had considerably improved. It was in a better position to assist the Third World countries including the Caribbean and Central American countries to adopt a stiff postures against the West. Since the Caribbean and the Central American countries are physically distant from the Soviet Union it is obvious that Soviet objective here was political, perhaps to create difficulties for its rival, the USA. A Soviet geopolitician noted this as early as 1967:

"The importance of this part of the world (the Caribbean Basin) for US imperialism can hardly be exaggerated. In military - strategic terms, it is a sort of hinterland on whose stability freedom of US action in other parts of the globe depends.<sup>14</sup>

Remarking on this factor, Adam Ulam, a leading exponent of Soviet foreign policy in the West wrote,

"...But it is in Latin America that the ideological ingredient of Soviet policies has been most in evidence, and more here than elsewhere (except perhaps in the Far East and with what sad results) the Soviets have based their bid for global power on the purported ideological mission of the Soviet state. The revolutionary struggle fomented or assisted by the USSR in the western hemisphere has been closely related to the real economic and

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14. L.I. Kamyin "US Foreign Policy Today" International Affairs no. 2, February 1967, p.67.

social blights of Latin American countries, and it is not a mere propaganda phrase to describe what is going on in some of them as a class war."<sup>15</sup>

In 1971, Boris Ponomarev, the Soviet ideologue and party secretary of the CPUS, and alternate member of the Polit-buro, again noted that "the revolutionary process is continuing to develop at a faster pace than in the other parts of the non socialist world,"<sup>16</sup> in Latin America. He goes on to say that the region has a relatively developed capitalism, a substantial working class and in some countries, a large membership of the local communist party (Mexico, Argentina and Brazil) and a long history of revolutionary struggle. But, it must be noted that this assessment was made with reference to the South American continent largely. This article of Boris Ponomarev is according to Kurt London, a keen student of Soviet affairs the most detailed and authoritative overview of the Soviet perceptions of development in Latin America.

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15. Adam B. Ulam, "The World Outside" in Robert F. Byrnes, ed. After Brezhnev, Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s (London, 1983), pp.379-80.

16. Boris Ponomarev, "Topical Problems of the Theory of the Revolutionary Process" Kommunist, no.15, October 1971, p.59 as cited in Leon Goure and Morris Bothen-  
burg, "Latin America" in Kurt London, ed., The Soviet Union in World Politics (Boulder, Co., 1980) p.237.

For the most part Soviet writers, tend to club together all the countries of Latin America. Soviet Writings on Latin American prior to 1975 have included the Carribbean and Central America. This could be because till the 1970s Central America and the Carribbean had yet to acquire the characteristics of a region.

The Soviet Union's perception of Central America and the Caribbean stems from the Soviet view of the world. The present epoch that is, the seventies was characterized in Soviet terminology by the struggle between the forces of socialism and the forces of imperialism, which they term the "correlation of forces."<sup>17</sup> The Caribbean is a region where the Soviets envision this correlation tilting favourably toward the socialist trend.<sup>18</sup> In effect this correlation of forces and the growth of the socialist system means a Soviet view of weakened US economic strength and political power in the world generally, and directly

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17. Sh.Sanakoyev "The New Stage of International Relations" International Affairs, no.10, October 1973, p.3.

18. S. Mishin "Latin America. Two Trends of Development" International Affairs, no.5, June 1976, p.54.

in its own Caribbean backyard. Central America and the Caribbean thus are seen as part of a major global pattern rather than isolated regions. However, the Latin American continent has three distinct areas if it is divided according to its physical features, and economic and political development.

1. The 'southern zone' comprising of Brazil, Argentina and Chile.
2. The other countries of the South American Continent with the exception of Guyana and Surinam.
3. Central America and the Caribbean area, usually termed the Caribbean Basin.

While the southern zone countries differ from the other nations of the South American continent in terms of economic development, the Caribbean Basin forms a distinct region, or sub-region on grounds of political, economic and cultural factors. Indeed, the region, only acquired a separate identity or subidentity during the 1970s; This was because while the Latin American states had received independence in the early half of the present century, the Caribbean Basin states were colonies until the process of decolonization began in earnest in the 1960s. Thus, economically, these states cannot be clubbed with Latin America because the

development of capitalism is still relatively weak and marginal. Culturally too, these states comprise a mixed population with large percentages of blacks. They share a greater affinity with African nations on these grounds in comparison to the Latin population of South America. However before describing the region it is essential to delineate the countries included within the term.<sup>19</sup>

The term 'the Caribbean and Central America' obviously includes all the land areas arising out of the Caribbean Sea itself, but even this restrictive view produced so complex a political pattern of nation states, dependencies like Puerto Rico, and semidependences like Martinique and Guadeloupe, that this study will include only the larger island states - Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada. Central America consists of Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras and El Salvador. Mexico has been excluded from our definition of the region for obvious reasons; for it is part of North America. However Guyana and Surinam have been included in our study, although they are not strictly speaking considered to

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19. For a definition of the region see Robert D. Crassweller, The Caribbean Community: Changing Societies and US policy (New York, N.Y., 1972) pp.6-13.



be part of Central America and the Caribbean. This is because these two Latin American countries have had historical and cultural affinity with the Caribbean area. Besides they are members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) a political and economic organization of former British colonies.

The importance of this area is manifold. Economically, the region is a rich one both in terms of agricultural produce & mineral wealth. The Caribbean Basin exports bananas, coffee, sugar, and cocoa, is the largest producer of bauxite and has large reserves of oil, coal, iron ore, zinc, and uranium to name the more important minerals. It also has large reserves of sea and ocean wealth being a littoral region.<sup>20</sup> Tourism is also of considerable economic importance. Central America and the Caribbean is also an area of major foreign investment, mainly in the form of multinational companies and US mining and canning corporations. These will be discussed in detail in chapter 3, the importance being their effect on the political

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20. See Latin American Weekly Report, (London) vol.3, no.24. June 22, 1979, p.191.

and nationalist sentiments of these states.

The area has long been regarded as already mentioned the strategic rear or the backyard of the United States. As early as 1915, US Secretary of State Lansing, who addressed a memorandum to then President Wilson noted this region as a 'vital sphere of influence':

"It would seem, therefore, that in the case of the Republics about the Caribbean seas, the United States should expand the application of the Monroe Doctrine and declare a definite Caribbean Policy, that while it does not seek domination over the territory of any of these Republics, it is necessary for the national safety of the United States and particularly in view of its interests in the isthmus of Panama, that it aid the people of those republics in establishing and maintaining honest and responsible governments to such an extent as may be necessary in each case, and it will not tolerate controls over or interference with the political or financial affairs of these republics...."<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet Union also regarded the region as a vital sphere of influence for the U.S.A. This was acknowledged as early as 1962 during the Cuban missile crisis when the USSR succumbed to U.S. dominance over the region. The Soviet back-off however, was in part motivated by the fact that in the 1960s the

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21. Papers relating to the Foreign Affairs of the United States, The Lansing Papers (Washington, GPO, 1940) pp.469-70.

Soviet Union did not have the status of a great power. In the 1970s, the USSR achieved global parity with the West, particularly with the U.S.A. a fact, which was recognized by the US in the 1972 Moscow Declaration.

The present work is a study of Soviet policy towards Central America and the Caribbean. The second chapter will deal with Soviet objectives and policy in the region. In this context it will analyse political uses, Soviet attitude towards important communist parties of the region, and the instruments deployed, to attain these objectives. The third chapter will focus attention on Soviet economic relations with the region and finally an assessment of Soviet policy in region will be made. We now turn to examine Soviet interaction with the region at the political level.



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## CHAPTER II

## SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

A marked feature of Soviet foreign policy in the seventies as already noted, has been the growing importance of the Third World including the Caribbean and Central America. Although the Soviet Union is not physically proximate to this region, it has nevertheless interacted with this region, thereby manifesting the global dimensions of its foreign policy.

In this chapter we shall firstly evaluate Soviet objectives in the Caribbean and Central America. This will be followed by Soviet relations with Cuba. An understanding of Soviet Cuban relations is important for we find that in the seventies this relationship has played a significant role in the region. Lastly we shall examine the instruments deployed by the Soviet Union to achieve its objectives in the Caribbean and Central America.

Soviet Objectives in the Caribbean and Central America

Since the opening of the 1970s the Soviet Union has been pursuing four goals in the Caribbean and Central America. These include firstly, the establishment of a presence in the Caribbean and Central America. This

began with the opening of diplomatic missions, trade and consular offices. Subsequently, this formal presence was strength by cultural exchanges, deepening economic ties and political support. It must be remembered that this region ranks lower in strategic priority to Soviet security and that was perhaps why Moscow has pursued a consistent pattern of state-to-state relations rather than opting for direct military support for armed struggle as it had done in Asia and Africa. This is true in cases like Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada where the Soviet Union chose to approach these "progressive" regimes only after they had firmly established power. This also suggests that the influence and priority accorded to this region in U.S. foreign policy had been recognized by the Soviet Union. It is only in the eighties that we find the Soviet Union has abandoned this approach and in certain select cases is willing to support directly. El Salvador is a case in point. However, for most part, the Soviet Union has extended her presence in the region through traditional diplomatic methods. In establishing its presence in the region the Soviet Union has sought to weaken primarily Western and particularly American influence in the region. The weakening of Chinese influence influence in the

in the area is not a major objective because Chinese activities in the vicinity are at a minimal level. As a corollary to the above the Soviet Union has sought to enhance its own influence in the region. This objective serves the national interest as well as the ideological interest of the Soviet Union. It is in this context that the expansion of Soviet maritime presence in the Caribbean has to be understood. The Soviet Union maintains ports of call in Cuba, Nicaragua and Jamaica for naval ships, trading activities, oceanographic research and merchant marine fishing fleet operations.

The second objective is the access to raw materials and markets. The Soviet Union imports largely, agricultural goods and raw materials from the region like coffee from Costa Rica, citrus fruits from Nicaragua and Cuba, sugar from Cuba and bauxite from Jamaica and Guyana. The Soviet Union's principal exports mainly consist of machinery and equipment. In this context it may not be out of place to say that Soviet writings on the subject are full of criticism for U.S. economic policies in the area and are branded as "imperialist". In the Soviet view its economic interaction with the region provides the countries an alternative source for some of its vital needs. This enables them to loosen shackles of "imperialism" and attain true independence. In the Soviet perception assertion of economic independence would have

a beneficial impact on the world correlation of forces.

The Soviet Union has also sought to promote Caribbean and Central American nationalism. This phenomenon has been particularly evident in the 1970s. Nationalism in the Caribbean and Central America is manifested either in movements for political independence or in economic independence measures varying from country to country. Thus, the Soviet Union has given political support to nationalist movements such as the Panama Canal Issue, the Puerto Rican independence movement, the Sandinista struggle in Nicaragua and the El Salvadorean guerilla movement. Economic measures carried out in countries like Jamaica and Guyana which have nationalized foreign bauxite corporations have also received strong Soviet support. The main reason for Soviet support is obvious. These steps are directed against the U.S.A. and hence, worthy of Soviet support. Similarly attempts at regional integration in matters such as trade, oil and shipping have also received extensive coverage in Soviet writings and support, as these are measures aimed at reducing dependence on the U.S.A. while potentially opening the door to the Soviets. Ideologically too, the Soviet Union supports nationalist movements as part of the world revolutionary process that will ultimately overthrow the capitalist system and establish a new world socialist order.

Finally, a probable Soviet objective in the Caribbean and Central America could be the strengthening of Cuba's position. There is no doubt that Cuba occupies an important position in Soviet aspirations. The many friendly visits that Soviet ships pay to Cuba amply demonstrate to Cuba's neighbouring states the backing it receives from the Soviet Union. Besides, being a fraternal country Cuba is an excellent example of resistance to the U.S. and how such resistance is well awarded by the Soviet Union in economic and political terms. Emulation of the Cuban example by other countries could receive similar Soviet assistance. This again would contribute significantly in weakening American influence. At the same time Cuba has forged a model of socialism more acceptable to the countries in the Caribbean and Central America. Cuba therefore, stands as an example to other Caribbean and Central American countries to be followed. The Soviet Union often quotes Cuba as an ideal model to the developing nations of Africa and Latin America.

#### Soviet-Cuban Interaction in the Region

The cornerstone of the Soviet position in Latin America has been its close relationship with Cuba. This was evident since the late sixties. With reference to the Soviet-Cuban understanding interacting in the Third



World, there are two divergent views. The first portrays Cuba as a surrogate or satellite of the Soviet Union merely carrying out orders given by the Soviets. The second school of thought perceives Cuban foreign policy as independent which happens to coincide with that of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> These views are in fact both exaggerated and the Cuban role vis-a-vis the Soviet Union must be understood in the regional context. In the words of a Soviet spokesman, Cuba has become a "...shining example of what might be achieved by a people who have rejected the capitalist path to development and embraced the road to building socialism".<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Union has perceived Cuba as a catalyst for restructuring inter-American relations and reducing the role played by U.S. "imperialism".<sup>3</sup>

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1. A number of works see the satellite view of Cuban foreign policy. Hugh Thomas, "Cuba's Military Adventures", The Christian Science Monitor (Boston), March 17, 1978, pp. 14-15. Peter Vanneman and Martin James, "The Soviet Intervention in Angola: Intentions and Implications", Strategic Review (London), Summer 1976, pp. 92-103. For the second view of Cuba as an independent actor see, Edward Gonzalez, "Complexities of Cuban Foreign Policy", Problems of Communism (Washington), November/December 1977, pp. 1-15.
  2. D. Lozinov, "The Liberation Struggle in Latin America", International Affairs (Moscow), no. 9, August 1977, pp. 39-45.
  3. B. Gafurov, "The Soviet Union and the National Liberation Movement" International Affairs, no. 7, July 1971, p. 20.

Until Fidel Castro took power in 1959, Latin America had been an exclusive U.S. sphere of influence. Till then, the main Soviet concern there, had been to support and guide Latin American communist parties.<sup>4</sup> These were traditionally pro-Soviet but due to their inherent weaknesses they entered into coalitions with democratic as well as authoritarian regimes to share power. It is a well known fact that Fidel Castro had developed utter contempt for the U.S.A. even when the revolution had not succeeded in Cuba. After the successful accomplishment of the Cuban revolution, he continued his approach of opposing the U.S. Two years later in 1961, he accepted the socialist model of development. But this did not bring the Soviet Union and Cuba any closer to each other. Their perceptions of world developments diverged a great deal as did their views on revolutions. It was only in the late sixties that the gulf that separated Cuba and the Soviet Union was bridged.

This is not to say that all the differences between the Soviet Union and Cuba have been solved. Differences

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4. Edward Gonzalez, n.1, pp. 1-19.

of approach to many problems exist, especially those relating to the Caribbean and Central America. Cuba would naturally like the Soviet Union to pursue a more vigorous policy of opposing American "imperialism" while the Soviet Union has placed greater emphasis on improved relations with the U.S. However, these tactical differences have ~~not~~ hampered a closer Soviet-Cuban understanding in the seventies.

It is plausible that Cuban revolutionary fervour subsided in view of its past experience in the region. The death of Che Guevara in 1967 may have also contributed to a sober assessment of revolutionary potentialities prevailing in the region. This is not the place to go into the details of Soviet-Cuban differences suffice it to state that by the late sixties the fundamental differences between the two countries were resolved.

The evolving Soviet relationship with Cuba coincided with what the Soviet Union perceived as a shift in the world balance of forces in its favour. The change in the correlations of forces in terms of Soviet policy in the Third World implied a greater assertive role for the Soviet Union. Soviet analysts argued that in the 1970s the socialist bloc had substantially greater foreign policy resources and also greater political opportunities for penetrating the national liberation zone, that is,

the Third World.<sup>5</sup> Due to these qualitative changes the Soviet Union perceived that in 'each geopolitical region of the world there is now an 'anti-imperialist vanguard'.<sup>6</sup> It is in the context of the above Soviet assessment that the Soviet Union perceives Cuba to be its anti imperialist vanguard in the Caribbean and Central America, and hence Soviet relations with Cuba assumed greater significance.

Thus, while Soviet and Cuban interests converged on Caribbean issues, that is, there is a unity of views on the ideological front, Cuba remains more active in the region than the Soviet Union. This is also because of its geographic position and its deep rooted revolutionary fevour. The goal that the understanding seemed to share was the strengthening of Cuba's position and elimination of U.S. hegemony in the region, rather than a forging of Soviet strategic and maritime commercial advantages.<sup>7</sup> However, there are limits to Cuba's influence in the region, because most countries still

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5. Bhabani Sengupta, Soviet Asian Relations in the 1970s and Beyond: An Interperceptonal Study. (New York, N.Y., 1976), p.16.

6. Ibid, p.16.

7. W. Raymond Duncan, "Moscow and Latin American: Objectives, Constraints and Implications in W. Raymond Duncan, ed., Soviet Policy in the Third World. (New York, N.Y., 1980), p.275.

share an anti-communist stand and consider that the Soviet Union is using the Cuban model as a 'showcase' of its policy in the Third World.

Soviet Diplomatic ties with the Caribbean and Central America

As we have already noted, the Soviet Union began its interaction with the Caribbean by establishing a formal presence, that is, it strove to have diplomatic relations with the countries in the region irrespective of the nature of the regime. The process of detente facilitated this task. The countries in the region did not incur the wrath of the U.S. by establishing relations with the Soviet Union. Perhaps, the U.S. apparent lower sensitivity to Soviet diplomatic ties and trade activities in her "strategic rear" was evident due to the 1972 Moscow Declaration.

Accordingly, Soviet diplomatic ties with the Caribbean countries began in 1970 with the establishment of ties with Guyana in 1970, Costa Rica in 1971, Trinidad and Tobago in 1974, Surinam in 1975, Jamaica in 1977, Nicaragua in 1979 and Grenada in 1980. Soundings were made in 1978 about relations with Panama which nevertheless has diplomatic ties with Cuba and some communist countries (see Table 2).

As the Tables show, Soviet-Cuban strategy can clearly be noted in that the Soviet Union ~~has~~ has no ties with pro-U.S. anti-communist regimes such as the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. Again, following the October 1980 elections in Jamaica which ousted the progressive regime of Micheal Manley and brought in Edward Seaga's pro-Western government Soviet ties with Jamaica have ceased.

With regard diplomatic ties as instruments of policy, the positive role played by Cuba can be clearly seen. The Soviet Union sees the development of diplomatic and trade relations as an indication of the region's drive from U.S. tutelage and a gesture of defiance of Washington's efforts to isolate them from contact with the communist bloc. In this context L.I. Brezhnev had acknowledged that "...the question of establishing relations with the Soviet Union is a politically sensitive issue for many developing countries," but argued that they learnt from experience that friendship led to their successful struggle against imperialism and for genuine independence".<sup>8</sup>

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8. Leonid Brezhnev's speech on the fiftieth anniversary of the USSR, Pravda (Moscow) December 22, 1972, in Reprints from the Soviet Press, December 1972.

Since, relations with the Soviet Union were a politically sensitive issue in many of these states who perceived Soviet ties as a beginning of a communist threat of takeover, relations with Cuba are more acceptable to forge. As the island forms part of the Caribbean community it is not regarded as a threat such as the Soviet Union, as a superpower is. Thus, Cuba has established ties with Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Surinam and Panama, which are more extensive than Soviet ties. The Soviets have also pointed out that the Caribbean states led in the progressive reentry of Cuba into the diplomatic network of Latin America.<sup>9</sup>

On the Caribbean part, willingness to establish ties with the Soviet Union has been motivated in part by the nationalistic and at times leftist trends in the region. For example, the opening of diplomatic ties served to pacify local radical movements in Costa Rica, Jamaica and Guyana, and was often advertised as a gesture of national sovereignty and independence from the U.S. Besides arousing popular support, it improved the bargaining position of some countries.

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9. A. Glinkin, "Changes in Latin America"  
International Affairs no.1, January 1975,  
pp. 51-53.

vis-a-vis the United States as for example, the Dominican Republic and Haiti did in the 1960s when Rafeal Trugillo in the Dominican Republic and Papa DOC Duvalier in Haiti threatened to turn to the Soviet Union if more favourable treatment from the U.S. was not forthcoming.<sup>10</sup>

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10. James D. Theberge, The Soviet Presence in Latin America (New York, N.Y., 1974) p.14.





	Al	Bu	PRC	Cu	Cz	GDR	Hu	DPR	NVe	Po	Ro	Su	Yu
Mexico			E, C	E, T	T					E, T		E, T	E
Nicaragua										NRM			
Panama									NRM, T				NRA
Paraguay													NRA
Peru	E			E			E		E(NRA)		E	E, T	E
Surinam													
Trinidad & Tobago													
Uruguay	E				E, T		E(NRA), T	T, E(NRA)		E(NRA)	E, T		E
Venezuela					E, T		(NRA)		E		E	E	E

Note: E-Embassy; L-Legion; E(NRA)-Embassy (non-resident Ambassador); C-Consulate  
 T-Trade Office; NRA-Non-resident Ambassador; NRM-Non-resident Minister.  
 Al-Albania; Bu-Bulgaria; Cu-Cuba; Cz-Czechoslovakia; GDR-East Germany;  
 Hu-Hungary; DPR-North Korea; NVe-North Vietnam; Po-Poland; Ro-Romania;  
 SU-USSR; Yu-Yugoslavia.

Source: W. Raymond Duncan, "Soviet and Cuba Interests in the Caribbean" in  
 Richard Millett and W. Marvin Will, eds., The Restless Caribbean:  
 Changing Patterns of International Relations (New York, N.Y., 1979),  
 pp. 134-35.

Table 2: Diplomatic Consular and Trade Representation of Communist Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, December 31, 1976.

	Al	Bu	PRC	Cu	Cz	GDR	Hu	DPR	NVe	Po	Ro	USSR	Yu
Argentina	E	E,C,T	E,T	E,C,T	E,C,T	E,C,T	E,C,T	E	E	E,C,T	E,C,T	E,C,T	E,C,T
Bahamas				NRA									
Barbados				NRA									
Bolivia		NRA			E(NRA)	R	E(NRA)			E(NRA)	E(NRA)	E,T	E
Brazil	L	E,T	E,T		E,C,T	E,C,T	E,T			E,C,T	E,T	E,T	E,C,T
Chile			E,T										C
Colombia		E,C,T		E,C,T	E,C,T	E,C,T	E(NRA),C,T,			E,C,T	E,C,T	E,C,T,	E
Costa Rica	R	T			E(NRA),T	NRA	NRA	R	R	NRA	E,C,T	E,C,T	NRA
Dom.Rep.													
Ecuador		E(NRA)			E,T	E	E(NRA)			E	E(NRA)	E,T	E(NRA)
El Salvador		T			T		T				T	T	T
Grenada			R										
Guatemala													
Guyana			E,T	E	R	NRA,T	E	NRA		NRA	NRA	E	E
Haiti										L			
Honduras					NRA,T					NRA	NRA		NRA
Jamaica			E	E	R		R	R	R	NRA	NRA	R	E
Mexico	E	E	E	E,C	E,T	E,T	E,T	R	E	E,T	E	E,T	E

	Al	Bu	PRC	Cu	Cz	GDR	Hu	DPR	NVe	Po	Ro	USSR	Yu
Nicaragua										NRA			
Panama		R	E		NRA	R	R		R	E(NRA)	NRA		E
Paraguay													NRA
Peru	R	E, T	E, T	E	E, T	E, T	E, T		T	E, T	E, T	E, C, T	E
Surinam			R								R	R	R
Trinidad & Tobago			E	NRA			R				NRA	NRA	NRA
Uruguay		E			E, T	E, T	E(NRA)			E(NRA) T (E), E, T			E
Venezuela	R	E	E	E	E, T	E	E		R	E	E	E	E

Source: W. Raymond Duncan, *Ibid.*, pp.136-37.

Soviet Perceptions and Support of Revolutionary Struggles and the National Liberation Movement in the Caribbean and Central America.

Since the Caribbean and Central America are located at a distance, support for national liberation movements has been an effective instrument for the Soviet Union. Leading Soviet scholars on Latin America which includes the Caribbean and Central America who are responsible for the Latin American section of the Central Committee of the CPSU, are currently involved in a debate over the prospects of revolution in the continent.<sup>11</sup> In this regard Western scholars have admitted that:

"...It is in Latin America that the ideological ingredient of Soviet policies has been most in evidence, and more here than elsewhere (except perhaps in the Far East and with what sad results) the Soviets have based their bid for global power on the purported ideological mission of the Soviet state. The revolutionary struggle fomented or assisted by the USSR in the Western Hemisphere has been closely related to the real economic and social blights of Latin America countries, and it is not a mere propaganda phrase to describe what is going on in some of them as the class war".<sup>12</sup>

With respect to ideology the Soviet objective is to create Marxist Leninist regimes in the Third World. It is with this belief that the Soviet Union supported national liberation struggles and revolutionary political

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11. Jerry F. Hough, "The evolving Soviet Debate on Latin America" Latin American Research Review, Vol.10, no.1, January 1980.

12. Adam B. Ulam, "The World Outside" in Robert F. Byrnes, ed., After Brezhnev: Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s. (London, 1983), pp.279-80.

movements in the developing nations. According to the Soviet view of the world revolutionary process, there are three main streams which determine "the fraternal union that will remake the world - the world socialist system, the international communist and worker's movement and the national liberation movements in the Third World."<sup>13</sup> The nature of the present epoch is termed as being one of the growing might of the world socialist system. It has been recognized by Soviet experts on Latin America that South America has reached a high state of development and some nations of the region do possess a significant working class.<sup>14</sup> With regard the Caribbean and Central America Soviet analysts have viewed it as the "strategic rear" of the United States,<sup>15</sup> a region where the correlation of forces has tilted favourably towards the socialist trend.<sup>16</sup> It is potentially a fruitful area for encouraging anticapitalism and anti-imperialism indirectly through Cuban

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13. B. Gafurov, n.3, p.20.

14. These nations are Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Mexico. See, Jerry F. Hough, n.11, p.128.

15. S. Mishin, "Latin America: Two trends of Development", International Affairs, no.6, June 1976, p.54; Leon Gouré and Morris Rothenburg, Soviet Penetration of Latin America (Miami, Fl., 1975), p.3; James Theberge, n.10, p.7.

16. S. Mishin, *ibid.*, p.56.

diplomacy and bilateral relations with Caribbean and Central American nations, or through revolutionary struggle and support for the nationalist movements.

Soviet writers have noted that the Caribbean and Central American area is one of the regions with a high level of revolutionary activity today.<sup>17</sup> The Soviet Union has envisioned the triumph of the liberation movement across the Caribbean and Cuba's extended role in these countries is recognised as favourable to the Soviet Union.

The Checklist given below of the National Liberation Movement by Wallace Spaulding, has offered a delination of the parties and movements in Central America and the Caribbean on the basis of participation in various conferences of the CPSU and other Communist Parties and Councils, has been made.<sup>18</sup>

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17. "Against Imperialism for Social Progress: International Scientific Conference in Berlin" World Marxist Review, Vol. 24, no.4, April 1981, p.65.
18. Checklist of the National Liberation Movement, Problems of Communism, (Washington) March-April 1982, pp.78-79.

Checklist of the National Liberation Movement: Indications of Participation

Attendance at:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 <sup>a</sup>
<u>Revolutionary Democratic Parties</u>								
Of which:								
<u>Vanguard Revolutionary Democratic Parties.</u>								
People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.	-	x	15	x	x	x	Sept.'81	PC
Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Labour Party	-	x	19	x	x	x	June'76	VP
Benin People's Revolutionary Party	-	-	x	x	x	x	-	PC
Congolese Labour Party.	x	x	36	x	x	-	Apr.'81	PC
Commission for Organising the party of the working people of ethiopia.	x	x	18	x	x	x	Apr.'78 <sup>b</sup>	VP
Mozambique Liberation Front.	x	x	26	x	x	x	June'76	PC
Yemen Socialist Party.	x	x	22	x	x	-	Sept'81	PC
<u>Other Revolutionary Democratic Parties.</u>								





	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
New Jewel Movement of Grenada.	-	x	x	x	x	-	Sept'80	-
Sandinist National Liberation Front of Nicaragua.	-	-	32	x	x	-	July'81	PC
<u>Liberation Movements Proper</u>								
Of which:								
<u>Unitary</u>								
National Liberation Front of Bahrain.	x	x	x	x	-	x	Oct'78	M
South West African People's Organisation (Namibia).	-	x	x	x	x	-	July'81	PC
Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	M
African National Congress (South Africa).	-	x	x	x	x	-	March'80	VP
Polisario Front (Western Sahara).	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	M
<u>United Front</u>								
Coordinating Body of Revolutionary Mass Organisations/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (El Salvador).	-	x	-	-	x	-	July'81	(M)

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Associations of Revolutionary Organisations of Guatemala.	-	x	-	-	-	-	March '81	(M)
Palestine Liberation Organisation.	-	x	x	x	x	-	July '76	VP
<u>Other Socialist Oriented Parties of Which:</u>								
<u>Ruling</u>								
Unity and National Progress Party.	-	x	x	-	x	-	-	-
Peoples National Congress (Guyana).	-	x	x	-	x	-	-	PC
Arab Socialist Renaissance (Baath) Party of Iraq.	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	-
General People's Congress of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamhriyah.	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	PC
Vanguard of the Malagasy Revolution <sup>e</sup> .	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	(M?) <sup>e</sup>
Democratic Union of the Mali People.	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	PC
People's Congress of Sierra Leone.	-	x	x	-	x	-	-	PC
Uganda People's Congress United National Independence Party (Zambia)	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	PC

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Zimbabwe African National Union <sup>f</sup>	-	x	-	x	-	-	-	vp <sup>f</sup>
<u>Nonruling</u>								
National People's Party of Bangladesh.	-	-	x	x	x	-	-	(PC)
MAPU-Worker-Peasant Party of Chile.	-	x	x	x	x	-	Jan'76	-
Chilean Socialist Party.	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	PC
National Progressive Unionist Party of Egypt.	-	-	x	x	-	-	May'75	VP
People's National Party of Jamaica.	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	(PC)
Progressive Socialist Party (Lebanon).	-	-	x	x	x	-	-	PC
Socialist Revolutionary Party (Peru).	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Socialist Party of Puerto Rico.	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Socialist Party of Uruguay.	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	PC

Note: 1. Conference of Problems of Peace and Socialism/Bulgarian Communist Party, Sofia, December, 1978; 2-Conference of Problems of Peace and Socialism/Socialist Unity Party, East Berlin, October 1982; 3-Twenty sixty Congress of the CPSU.

Speaking order, main sessions, Feb-March 1981; 4-Twelfth Congress, Bulgarian Communist Party, March 1981; 5-Tenth Congress, Socialist Unity Party (East Germany), April 1981; 6-Work Conference, Problems of Peace and Socialism, November 1981; 7-Last Article in "Problems of Peace and Socialism"; 8-Has members on the World Peace Council.

a-key to symbols: VP-Vice President and member of Presidential Committee; PC-member of Presidential Committee; M-member of WPC; where the symbol is in parenthesis, the country is allocated the indicated position but no incumbent is currently identified; it is only assumed that a member of the party in question will be named to the slot.

b-At the time, COPWE had not been created; the organization represented was the Provisional Military Administrative Council, then and still the actual ruling body in Ethiopia.

c-Since the overthrow of Guinea-Bissau's Luis Cabral in November 1980, it appears that two separate parties are emerging from PAIGC, one in Cape Verde islands, the other in Guinea-Bissau; it is not clear how Moscow views this.

d-is a member of the democratic Socialist International.

e-the dominant group in Madagascar's ruling coalition; no slot is indicated for this party in the WPC, although the listing is said to be incomplete, leaving open the possibility that a representative from this party could be added to those from its junior coalition partner the AKFM/KDRSM.

f-Moscow used to support ZAPU over AZNU and hence ZAPU remains the representatives on the WPC.

Wallace Spaulding has included the two revolutionary parties in Central America and the Caribbean that are in power, - the New Jewel Movement of Grenada and the Sandinist National Liberation Front of Nicaragua among the revolutionary democratic movements, although the Soviets have not publicly done so. His basis is that, Grenada was the only other non communist country to join 'the vanguard' revolutionary democracies in supporting the Soviet position in January 1980 at the United Nations debate on Afghanistan, (even Nicaragua abstained during this vote). Also, in September 1980, a New Jewel spokesman was published in World Marxist Review (the London edition of Problems of Peace and Socialism)<sup>19</sup> a distinction enjoyed by each of the 'vanguard' revolutionary democratic parties except that of Benin, but by less than half of the other revolutionary democratic parties. As for the Sandinistas the revolutionary democratic status may be inferred from two things - their representative was permitted to address a main session of the Twenty sixth Congress of the CPSU, a privilege otherwise reserved only for important Communist and revolutionary democratic parties; and like the Algerian FIN, the Sandinistas have replaced the local national Communist Party as Nicaragua's sole representative at foreign

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19. W. Richard Jacobs, "Grenada: On the road to People's Democracy," World Marxist Review, (London) vol.23, no.9, September 1980, p.161-68.

communist party Congress. In August 1980, the authoritative soviet line source the World Marxist Review identified Nicaragua and Grenada as the sole countries other than Cuba to have "taken the road of building a new society in Latin America"<sup>20</sup>.

Besides Nicaragua and Grenada, El Salvador and Guatemala have been identified as countries in the region where a "popular liberation movement" is being waged. Again two other regional parties have been identified as 'socialist oriented' parties. These are the people's National Congress of Guyana and the People's National Party of Jamaica, primarily because parties have followed the socialist path in the economic sphere through the nationalization of foreign corporations. For the present, an analysis of the Panama Canal movement, the Puerto Rican Independence movement, the Nicaraguan and Grenadian's revolutions, and the guerilla struggle of El Salvador would be briefly discussed and the role of the Soviet Union in lending political, economic and military support to these movements would be examined.

#### Panama Canal Issue

The concept of Central America and the Caribbean being the 'Strategic rear' or the 'soft underbelly'

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20. Raul Valdes Vivo, "The Latin American Proletariat and its Allies in the Anti-imperialist Struggle", World Marxist Review, vol.23, no.8, August 1980, p.48.

States became evident in the early years of the present century. The acquisition of the Panama Canal zone by the U.S. made it a major path for world commerce. U.S. control over the Canal Zone had always been a bone of contention between the two nations.

In the 1970s, the zone was in effect an outpost of U.S. military and the comfortable lifestyles of its residents was in stark contrast to the poverty on the other side of its guards and fences. Among the most controversial of U.S. military activities in the zone has been the maintenance of institutions wherein military personnel from the Americas had been trained in counter insurgency and guerilla warfare.<sup>21</sup> All these factors contributed widely to nationalistic sentiments, and riots on the issue occurred in 1927, 1947 and 1964. What incensed Panamanian nationalistic feelings most, were the continuance of U.S. military bases elsewhere in the country and the U.S. appointed Board for governance of the Canal .

Under the new government of General Omar Torrijos Herrera in 1970, negotiations for a new set of treaties were resumed. These dragged on until March 1973 when,

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21. Donald Barr Chidsey, The Panama Canal: An Informal History (New York, N.Y., 1970).



at the urging of Panama the United Nations Security Council called a meeting in Panama City. A resolution calling on the U.S. to negotiate "a just and equitable" treaty was vetoed by the U.S. on the grounds that the disposition of the canal was a bilateral matter. However, Panama had succeeded in focusing attention on the canal, the matter became a prominent issue in the Organisation of American States (OAS); the new treaty was announced on August 10, 1977 as a result of continuous negotiations and Latin American support of Panama. This new treaty abrogates the treaty of 1903, with Panama assuming jurisdiction over the Canal Zone although the U.S. retains the use of all land and water areas and installations necessary to the operation, maintenance and defence of the canal. The treaty expires on December 31, 1999, after which Panama will assume full ownership and control of the canal.

The Soviet Union has always supported the Panamanian right to the canal issue. The support was covertly extended through Cuba. In January 1976, General Torrijos spent a week with Premier Castro in Cuba where he was publicly counseled that the Panamanian struggle called not for radicalism, but rather for moderation. The Cuban leader thus

contributed to insulating Torrijos against domestic opposition from the Left. Torrijos was subsequently an official guest of Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, a great friend of Fidel Castro. Soviet support was also given through the Soviet-backed People's party of Panama. The party was founded in 1930, and banned in 1953 but has operated throughout in semi-legal conditions. While Soviet literature had always condemned the 1903 Treaty as "shackling"<sup>22</sup>, the Panamanian People's Party declared that the Panamanian people could not confront the U.S. singlehandedly, without support in the form of international solidarity. Its Sixth Congress (1980) stated that the People's Party of Panama "attaches equal importance to international and internal factors of struggle and thinks highly of the assistance that we are getting from the socialist community, particularly the Soviet Union."<sup>23</sup> Again with reference to the Canal Zone issue, Luther Thomas, Member of the Politburo of the party stated the Soviet Position, "We communists have always raised high the banner of struggle for sovereignty over the Canal Zone and its reunification with

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22. V.Lenin, "Panama", International Affairs, no.1, January 1978, p.155 and G. Zafesov, "The Land of Two Oceans", International Affairs, no.6, June, 1977, p.129.

23. Central Document of the People's Party of Panama: Sixth Congress. (Panama City, 1980), p.32.

the country's national territory."<sup>24</sup> The official Soviet position was noted at the very onset of the new government of General Omar Torrijos, when at the UN Security Council in 1973, the Soviet Union backed its "just demand for the restoration of sovereignty over the Canal Zone".<sup>25</sup> The Torrijos government policies were stated to have acquired a "strong anti-imperialist character" with the nationalization of U.S. owned Fuerza Y Luz power company and the state control over the operation of the U.S. owned United Fruit Company in 1972.<sup>26</sup> However Soviet support played down the significance first of the signatures in September 1977, then of the ratification in April 1978 of the Panama Canal Treaty. Evidently unwilling to condemn the treaty as long as Panama accepted it, (the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the People's Party of Panama assessed it as an important step forward on the road to national liberation), Moscow attacked the U.S. Senate's efforts to emascu-

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24.V.Mikhailov, "Panama Canal Zone", International Affairs, no.5, May 1975, p.146.

25.Ibid., p.145.

26.V. Lunin, n.22, p.155.

-late it through amendments as also the U.S. in general of exerting pressure on Panama, throughout the ratification process. In this regard, Moscow criticised the provision of U.S. military presence until the year 2000, (a provision other agreements did not have), and the right Washington had obtained to take unilateral action after the year 2000, to ensure the Canal's neutrality. The Soviets state that, "Since there will be no Canal Zone, the unilateral action taken by the U.S. will mean violation of Panama's national sovereignty and interference in her internal affairs."<sup>27</sup> The report of a group of Soviet journalists touring through Panama in 1977 noted that there are fourteen U.S. military bases manned by a contingent of several thousands servicemen in the zone and military schools which train police in counter insurgency, "kept in readiness to be sent of at a moments notice to any part of Latin America where there is a threat to the interests of U.S. imperialism."<sup>28</sup>

#### Puerto Rican Independence Movement

Puerto Rico has been termed the 'United States southern most border'. She was integrated into the United States, in the sense that her economy, people

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27.G.Zafesov, n.22, p.130.

28.Ibid., p.130.

and political life including her foreign relations was determined by the U.S. as early/as 1951. The fate of the island being decided by a faraway great power was not unusual in the Caribbean. That it still continues to do so in a decolonised world of the present era, makes for a peculiar situation.

Puerto Rico's lack of autonomy was condemned by the United Nations in 1973, and has been decried by all three main groups on the island: independentists, who want full autonomy with full-fledged nationhood; common-wealthers, who want more autonomy with a New Pact; and statehooders, who want atleast to legitimize the lack of autonomy with increased participation and representation. In 1960, the General Assembly of the UNO passed the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to to Colonial Countries and Peoples" conferring on all peoples the fundamental human right of independence.<sup>29</sup> and the Committee of Decolonization took up the Puerto Rican case. Puerto Rico was politically bound to the U.S. by the Estado Libre Asociado (ELA) or Commonwealth. This status, it was argued, by U.S. supporters was a new alternative, equal in dignity, although

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29. Hollis W. Barber, "Decoloniation: The Committee of Twenty-four", World Affairs, vol.38, no.2, Fall 1975, p.129.

different in nature, to independence or federated statehood.

On the recommendation of the U.S. that the issue could be resolved by a plebiscite, the Puerto Rican organisations that brought the status issue to the UN claimed that the "U.S. had gotten the Puerto Rican government to set up a plebiscite to forestall UN action."<sup>30</sup> According to the Independence Party President Concepcion de Gracia, the plebiscite was "nothing but an effort to stop the negotiations in the UN to have the Puerto Rico case reexamined."<sup>31</sup> This claim was supported by the fact that UN action was forestalled until after the plebiscite.

In 1977 there was a Cuban resolution to place Puerto Rico on the UN list of colonies. The vote occurred on September 12, 1978 with 10 in favour, including the Soviet Union and China and 12 absentions, mainly western block countries. Yet, as Anderson suggests, "Puerto Rico with or without the formal (UN) declaration would continue to be a symbol of remaining colonialism in the Third and Socialist worlds at least."<sup>32</sup>

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30. The San Juan Star, (Puerto Rico), April 8, 1967, p.6.

31. The San Juan Star, March 16, 1967, p.6.

32. Robert W. Anderson, "Puerto Rico Between the United States and the Caribbean" Paper presented at the conference of contemporary Trends and Issues in Caribbean International Affairs, Trinidad, May 23-27, 1977, p.11.

In 1975, Cuba recognized the Puerto Rican Independence Movement as the sole representative of the Puerto Rican nation.<sup>33</sup>

The present situation seems unsettled, but one point common to all the status position groups is the desire to rid the island of its colonial vestiges. The Soviet Union has lent support to the Independents and termed the US attitude as "undisguised neocolonialism".<sup>34</sup> Supporting national liberation movements particularly those directed against the US have received Soviet support and encouragement. But in this case Soviet support is cautious for any overt support could lead to direct confrontation. However, Soviet support to the Puerto Rico Independence movement is evident in the extensive coverage through radio broadcasts and newspapers on its colonial position.<sup>35</sup>

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33. "Puerto Rico Libre" Bulletin of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee (Puerto Rico) vol.3, no.2, Sept.15, 1975.

34. W.Andrianov, "Undisguised Neocolonialism" International Affairs, no.6, June 1977 pp.156-57.

35. See Radio Broadcasts, Moscow Tass in English, September 5, 1978 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report, Soviet Union, September 7, 1978, also, Pravda Sept. 25, 1978 in FBIS Daily Report, Soviet Union, September 28, 1978.

### The Nicaraguan Revolution

While Soviet-Cuban support for the Panamanian and Puerto Rican movements was limited, this was not the case on Nicaragua.

According to American opinion, the triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua was the result of coordinated Soviet-Cuban strategies and tactics in Central America. The Sandinists have claimed that it was conditioned by various internal forces such as the unpopularity of the Somoza regime among all classes, underdevelopment, unequal distribution of wealth, enormous poverty, and other deep social and economic cleavages. Nicaragua had long been dominated by dictators such as Anastasio 'Tacho' Somoza (1936-1956) and his son Anastasio 'Tachito' Somoza (1967-1979). Also, the United States had played a role in national policy making since 1912, because Nicaragua lies in in close proximity to the Panama Canal. Thus, US, strategic interests were largely the motivating force behind the US interventions in 1912 and 1927, and it was virtually a US protectorate until 1933, except for a brief interlude from 1926-1927. During this time Augusto Cesar Sandino, a staunch radical nationalist had opposed the corrupt dictatorship of his country and US interference. The Soviet Press hailed Augusto Cesar Sandino in the early 1980's as an anti-imperia-



-list hero who had opposed US imperialism but in 1930's the Soviets and the Comintern had denounced Sandino and his "rebel bands." The Soviets had condemned the US. intervention of 1927, but had failed to display much support for the original Sandinistas; while Sandino had cooperated with the communists in the 1920's, he had denounced their activities in 1936. After the withdrawal of the US troops from Nicaragua, Sandino actually made peace with the Nicaragua Government. The Comintern denounced this as "capitulation... over to the side of the counter-revolutionary government."<sup>36</sup>

Communism in Nicaragua, as elsewhere in Central America had traditionally been a weak movement. In the past ~~two~~ decades, three Marxist Parties have existed in Nicaragua all of them illegal, clandestine or semiclandestine; a very small Maoist group, the anti-Soviet Communist party of Nicaragua and the pro-Soviet Socialist party of Nicaragua (PSN), a semiclandestine organisation founded in 1937. Some members of the PSN had links with the Sandinistas in

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36. Compare "USSR-Nicaragua Building Cooperation," New Times, March 1980, pp.13-14, with "Struggles of the Communist Parties of South and Caribbean America" The Communist International vol.12, no.10, May 20, 1935, pp.564-76.

the 60s and 70s but the PSN was not the main force behind the revolution. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) was founded in 1961<sup>by</sup> radical, left leaning nationalists led by the late Carlos Fonseca Amador, who though not a communist had visited the Soviet Union. The Sandinists were inspired and supported from the very beginning by Castro, and tried to overthrow the Somoza regime but were soon crushed by the National Guard. Although Amador later died while fighting Somoza, the Sandinists continued their struggle in the 1970's with only limited support from Cuba and the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the revolutionary struggle coincided with the Soviet strategy of support for "anti-imperialism", geographic remoteness and general pessimism following the overthrow of Allende in Chile prevented the Soviet Union from extending support to revolutionary movements. It could be also due to the fact that the process of detente had been initiated and perhaps the Soviet Union did not wish to jeopardize it. The support was mainly from Cuba and reports indicated that the Cubans were training the FSLN, providing them with arms and money.<sup>37</sup>

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37. See statement of W.H. Duncan, a vice-president with the American Chamber of Commerce of Latin America in Nicaragua, in U.S. House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Central America at the Crossroads, Hearings Before the Sub-Committee on American Affairs, September, 11-12, 1979, p.47.

The Soviets exercised considerable restraint from publishing analyses in the Nicaraguan struggle, and it was only in 1978 that some articles were published reassessing the chances of the FSLN victory.<sup>38</sup> As the victory of the Sandinistas was in sight Cuba sent specialists from all fields including the military to help and advise the Sandinistas. In contrast to the Cubans, the Soviets were guarded until such time as the revolution had consolidated power. The only concession was a message from Brezhnev expressing Soviet willingness "to develop multifaceted ties with Nicaragua,"<sup>39</sup> and emergency donations in the weeks following Somoza's overthrow. These were smaller than the U.S., Mexican or Venezuelan donations during this period. The new chapter in Soviet Nicaraguan cooperation opened only in March 1980, when the first high-level Sandinist delegation arrived in Moscow on March 17, 1980, on a journey that also included stops at Bulgaria, the GDR, and Czechoslovakia. Ideologically, the Nicaraguan Revolution was upgraded to a "people's democratic revolution" waging a courageous war against imperialism and reaction.<sup>40</sup>

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38.V. Andrianov, "Nicaragua", International Affairs, no.12., December 1978, p.137.

39.Pravda July 20, 1979.

40.Morris Rothenburg, "Latin America in Soviet Eyes" problems of Communism (Washington), September-October 1983, p.8.

According to Latinskaya Amerika in July 1982.

"The Sandinista Front of National Liberation, in alliance with other parties, comes out in the role of the political vanguard of the Nicaraguan revolution and fulfils the role of the ruling party, consistently realizing a program of profound socio-economic reforms"<sup>41</sup>

A comparison of the joint communiques of March 1980 and 1982, brings out the greater alignment of Nicaragua with the Soviet Union. While the 1980 document barely mentions the U.S., the 1982 communique, deplures "the growth of the aggressiveness of the forces of imperialism and reaction led by the Union States of America."<sup>42</sup>

The FSLN and the CPSU also agreed on future party-to-party contracts. In addition an impressive array of political ties have developed between Nicaragua and other Communist states, the most important being the affiliation with the Cuban Committee for the Defense of the Revolution. The Soviet Union has also developed economic ties with Nicaragua, which would be dealt with in the next chapter, while the military will be discussed separately.

#### Guerilla Struggle in El Salvador

Like Nicaragua, El Salvador has a strong heri-

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41. Ibid., p.8-9.

42. Ibid., p.8-9.

-tage of instability caused by a rigid class structure, unequal distribution of wealth, and 30 percent unemployment. Though it is the smallest country in Latin America it is the most densely populated (400 people per square mile) and the socio-economic life has been dominated by an oligarchy of wealthy families while military strongmen have controlled the country's politics.

In El Salvador, as in Nicaragua, the communist movement has been very weak. The pro-Soviet Communist party in El Salvador (PCEs), founded in 1930, was actively involved in a massive peasant insurrection in 1932, which was crushed by the military and resulted in 30,000 deaths. Since that time the PCEs has been an illegal, clandestine organisation. As late as 1979 it had only 225 members.

It was not till the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua that the Soviet Union paid attention to the developments in El Salvador. The struggle in the 1960s and 70s was largely ignored by the Soviet Union. Perhaps it placed higher priority to its national interests than its ideological interests and opposed armed struggle and terrorism as revolutionary means in El Salvador. However, the successful

Nicaraguan Revolution, led to a change in tactics, reflected in the (pro-Soviet) PCES endorsement of violent revolution at its Seventh National Congress in May 1980.

The example of Nicaragua, however, was not the only motive for the changing perceptions and tactics of the PCES and the Soviets in early 1980. Both the USSR and Cuba feared that if the PCES did not use violence to implement its "anti-imperialist" strategy it would soon be overtaken by its more radical rivals who were quickly gaining popular strength. The PCES, they reasoned, should not be suddenly surprised by successes of the non communist guerillas and deprived thereby of responsibility for the victor. Thus Cuban and Soviet tactics since the spring of 1980 have been directed at transforming the numerically small PCES into a leading force in the guerilla struggle in El Salvador.<sup>43</sup>

The primary Soviet objective for fomenting turmoil in El Salvador is probably to pin down the United States in its "strategic rear" as the opportunity presents itself. This development could be

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43. Y. Korolyov, "El Salvador: The "Hot Spot" in Latin America" International Affairs, no.6, June 1981, p.58-66.

linked to strained East West relations. Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the American rapprochement with China. Indeed, the Soviet Union may have thought that El Salvador provided the same exploitable opportunity in the same geographic proximity to the United States as Afghanistan is to the USSR. This idea of making El Salvador an 'American Afghanistan' in retaliation of the U.S. - Chinese support for Afghani rebels, may have promoted Soviet decision to support Cuban efforts in El Salvador. Thus, Cuban training of Salvadorean guerillas increased sharply after 1979, and the USSR met a delegation of various groups of guerillas at a meeting in Havana that was organized by Castro. In 1980, the Soviet Union also agreed to train a group of Salvadoran guerilla youths and assist Cuba in the search for armaments.<sup>44</sup> In June-July 1980, with the assistance of Soviet officials responsible for Third World affairs in the Soviet Secretariat (such as K. Brutents and his deputy Kudachkin, the PCES Secretary visited the Soviet Union and certain East European countries, and obtained American-made weapons (M-14 and

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44. Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Strategy in the Caribbean Basin" in Proceedings of the US Naval Institute (Washington) May 1982, pp. 175-76.

M-16 rifles, M-79 grenades) from Veitnam and Ethiopia, countries with large stocks of U.S. weapons.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the USSR could deny involvement if accused. East European allies promised to provide communications equipment, uniforms and medical supplies, while the Soviets helped to arrange for the transport of the weapons to Cuba in the fall of 1980. From Cuba, the weapons were conveyed to Nicaragua and from there by land, sea or air to El Salvador through Honduras.<sup>46</sup> Various articles in Soviet publications reiterate the Soviet position on El Salvador,.

"The Soviet Union has a clear cut position on the developments in El Salvador. The people of that country have every right to settle their internal problems themselves and to choose the type of social structure and development that suits them most; the Soviet people are siding with the heroic people of that Central American country for their liberation. Their fight is a part of the common struggle of freedom, social progress and peace throughout the world."<sup>47</sup>

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45. Ibid., p.176.

46. "Communist Interference in El Salvador" Spécial Report no.80 (Washington 1981). Several critics have rightly pointed out the inconsistencies of the report.

47. V. Korolyov, n. 43, p.65.



The New Jewel Revolution of Grenada:

The New Jewel Movement (NJM) came into being in March 1973 under the impact of the Black Power movement in the U.S. and the armed liberation struggles in South Africa. The movement arose as a result of ten years of home rule even after independence from the British government.

The NJM has stated its allegiance to Marxism and maintained strong political and economic ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union. While the Soviet Union only opened diplomatic ties with Grenada in July 1982, it is evident that relations between the two countries had already begun, because Grenada voted along with the Soviet Union in the January 1980 U.N. vote on the Afghanistan issue. In August 1980, an authoritative Soviet source said that Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada were the sole countries to have "taken the road to building a new society in Latin America."<sup>48</sup> The Soviet Union was also giving considerable aid to the island in tandem with Cuba, motivated in part also by the strategic location of Grenada close to the oil producing nations of Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

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48. Raul Valdes Vivo, n.20, p.51.

The political importance of Grenada became important especially after the electoral defeat of Prime Minister Manley of Jamaica to Western oriented Edward Seaga in October 1980. Soviet equipment and financial assistance has enabled hundreds of Cuban workers and technicians to begin building a new international airport at Port Salines in Grenada.<sup>49</sup> When finished, it would be capable of handling all types of Soviet and Cuban aircraft including, the Soviet "Backfire" bomber. On the island which has a population of 120,000 there are over 50 Cuban military advisors who are organising the build up of a new revolutionary army; in addition there are several hundred Cuban military and civil advisors, doctors and construction workers in Grenada.<sup>50</sup>

As in Nicaragua, the Soviet Union is assisting in building and promoting a fishing industry in Grenada for which the Cubans have supplied a fishing trawler. After Admiral Gershkov's visit to the island in 1980, (he is the chief of the Soviet Navy) there were reports about Soviet intentions of building naval facilities there.<sup>51</sup>

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49. Jiri Valenta, n.44, p.177.

50. Ibid., p.177.

51. AFP (Paris), January 15, 1981, reported in EBIS, Latin America, January 21, 1981.

Besides being linked with the Soviet Union and Cuba, the NJM has political ties with the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The military ties of Grenada would be discussed separately along with the Soviet military presence in the region.

Soviet Military Presence and Assistance to the Caribbean and Central American Region.

Apart from political support to national liberation movements and guerilla movements, the Soviet Union has also deployed the traditionally effective instrument of influence namely, of maintaining a military presence and arms assistance to the countries of the region. This serves the national interest as well as the ideological goals of the Soviet Union. In this section we shall firstly examine Soviet naval activities in the region and then discuss military assistance.

Despite the obvious limitations imposed by geography the Soviet Union has been able to establish a naval presence in Cuba including the use of modern docks and repair facilities. The Soviets have also built air facilities for reconnaissance aircraft; satellite stations, and sophisticated intelligence equipment for monitoring U.S. satellite and microwave

conversations have also been built. The detection of crates of new Soviet aircraft at an airfield outside Havana in early 1982 indicated that the Soviet Union was continuing to supply the Cubans with MIG-23 "Flogger" aircraft some of which may be a special ground attack version.<sup>52</sup> Some analysts view these planes as being capable, after some modification, of carrying nuclear weapons. Mean while Soviet Tu-95" Bear D" reconnaissance planes are periodically deployed from their Northern fleet bases in the Soviet Union to either Jose Marti airport or San Antonio de los Banos in the Havana area for monitoring U.S. naval activities in the Atlantic.

In addition to a Soviet Combat brigade of 2,600 men, there are several thousand other military and civilian advisors and technicians in Cuba. There are reports by the U.S. government of the Soviet Union using Cuba as a base for training guerillas for various countries of the region. This claim has however, not been substantiated.<sup>53</sup>

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52. George C. Wilson "Crates of Soviet aircraft Detected near Havana" The Washington Post: January 13, 1982.

53. Communist Interference in El-Salvador" n.46.

Since the 1960s, 20 Soviet naval task groups have deployed to the Caribbean sea and made Cuban port calls. The most recent deployment, however, in April 1981, included a cruiser for the first time. The visit was significant and was a clear demonstration of Soviet intentions in the region.

The regular deployment of Soviet Warships to Cuba is also designed to further cooperation between Soviet and Cuban armed forces as General I. Shkadev, Chief of the group of Soviet advisors in Cuba put it, "Friendly visits by Soviet Warships to parts of Cuba make an important contribution between Soviet and Cuban soliders."<sup>54</sup>

Overall, the small yet growing Soviet naval and military presence in the Caribbean is designed to help encourage policies along the lines of what Admiral Gorshkov would refer to as "progressive changes on shore". The "demonstration activity" of the Soviet Navy, in his view, makes it possible to "achieve political goals without resorting to armed struggle."<sup>55</sup>

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54. Curt Gasteyger, "Political and Strategic Implications of Soviet Naval Presence in the Caribbean in James D. Theberge, ed., Soviet Seapower in the Caribbean: Political and Strategic Implications. (New Yorks/N.Y., 1972) p.61,.

55. Admiral Serger Gershkov, The Sea Power of the State (Moscow, 1976) p.403.

Thus, the political uses of Soviet military power has been convincingly demonstrated in displayed in the Caribbean and Central America.

Before we examine Soviet arms assistance to the countries of the region it is important to bear in mind that information on such a sensitive topic is extremely limited especially where it concerns Soviet information. Therefore, one has to rely on Western sources which at times do seem exaggerated. This does not, however, diminish the fact that Soviet arms transfers to the region have been indeed significant.

The Soviet arms transfer reached major proportions in the 1980s with reports of the Soviets shipping 62,000 tons of arms, the largest amount since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. This total for 1981 is larger than that for the previous three years combined.

Soviet military aid to Nicaragua also is significant. Twenty-eight million dollars worth of Soviet, East German and Cuban arms were transferred to Nicaragua in 1981 including 25 T-54 and T-55 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and two Hip helicopters, heavy artillery surface-to-air missiles and large quantities of automatic rifles. East Germany has delivered 800

military trucks, in addition to weapons.<sup>56</sup> There are 70 Soviet advisors teaching the Nicaraguans how to operate equipment and Nicaraguan pilots are being trained to fly Soviet planes in Cuba and Bulgaria. With Soviet and Cuban assistance, Nicaraguans are building new runways at four airfields probably to accommodate MIG fighters. Cuba's role in providing military backup has been considerable in that there are about 4,000 Cubans in Nicaragua, 2000 of which are security and military advisors. According to a Sandinista leader, this military equipment has been brought in response to "the danger of U.S. invasion."<sup>57</sup>

The Soviet Union, following a visit of Admiral Gerschkov to Grenada in 1980, was building naval facilities there.<sup>58</sup> According to some reports scores of recruits from Trinidad are undergoing training in guerilla tactics in Grenada.<sup>59</sup>

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56. AFP (Paris), July 17, 1981, reported in FBIS, Latin America, July 1981, Arms build up was also noted in Managua Radio Sandino, September 7, 1981. In FBIS Latin America, Sept. 9, 1981.

57. Ibid.

58. AFP (Paris) January 15, 1981 reported in FBIS, Latin America, January 21, 1981.

59. Trinidad Guardian (Port of Spain), Jan. 9, 1980 reported in FBIS, Latin America January 14, 1981.

### Cultural Propaganda

In contrast with the other instruments of Soviet policy in the Caribbean Basin, cultural diplomacy and propaganda is the most limited. It nevertheless exists and thus, deserves a mention. The two important methods employed are radio broadcasts and literature circulation.

The Soviet Union has used radio coverage extensively on Nicaragua, and El Salvador since January 1978. Broadcasts are in English, Russian and Spanish, depending on the audience, and they generally link U.S. 'imperialism' with the Somoza regime in Nicaragua and the military junta in El Salvador.<sup>60</sup> Again Moscow's coverage for the Puerto Rican Independence Movement was considerable during the time of the UN Decolonization Committee session in 1978.<sup>61</sup> The Soviet Union was the second major communist broadcasting country to Latin America even in 1977 with a weekly total of 143 hours preceded by Cuba with 253 hours weekly.<sup>62</sup> The Soviet Union through their official-line source magazine Problems of Peace and

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60. See FBIS, Soviet Union January 14, 23, 31, 1973.

61. See Radio Broadcasts, Moscow Tas in English, September 5, 1978. in FBIS-Soviet Union, Sept. 7, 1978; Pravda September 25, 1978 in FBIS September 28, 1978.

62. Communist International Radio Broadcasting, 1977. (Washington, 1978) p.8.



Socialism interviewed guerilla leaders and Marxist oriented groups of El Salvador, Nicaragua and Grenada. Various seminars and Communism on the region's struggles are organised jointly by Cuba and the Problems of Peace and Socialism where revolutionary organisations are invited and discussions on the subject are held.

Soviet literature on Latin America has markedly increased. The Soviet Journal Latinskaya Amerika published by the Institute of Latin America in Moscow, increased its circulation from 2500 in 1972 to 6,000 in 1980. The magazine, which was a bimonthly published jointly in Russian and Spanish became a monthly journal in 1980. Soviet literature in Spanish has also increased in double during the 1970s.

#### Relations with Regional Communist Parties.

Moscow's association with Latin American Communist parties dates back to the October Revolution of 1917. It was only with the Cuban Revolution of 1959 that substantial party to party relations began to develop. Till then these were restricted to Mexico, Uruguay and Argentina. The CPSU had only sporadic contacts with the Latin American Communist parties, largely individual

contacts. Soviet financial aid to these parties have been small, but regular.<sup>63</sup>

The turning point in Soviet relations with the region came in 1950-1960 after the Cuban revolution. The Soviet Union saw the Cuban revolution as the spark that would ignite a chain of revolutionary fires in the rest of the continent. The revolution spurred Soviet research into Latin American affairs, and in 1961 the Soviet leadership established a new Institute for the Study of Latin America. They believed that the Cuban style of revolution was suitable to Central America, with Soviet backing. Thus, in 1959 and in 1960, respectively the communist parties of Nicaragua and El Salvador tried to overthrow their countries' regimes. However, with the Cuban missile crises of 1962, Soviet internal problems such as the change in domestic leadership following the downfall of Khrushchev and economic difficulties, and the prospects of detente, the Soviet-backed communist parties in the region reduced their emphasis on revolutionary

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63. Robert J. Alexander, "The Communist Parties of Latin America", Problems of Communism, July-August 1970, pp.37-46. Also see, Robert J. Alexander, Communism in Latin America, (New Brunswick N.J., 1957), for a study of early Soviet relations with Latin American Communist parties.

change and instead opted for cooperation with "progressive" regimes. This enabled the Soviet Union to begin diplomatic initiatives in Latin America.

It is misleading however, to believe that because of these trends Moscow had given up the notion of supporting revolutionary movements in the region, or that the regional parties had adopted a posture of acquiescence. As the meeting of the communist and Worker's Parties in Moscow in 1974 claimed: "The past five years have seen an irreversible trend towards the development and expansion of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America and its evolution into a struggle against capitalist exploitation"<sup>64</sup>.

The Havana Declaration Stated:

"The utilization of all legal possibilities is an indispensable obligation of the anti-imperialist forces. Revolutionaries are not the first to resort to violence. But it is the right and duty of all revolutionary force to be ready to answer counter-revolutionary violence with

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64. K.I. Zarodov, Marxism, Leninism and our Time (Prague, 1974) p.75. The main goal as identified at the conference was to form united fronts with 'progressive regimes' or with other parties and organisations such as unions and labour organisation to put the interests of the working class above political ideological or religious prejudices. It was also decided to persuade youth, workers, peasants, teachers etc., to help oppose imperialism and oligarchy with an effective union.

revolutionary violence".<sup>65</sup>

As noted before, the communist parties in Central America have been traditionally very weak, with membership ranging from a few dozen to several hundreds. (See Tables 3-5). As is the problem in other parts of the Third World, this region also has several communist groups like Maoist groups, Trotskyite groups etc. These groups hamper the cause of Soviet Communism.

In dealing with the various methods employed by the Soviet Union to achieve her objectives we have not dealt with the important role economic relations play in achieving the desired goal. This aspect will be dealt with in the following chapter.

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65. Willian E. Ratliff, "appendix: Conference of Communist Parties of Lation America and the Canbbean" in Richard F. Staar, ed., Yearbook of International Communist Affairs 1976, (Standford, Ca, 1977).p.471.

TABLE 3: STATUS OF LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNIST &amp; ULTRALEFTIST PARTIES, 1972

Country	Name of Party	Estimated Membership	Position	Legal
Argentina	Communist Party of Argentina	70,000	Pro-Moscow	Yes
	People's Revolutionary Army	Not known	Trotskyite	No
	Armed Forces of Liberation	"	Pro-Castro	No
	Revolutionary Armed Forces	"	Pro-Castro	Yes
	Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas	"	Castroite-Peronist	Yes
Barbados	No Communist Party	-	-	-
	Peoples Progressive Movement	Negligible	Far Left	Yes
Bolivia	Communist Party of Bolivia	1,500	Pro-Moscow	No
	Communist Party of Bolivia	1,100	Pro-Peking	No
	Revolutionary Workers Party	175	Trotskyite	No
	Army of National Liberation	Not known	Pro-Castro	No
Brazil	Communist Party of Brazil	7,000	Pro-Moscow	No
	Communist Party of Brazil	Not known	Pro-Peking	No
	National Liberation Action	Negligible	Pro-Castro	No
	Popular Revolutionary Vanguard	-	Pro-Castro	No
Colombia	Communist Party of Colombia	10,000	Pro-Moscow	Yes
	Communist Party of Colombia, Marxist/Leninist	1,000	Pro-Peking	Yes
	Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces	100 <sup>b</sup>	PCC	No
	Army of National Liberation	100 <sup>b</sup>	Guerrilla arm	No
	Popular Army of Liberation	50 <sup>b</sup>	Pro-Castro	No
				Pro-Peking

1	2	3	4	5
Costa Rica	Popular Vanguard Party	1,000	Pro-Moscow	No
Cuba	Cuban Communist Party	125,000	Independent <sup>a</sup>	Yes
Dominican Republic	Dominican Popular Movement	385	Pro-Castro	No
	Dominican Communist Party	470	Pro-Moscow	No
	14th of June Revolutionary Movement	300	Splintered*	No
	Communist Party of Dominican Republic	145	Maoist	No
	Proletarian Voice	65	Pro-Peking	No
	Popular Socialist Party	40	Pro-Moscow	Yes
Ecuador	Communist Party of Ecuador	500	Pro-Moscow	Yes
	Communist Party of Ecuador, Marxist/Leninist	250	Pro-Peking	Yes
	Revolutionary Socialist Party of Ecuador	450	Undertermined	Yes
El Salvador	Communist Party of El Salvador	125	Pro-Moscow**	No
Guadelope	Communist Party of Guadelope	3,000	Pro-Moscow	Yes
Guatemala	Guatemala Labour Party	750	Pro-Moscow (With small terrorist faction called Revolutionary Armed Forces)	No
Guyana	Working Peoples Vanguard Party	100	Pro-Moscow	Yes
	Peoples Progressive Party	100 <sup>c</sup>	Pro-Moscow	Yes
Haiti	Unified Party of Haitian Communists	Not known	Merger***	No
Honduras	Communist Party of Honduras	300	Pro-Moscow (With Revolutionary wing)	No

1	2	3	4	5
Jamaica	No Communist Party	-	Pro-Moscow (with revolutionary wing)	No
Martinique	Communist Party of Martinique	1,000	Pro-Moscow	Yes
Mexico	Mexican Communist Party	5,000	Independent	Yes
	Socialist Peoples Party	10,000	Pro-Moscow	Yes
Nicaragua	Socialist Party of Nicaragua	60	Pro-Moscow	No
	Communist Party of Nicaragua	40	Pro-Moscow	No
	Sandinista National Liberation Front	50	Pro-Castro (Guerilla group)	No
Panama	Peoples Democratic Party	500	Pro-Moscow	No
	Castroite Movement of Revolutionary Unit	50	Pro-Castro	No
Paraguay	Communist Party of Paraguay	3,500	Pro-Moscow (mainly)	Yes
Peru	Communist Party of Peru	3,200	Pro-Moscow	Yes
	Communist Party of Peru	1,200	Pro-Peking	Yes
	Movement of the Revolutionary Left	Not known	Pro-Castro	Yes
	Army of National Liberation	"	Pro-Castro	Yes
Trinidad & Tobago	No Communist Party	-	-	-
Uruguay	Uruguay Communist Party	22,000	Pro-Moscow	No
	National Liberation Movement (Tupamaros)	800/1000	Independent	No

1	2	3	4	5
Venezuela	Communist Party of Venezuela	8,000	Pro-Moscow	Yes
	Movement to Socialism	4,500	Independent	Yes
	Union for Advancement	Not Known <sup>e</sup>	Communist Front	Yes

\* = various ideologies; \*\* = with violent faction; a = less independent and more pro-Moscow than any time since the Cuban Revolution; b = unofficial estimates; c = the PPP is dominated by approximately 100 hard core Communist but has electorate following; \*\*\* = resulted from a merger in 1968 of Pro-Moscow and Pro-Havana line parties and is inactive; d = formerly Nicaraguan Socialist Workers Party, but the name was changed in 1971; e = during the December 1968 elections, the Union for Advancement obtained 103,368 votes.

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence & Research, "World Strength of Communist Party Organizations, in James D. Theberge, 1966 Soviet Presence in Latin America (New York, N.Y., 1974), pp. 95-99.



TABLE 4: CHECKLIST OF COMMUNIST PARTIES OF LATIN AMERICA, 1975

Country	Population	Membership	Per cent of vote Seats in Legislature	Sino/Soviet Dispute
Argentina	25,030,000	147,000	-(1973); 2 of 243 chamber seats	Pro-Soviet
Bolivia	5,272,000	450	No elections	Pro-Sino
Brazil	107,613,000	7,000	-(1974);	Pro-Sino
Canada	22,781,000	2,500	-(1974); no seats	Pro-Sino
Chile	10,584,000	100,000	No elections	Pro-Soviet
Colombia	22,217,000	12,000	-(1974); 2 of 199 chamber seats	Pro-Sino
Costa Rica	1,968,000	1,500	-(1974); 2 of 56 seats	Pro-Soviet
Cuba	9,252,000	200,000	No elections	Pro-Soviet
Dominican Republic	4,697,000	1,500	-(1974);	Factions
Ecuador	6,705,000	600	No elections	Pro-Soviet
El Salvador	4,100,000	175	-(1974);	Pro-Soviet
Guatemala	5,853,000	750	-(1974);	"
Guadelope	352,000	3,000	-(1973); 10 of 31 General Councils	"
Guyana	811,000	100	26.0 (1973); 11 of 53 seats	"
Haiti	4,569,000	150	-(1973);	"

1	2	3	4	5
Honduras	2,749,000	750	No elections	Pro-Soviet
Martinique	347,000	1000	-(1973); 4 of 36 General Councils Seats	Pro-Soviet
Mexico	58,075	5000	-(1973); no seats	Independent
Nicaragua	2,153,000	150	-(1972);	Pro-Soviet
Panama	1,668,000	500	-(1972);	Pro-Soviet
Paraguay	2,547,000	3500	-(1973)	Pro-Sino
Peru	14,819,000	3200	No elections	Pro-Sino
Puerto Rico	900,000	125	-(1972); no seats	Pro-Soviet
U.S.A.	215,000,000	15,000	-(1974); no seats	Pro-Soviet
Uruguay	3,064,000	30,000	No elections	Pro-Soviet
Venezuela	11,980,000	6000	-(1973); 11 (MAS-9; PVC-2) chamber seats and 2 (MAS) of 47 Senate seats	Factions

Source: Richard Staar, ed., Yearbook of International Communist Affairs, 1976.

TABLE 5: CHECK LIST OF LATIN AMERICAN PARTIES &amp; FRONTS, 1982

Country	Population	Membership	Per cent of votes Seats in Legislature	Status	Position
Argentina	28,130,000	80,000 claim	No election scheduled	Prescribed	Soviet
Bolivia	5,490,000	500 est. <sup>f</sup>	-(1980); election voided	"	"
Brazil	124,800,000	6000 "	-(1978) <sup>g</sup>	" <sup>c</sup>	"
Canada	24,200,000	2500 " <sup>h</sup>	0.05(1980); none	Legal	"
Chile	11,162,000	20,000 "	Elections promised	Prescribed	"
Colombia	25,217,000	12,000 "	1,9(1978); 3 of 311	Legal	"
Costa Rica PVC	2,332,000	3200 "	2.7(1978); 3 of 37	Legal	"
Cuba	9,800,000	434,000 claim	-(1981); all of 499	in power	"
Dominican Republic	5,855,000	4500 est. <sup>i</sup>	-(1978); none	Legal	"
Ecuador	8,275,000	1000 "	3.2(1979); none <sup>j</sup>	Legal	"
El Salvador	4,610,000	800 " <sup>k</sup>	(1976)	Prescribed	"
Guadelope	304,000	3000 "	38.6(1981); 1 of 3 in Paris <sup>d</sup>	Legal	"
Guatemala(PGT)	7,310,000	750 "	(1974)	Prescribed	"
Guyana (PPP)	857,000	Unknown	20.4(1980); 10 of 65	Legal	"
Haiti(PUCH)	5,923,000	350 est.	(1973)	Prescribed	"
Honduras	3,940,000	1500 "	(1980)	"	"
Jamaica(WPJ)	2,268,000	Unknown	-(1980); none	Legal	"

1	2	3	4	5	6
Martinique	302,000	1000 est.	6.4(1981); none in Paris <sup>d</sup>	Legal	Soviet
Mexico (PUSM)	69,100,000	112,000 claim	5.4(1979); 18 of 400 <sup>1</sup>	Legal	Soviet
Nicaragua (PSN) <sup>m</sup>	2,559,000	250 est.	Election promised 1985	Legal	Soviet
Panama (PPP)	1,928,000	550 "	-(1978); none	Legal	"
Paraguay	3,268,000	3500 "	(1973)	Prescribed	"
Peru	18,119,000	3000 " <sup>n</sup>	2.8(1980); 4 seats <sup>o</sup>	Legal	"
Puerto Rico <sup>p</sup>	3,258,000	125 "	-(1980); none	Legal	"
U.S.A.	229,700,000	11,000 "	0.01(1980); none	Legal	"
Uruguay	2,944,000	7000 "	No elections since 1971	Prescribed	"
Venezuela	17,913,000	4500 "	1.4(1978); 1 of 195 <sup>q</sup>	Legal	"

Note: e = 'prescribed' is not an entirely satisfactory term. The local communist party may more accurately be said to fail to meet constitutional requirements for participation in national elections.

d = An overseas department of France entitled to elect 3 deputies to the French National Assembly.

f = The PCB is only one of a number of leftist organizations; others include the FCB/Marxist-Leninist, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, the Revolutionary Party of Bolivia Workers, and various Trotskyite groupings.

g = At least 5 communists were elected under other party labels.

h = Membership estimates is for all leftist groups, the pro-Beijing CPC/Marxist-Leninist being stringer than the CPC electorally getting 0.13 per cent of the vote in 1980.

- i = The membership estimate is for all of a dozen or so Marxist groups.
- j = The Maoist Radical MPD won 4.8 per cent of the vote and one seat.
- k = Membership estimates is for combined political and guerrilla strength.
- l = Of the PCEF this party is only one of five leftist grouping comprising the farabundo marti National Liberation Front conducting civil war against the El Salvadorian Government.
- m = This party restricts its activities to the domestic scene. The FSLN represents Nicaragua at Communist meetings abroad. The pro-Beijing Communist Party of Nicaragua claims 1,200 members.
- n = Pro-Beijing groups total another 1,500 members.
- o = The data are for the United Left - and electoral coalition of the Peruvian Communist Party.
- p = The Puerto Rican Socialist Party is also pro-Moscow and about the same size as the PCP.
- q = Overall, the Venezuelan Left Garnered 9.0 per cent of the vote in 1978. The Movement to Socialism (MAS) won 11 seats; the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) 4; the Peoples Electoral Movement (MEP) 3; the Venezuelan Communist Party 1; and the Communist Vanguard 1.

## CHAPTER III

SOVIET ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE CARIBBEAN  
AND CENTRAL AMERICA

The Third World has a special economic importance for the Soviet Union; it has served as a market for Soviet economic goods, sales of military weapons, supplies and equipments. It has also been a source of raw materials, and most importantly, it has created an opportunity for economic integration with the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc. Since the last decade and even now the Third World's problems have increased substantially. Growth in the price of oil since 1973, drop in the value of local exports and crisis in credit structures have aggravated the economic situation prevailing in the Third World including the Caribbean and Central America. The Soviet Union has tried to capitalize on this dissent in an effort to discredit the West and win the favour of the developing countries. In their political attacks the Soviets have emphasised the "neo-colonialist" nature of this economic relations, particularly its inequality and injustice. But more importantly they have pointed out the important role that the Third World resources have played in maintaining the world capitalist system and the growing dependency of the West on these resources.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Otto Rheingold, "Some Features of the Contemporary Crisis of the Capitalist Economy" Kommunist (Moscow), no. 7, May 1974, translated in Junior Publications Research Service (Washington), 62292, June 2, 1974, p. 145.

Related to Soviet economic interests in the Third World is the Soviet insistence on putting forward their brand of socialism as a model for development and for building socialism. According to a noted Sovietologist, Leo Tansky, the underlying purpose of Soviet economic aid, was to convince Third World countries that the Soviet Socialist system offered the only solution to their economic problems.<sup>2</sup> Consequently the Soviet model has appealed to many developing countries, and as aptly explained by Bhabani Sengupta: Where Soviet strategies proved to be more or less successful, the anti-imperialist struggle provided "the mutual value responsiveness": Soviet aid met felt needs; political and military support helped achieve, sustain and defend shared objectives; Soviet global interests and the regional interests of the developing countries converged. The entire process helped to establish orientations. Thus, the Soviet Union, "is seen as a friend, a great power that seeks not subjugation but interdependence, and the socialist system as something to be learned from, to be adapted to local conditions".<sup>3</sup>

In this connection the Soviet Union continued to point out Cuba as an inspirational example to the Third World in

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2. Leo Tansky, "Soviet Foreign Aid", in Joint Economic Commission's Report, Soviet Prospects for the Seventies, (Washington), 1973, p. 767
  3. Bhabani Sen Gupta, "An Approach to Study Soviet Policies for the Third World", in Roger Kanet & Donna Bahry eds., Soviet Economic & Political Relations with the Developing World (New York, N.Y., 1974), p. 30.

general and to the countries of the Caribbean and Central America in particular. Thus, International Affairs wrote:

"The prestige of the first socialist state in the Western Hemisphere has become as it were a catalyst for the increased activity of a wide movement among the Latin American peoples to restructure inter-American relations on the basis of the principles of peaceful co-existence and the recognition of the right to countries with different social systems to exist, dispose of their own natural resources, do away with the domination of the multinational monopolies, and establish independent economies".<sup>4</sup>

Soviet analysts considered events such as the formation of the new Latin American Economic System (SELA) in October 1975, under the initiatives of Mexico and Venezuela supported by Cuba and several other Caribbean states as a sign of decreasing role of the U.S. in their affairs. The Soviets have pointed out the conspicuous absence of the U.S. in Economic Commission for Latin America, and its impact on the weakening of the U.S. dominated Organisation of American States (OAS).. They see this as an example of a trend towards "unity and solidarity founded on the realisation by the peoples of the continent that they have a common historical destiny and must act in a united front against imperialist expansion".<sup>5</sup>

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4. D. Lozinov, "The Liberation Struggle in Latin America", International Affairs, no. 8, August 1977, p. 39

5. S. Mishin, "Latin America: Two Trends of Development", International Affairs, no. 6, June 1976, p. 54. The members of SELA include Cuba and 22 other Latin American and ...



Other Soviet cited evidence of this type included the formation of the joint Caribbean Shipping Company of eight countries (NAMUCAR), which is seen as further evidence of a successful integrational trend in Latin America leading toward accelerated weakening "of imperialism's position"<sup>6</sup> of major prominence in the Soviet perception is Caribbean raw materials diplomacy which is opposed to U.S. private business control. Guyana's nationalization of the REynold Guyana Mines in January 1975 brought the country's bauxite mining industry fully under state control is one example. Jamaica, too was singled out for special attention from 1974 when it signed an agreement with the Kaiser Aluminium and Chemical Corporation a U.S. firm for 51 per cent shareholding by the Jamaican Government. Following this Kingston announced its warming economic long range plans with the Soviet Union in July 1977 but did not make much headway because in 1980 the progressive regime of Micheal Manley was defeated at the polls by the more conservative party of Edward Seaga. Relations with Guyana made a start with Guyana and the Soviet Union signing a major economic, scientific and technological agreement in

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... Caribbean countries. The main aims of SELA are to reinforce regional cooperation and to help coordinate the functions of existing groups such as the Andean Group and the Central American Common Market. The Soviets strongly support SELA.

6. Ibid, p. 57.

June 1977.<sup>7</sup>

A special mention must be made of the Cuban relationship with these two countries. Since Guyana and Jamaica showed a willingness to adopt the socialist model of development, the Cuban model was the obvious choice. Thus, throughout the 1970s medical teams went out to Guyana and Jamaica, constructing school and mini dams with Cuban help. Scholarships for developing sports facilities were given to Jamaica as a means to bind the two countries together. In May 1977, Cuba and Jamaica signed a one year economic and technical cooperation agreement.

The most important Soviet trading partner in the Caribbean region is Cuba. Economically, Cuba is tied as closely as the East European countries to the USSR. In 1972, Cuba became a member of the Soviet-sponsored Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). From then, Cuba became a showcase of the Soviet model to the Third World. The significance of Soviet oil shipments to Cuba for example, is described a Soviet magazine as "hard to overestimate, since practically the entire functioning of Cuba's national economy is based on energy supplies from the Soviet Union".<sup>8</sup> The favourable prices for oil and the subsidy paid to Cuba for the bulk of its sugar exports going to the Soviet bloc,

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7. Granma Weekly Review (Havana), June 26, 1977

8. V. Burmestrov, "The First Soviet-Cuban Long-Term Trade Agreement (1976-80). Its results", Foreign Trade (Moscow), Jan., 1982, p. 9.

bring out clearly the Soviet support to Cuban economy.

One source has estimated that the USSR paid 44¢ a pound for Cuban sugar when the world market price for this commodity was about 10¢. (See Table below).

Sugar Prices in the International Market & the USSR-Cuban Agreement (In U.S. cents per pound)

Years	International Market Price	Soviet price paid to Cuba	Difference
1970	3.75	6.11	+ 2.36
1971	4.53	6.11	+ 1.58
1972	7.43	6.11	- 1.32
1973	9.63	12.02	+ 2.39
1974	29.96	19.64	-10.32
1975	20.50	30.40	+ 9.90
1976	11.57	30.95	+19.38
1977	8.10	35.73	+27.63
1978	7.81	40.78	+32.97
1979	9.65	44.00	+34.35

Source: Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "The Economy", in Jorge I. Domínguez, ed., Cuba: Internal & International Affairs (Beverly Hills, Ca., 1982), p. 120.

Soviet-Cuban trade relations as they developed gave rise to broadening economic, scientific and technical cooperation that embraced all the key branches of the Cuban national economy. A qualitatively new stage in economic

cooperation began between the two countries with the signing in February 1976 of the first long term trade agreement for the years 1976-80. As the Tables below show, the five year period resulted in goods exchanged amounting to nearly 19,000 million roubles. The main imports of Cuba's from the Soviet Union were wheat and flour while, the main imports of the USSR from Cuba were sugar and nickel concentrate. There was a drastic reduction in the export of sugar in 1980 because of a sugar cane disease.

Trade Turnover Between the USSR & Cuba  
(1976-80) in Millions of Roubles

Turnover	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Total	2,589	2,872	3,452	4,169	4,249	4,266
Soviet export	1,141	1,351	1,635	1,947	2,113	2,288
Import	1,448	1,521	1,817	2,222	2,136	1,978

Source: V. Burmistrov, no. 10, p. 7-11.

Soviet Exports in Cuba's Total Imports  
(In per cent) 1976-80

Oil & Oil Products	10
Wheat & Flour	94
Fertilizers	91
Ferrous Metals	69
Car	82
Trucks	70
Buses	37
Bus Chassis	78
Metal Cutting Lathes	27

Source: V. Burmistrov, p. 7.

Structure of Soviet Exports to Cuba, 1976-80  
(in million roubles, with relative share)

Family group of goods	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Total	1,351	1,635	1,974	2,113	2,288
Machines and equipment	367	447	560	636	741
Oil & Oil Products	288	375	490	578	612
Ferrous Metals	82	93.9	101.3	106.1	106
Chemicals	12	12.2	12.8	17.9	21.4
Fertilizers	36.3	48.4	55	47.4	47.9
Timber	26.8	32.3	42.5	34.3	41.4
Raw Cotton	23.7	24	28.9	26.6	31.7
Grain	62.8	91.9	64.4	82.5	94.1
Flour	67.2	67.3	39.5	56.7	57.7
Other Food Stuff	89.6	107.2	111.3	127.8	108.0
Household Goods & recreational facilities	46.4	58.6	62	54.7	72.3

Source: V. Burmistrov, p. 7.

Structure of Soviet Imports from Cuba, 1976-80  
(in million roubles)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Total	1521	1,817	2,222	2,136	1,978
Nickel conc.	94	117	76.8	63.8	81.9
Raw sugar	1398	1675	2117	2038	1858
Citrus Fruits	4	5.2	9.2	10.1	13.9
Rum & Liqueurs	13.5	9.8	9.8	11.1	16.1
Other goods	115	10	9.2	13	7.8

Source: V. Burmistrov, p. 10.

Thus, what can be perceived from the above tables is that the Soviet Union plays a vital role in Cuba's economy. This is often to the loss rather than gain of the Soviet Union as seen in the case of sugar prices. This loss however is compensated in political terms, while making Cuba dependent on it economically. This was amply proved when Cuba provided manpower especially military manpower for Soviet activities in both Africa and Latin America. More importantly, Cuba stands as a showcase of the Soviet model of development to the developing countries. This gain stands especially true for the Caribbean and Central American region where the Cuban model has been adapted. This is to be seen in the case of Nicaragua and Grenada, since 1979. On November 6, 1979, shortly after the overthrow of the Somoza Government, Politbureau member Andrey Kirilenko remarked that, "Soviet people rejoice that in recent years the people of Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Grenada have broken the chains of imperialist domination and have embarked on a road to independent development".<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet Union moved rapidly to establish diplomatic, economic and other relations with the new regime in Nicaragua. On March 17, 1980, the first major Sandinista

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9. Pravda (Moscow), November 7, 1979.

delegation arrived in Moscow on a journey that also included stops in Bulgaria, GDR and Czechoslovakia. The visit brought a variety of agreements on trade relations, technical cooperation, airline and consular ties. In May 1982, Nicaragua joined the Soviet led Intersputnik telecommunications consortium.<sup>10</sup>

Of special significance is the agreement signed between Nicaragua and the head of the Soviet State Planning Commission, N.K. Baybakov which allowed the Soviet Union considerable influence over Nicaragua's future economic course, because the agreement is about cooperation at the basic planning level. In September 1981, the Soviet Union concluded an economic aid, technical cooperation, radio-TV and fishery agreements with Managua. An economic protocol provided for a US \$ 50 million Soviet credit supplementing US \$ 100 million in credits from Libya, US \$ 64 million from Cuba and over US \$ 50 million from GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria extended during 1981-82.<sup>11</sup> The next milestone came in May 1982 when new commercial agreements between the two countries were signed. According to the agreement, the

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10. Radio Managua, May 20, 1982, in FBIS-Latin America, May 21, 1982, p.p/22

11. On the Soviet credit see TASS, September 4, 1981, in FBIS Daily Report Soviet Union, Sept. 8, 1982, p. K/2. On the Libyan credit & the Cuban credit see Radio Managua April 25, 1981 in FBIS-Latin America, Apr. 27, 1981, p. P/8. On the GDR credit see Radio Managua, June 6, 1981, ibid, June 10, 1981, p. P/17. On the Czech credit see El Nueva Diario (Managua), Dec., 19, 1981, ibid., Dec. 28, 1981, p. P/6. On the Bulgarian credit see Radio Managua, Apr. 8, 1982, in ibid, Apr. 14, 1982, p. P/22.

Soviet Union had granted an additional US \$ 100 million credit and had contracted to expand facilities for ship repair at the Pacific port of San Juan del Sur.<sup>12</sup>

Grenada, too, has become the beneficiary of Soviet aid. As a capstone of the first visit to the Soviet Union by Grenada's leader Maurice Bishop, a series of official agrrrments were signed in July 1982. However, internal rivalry and the consequent US invasion of Grenada in early 1984 has prevented further economic cooperation between the two nations.

A mention must be made of the Soviet built/assisted projects in this region, These are located largely in Cuba - four elevator wharfs at Havana port, the Mariel 500 MV electropower station, the nitrogen fertilizer factory built in Nuevitas, the Rente and Havan thermal power stations, the Juragua atomic power station being built, the Jose Marti metallurgical enterprise, nickel factory in Punta Gorda, the the petroluem refinery in Santiago de Cuba, the boiler workshop in Sagua la Grande, a tandem workshop at the Planta Mecancia engineering works in Santa Clara and the Tasia engineering works. However, other Soviet aided projects are

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12. Radio Managua Domestic Service, May 10, 1982, in FBIS-Latin America, May 11, 1982, pp. P/8-10.



located in Nicaragua and Grenada. In Nicaragua these included radio and TV factories and the building of port repair and expansion at San Juan del Sur. The most important project undertaken in Grenada is the joint Soviet-Cuban aided airport being constructed, at the cost of \$ 70 million.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the Soviet Union's economic relations are substantial with Cuba and with those countries who have adapted the socialist model of development. Although at present its economic interaction with other countries is limited for a variety of reasons, nevertheless, these could be made meaningful in the future, if an opportunity arose. This would largely depend on the East-West relations and more importantly on the ability of Soviet resources. Given its own economic difficulties such an eventuality is doubtful.

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13. William McWhirter, "Grenada: Revolution in the Shade", Time (New York, N.Y.), May 2, 1983, pp. 14-15.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

Soviet policy in the Caribbean must be assessed in the global context. An analysis of the Soviet Union's objectives and policy instruments in isolation from the global and regional arena may impute more power to the USSR than in fact actually exists. Thus, if viewed in the overall Soviet Third World policy, the Caribbean and Central America hold only marginal interest for the Soviet Union. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Soviet Union has given no importance to the region. - Indeed, in the 1970s and especially in the latter half of the decade, the Soviet Union began a distinct policy in the region, as the decolonization process began gathering momentum. Although the Soviet Union was a new comer there, with Cuban help it was able to exploit the socio-economic malaise and the anti-U.S. sentiment prevailing in the region. In doing so they have employed a variety of tactics: peaceful and legal, violent or a combination of both.

In the first place, what factors illustrate that the region is of low priority within the overall Soviet Third World policy? A primary indicator is noted in the tactics or instruments employed by the Soviet Union in exploiting opportunities in the Caribbean and Central America. Similar opportunities created by crises in countries such

as Angola, Ethiopia and Afghanistan have resulted in direct Soviet or Cuban military support. This militancy in Soviet policy is missing in the Caribbean and Central America. Nevertheless, this cautiousness in Soviet policy towards the region has been punctuated with exception. According to a White Paper published by U.S. on El Salvador Soviet policy is marked by greater assertiveness and involvement rather than a cautious approach. This assertion has been challenged within the U.S. itself. On the whole active Soviet military support in the area is still unpronounced and El Salvador could still be regarded as an exception rather than the rule. The reasons have already been stated in earlier chapters: the geographic remoteness the area shares with the Soviet borders and hence its unimportance in strategic terms; and the proximity of the region with the U.S.A. leading to the understanding that the area is its "vital sphere of influence".

As regards political support for movements considered to be "progressive" in the Soviet view we find that the support was not consistent. To elucidate we find that Soviet backing for the Panama Canal issue and the Puerto Rican independence movement was lukewarm, while it has actively backed "progressive" forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador. On the other hand revolutionary forces in Guatemala and Honduras which merited Soviet support were largely ignored. Similarly, the Soviet Union has not

concentrated its efforts in building communist parties in the region. Its relations with those that are already in existence are formal. The trend of Soviet political backing suggests that ideology is not the prime motivation of its policy in the region. The low profile maintained by the Soviet Union in the area suggests that it was interested in maintaining a presence in the region considered to be of vital importance for the U.S.A. Thus, the leverage acquired here could be used to bring the U.S. to the negotiating table, in which the Soviet Union is vitally interested.

At the economic level we have seen that the Soviet interaction with the region is on a minimal plane. It has substantial economic ties with select countries especially Cuba. If the Soviet Union has not been able to develop meaningful economic relations with other countries it is because of its own paucity of resources. The economic problems in the region are so gigantic that the Soviet Union is unable to come to their rescue. Its own economic difficulties makes it even more difficult for the Soviet Union. Hence it would not be wrong to conclude that for the present it is content with the economic ties prevailing between these countries and the West. It is willing to encourage their assertiveness vis-a-vis the West without helping them in any way.

From a long term perspective the goal of Soviet policy would be to project its power in this region much to the detriment of the U.S.A. However, for the present and in the coming years the Soviet Union would not like to risk a direct confrontation with the U.S. That is why its approach is cautious and its presence could be termed as a low profile one. Besides, the Soviet Union faces a major handicap in the region: it is one of living down its image of an expansionist power. The bogey of a 'communist threat' or a 'red takeover' is still taken quite seriously in the Caribbean Basin. To take an example, a crucial setback to the Soviet-Cuban endeavour was the October 1980 defeat of the left-leaning regime of Michael Manley by the more pro-Western party of Edward Seaga. Seaga skillfully used the bogey of a Soviet-Cuban takeover to his advantage. Additional setbacks in the region include the electoral defeats of left-leaning parties with close Cuban ties on the small Caribbean islands of St. Vincent, Dominica and Antigua where all the parties who won were rightist parties.

The future of the policy lies largely on the fate of East-West relations. The limits and the constraints to a more positive Soviet policy in the region lie in the still pervasive U.S. economic power over the region and the Soviet Union's weakness on Third World development issues. There is also the questionable strength of communism

and the local communist parties. These are more involved in internal power strifes than in realising the potential of local revolts. If the Soviet Union is able to overcome these difficulties there would be a greater scope for relations with this region, for there is a genuine grievance against the U.S.-supported dictatorships in the local states.

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