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## THESIS

USSR LOCAL WAR DOCTRINE  
AS RATIONALE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE SOVIET CTOL AIRCRAFT CARRIER

by

Stanley G. Stefansky

June 1985

Thesis Advisor:

D. C. Daniel

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USSR Local War Doctrine as Rationale for the  
Development of the Soviet CTOL Aircraft Carrier

by

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Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

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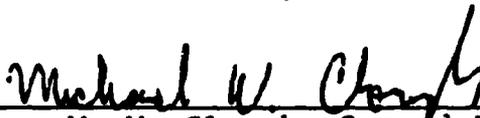
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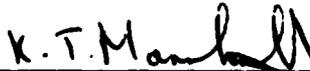
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to determine whether the apparent shift in Soviet "local war" doctrine, reflecting an increased willingness to involve Soviet military force in Third World crises, provided an important rationale for the construction of the first legitimate attack aircraft carrier. Following a historical chronology of Soviet perceptions about aircraft carriers, this study details Soviet thought on aircraft carriers in general and their utility in particular, during the period 1969-1977; the juncture wherein the apparent shift in their doctrine and the formal decision to build the carrier occurred. It is the contention of this writer that the nearly simultaneous occurrence of these events was more than mere coincidence. Moscow has long understood the utility of navies as a political and military tool in Third World crises and may have decided to provide this branch of their armed forces with increased capabilities to intervene more decisively and to effect terms favorable to Soviet foreign policy objectives.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Although Soviet naval leaders have long recognized the capabilities of aircraft carriers, many Western naval analysts, including Norman Polmar, Michael MccGwire, Charles Peterson, and Dov Zakheim, believe that the formal decision to build a class of such ships did not occur until the mid-1970s. Hence, it appears plausible that the rationale for this decision can be discerned by analyzing Soviet military writings of the period prior to the decision and by studying the political and military context wherein this decision was made. Events occurring at the time influenced Soviet doctrine and reflected a reappraisal of the role of aircraft carriers in the Soviet navy.

This paper examines the period of the late 1960s to the mid 1970s in Soviet history in an attempt to discern some of the rationale for the construction of the Soviet attack CTOL aircraft carrier and to identify possible missions for the ship. Chapter II examines the history of Soviet thought towards aircraft carriers.

Many factors played a part in the Soviet decision not to build a true strike aircraft carrier. An examination of secondary sources concerning Soviet thought on naval doctrine from 1917 through 1970 reveals that among these problems were economic constraints and technological deficiencies. At times

(especially postwar periods) these played a role, but overall the main reason was carrier construction simply did not fit into their doctrine--one of defense. Substantial Soviet economic growth in the 1930s and again in the 1950s was not accompanied by any formal Kremlin decision to build aircraft carriers. Therefore it seems plausible that although capabilities to build were there, the main reason for Soviet hesitation was doctrinal. However, as articulated by the Soviets, doctrine is not static, but dynamic. This is especially evident in Soviet writings on local war. Chapter III traces the evolution of Soviet local war doctrine.

Before the 1970s there was very little direct Soviet involvement in Third World conflicts. A factor inhibiting a more aggressive role for Soviet military forces in Third World crises was the Politburo's fear that local war would necessarily escalate to world war. These perceptions changed when the Soviets achieved an ambiguous strategic nuclear parity with the U.S. in the early 1970s, which they thought would act as a deterrent to U.S. escalation of these local wars. Therefore, local wars could be managed and contained. Furthermore, as years passed, the Politburo evidently concluded that in order to protect fledgling socialist gains they would have to do more militarily. These two factors provided the motivation for greater Soviet military involvement in defense of their state interests. An examination of Soviet thought on local wars reveals that a

shift reflecting the need for a greater military role in such conflicts occurred in the early 1970s. Consistent with this enhanced military role, the Soviets sought to give their navy greater capabilities with which to achieve its seemingly more ambitious political and military objectives.

These greater capabilities were to be satisfied by providing the Soviet navy with aircraft carriers. The carrier construction sequence in the Soviet Union is discussed in Chapter IV. Though the first two attempts to deploy air capable ships were designed primarily to counter Western submarines, they found these platforms ill-suited for the power projection role required in distant conflicts. This became evident during Soviet involvement in local wars when Soviet ships were incapable of decisively affecting the tactical situation on shore.

An examination of Soviet naval involvement in Third World crises follows in Chapter V. The Soviet decision to build aircraft carriers in the early 1970s reflected, in part, a shift in Soviet military doctrine pertaining to Third World crises. Historically, their naval doctrine was strictly defensive allowing no position for extremely expensive aircraft carriers. The object was to defend the water boundaries of the homeland. In the 1960s, the Soviets practiced a forward strategy essentially projecting their naval forces to operating areas distant from the Soviet Union. Originally implemented to counter American strategic nuclear strike

systems based at sea, they found naval forces effective in pursuing their foreign policy goals in the developing world. The Soviets saw a need to develop power projection capabilities and, after observing U.S. aircraft carriers in local wars, came to the conclusion that this would be an effective weapon.

Chapter VI examines original source information on Soviet thought about the use of aircraft carriers in local war. Many Soviet analysts argue: (1) that aircraft carriers are the only viable means of providing air support for distant naval operations; (2) that aircraft carriers are the only means of providing forward bases for Soviet aircraft when foreign bases cannot be guaranteed; and (3) that by making it possible to bring Soviet airpower to bear on distant shores, modern attack aircraft carriers are considered crucial in determining the favorable outcome of local conflicts.

Thus, it appears that the Soviet decision to construct their first attack aircraft carrier followed a shift in Soviet ideas on local war and greater military involvement in such wars. This writer contends that the apparent simultaneous shift in Soviet ideas on local war and the formal decision to construct the carrier were more than mere coincidence. A causal relation between the two is suggested. This is not to say the local war role of carriers is the only mission. Indeed it is not. But it is one of the major reasons Soviet decisionmakers chose to build them.

## II. HISTORY OF SOVIET THOUGHT ON AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

### A. INTRODUCTION

Although at times poor economic conditions and the lack of technology played a part in the Soviet decision not to build aircraft carriers, it is this writer's contention that the primary reason for Soviet reluctance to construct these ships was doctrinal. During the early years, the Soviet Union was economically too weak to support such large ship construction. However, once the economy had improved and Stalin's plans for industrial progress were underway, the means to build large ships and carriers were available. Nevertheless, the Soviets showed no interest. Khrushchev was later averse to large ship construction and wanted a missile and submarine-based fleet. So again, the opportunity for building aircraft carriers was not realized by the USSR. The explanation for this disinterest in aircraft carriers must rest on an examination of Soviet doctrine. Throughout this entire period Soviet naval doctrine, under the aegis of Soviet military doctrine, remained defensive with Soviet naval forces tethered to the homeland within range of land-based aircraft. Therefore at this time, a strike aircraft carrier, no matter how capable Russia was of producing one, was superfluous.

## B. INTERWAR SOVIET IDEAS ON AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

Prior to the Third Five Year Plan (1937-1941), there were few Soviet advocates of large surface ship construction outside of select navy circles. Though several Soviet naval leaders, after viewing the development of the aircraft carrier in the British, American and Japanese navies during the inter-war period, understood the importance these ships would play in future wars, the Soviet Union was economically too weak and technologically deficient to embark of a major ship-building program until the mid-1930's. The immediate post Brest-Litovsk Russia was on the verge of economic collapse and facing serious threats to governmental survival. The ascendancy of the Bolsheviks via a palace coup and Russia's humiliating withdrawal from World War I incited a civil war which would engulf the country for the next two years. Even before the civil war had ended, British, French, and American troops intervened in the new Soviet state, and a newly established Poland invaded in an attempt to annex the Ukraine. The debilitating effects of years of war coupled with the revolutionary economic policies of the Bolsheviks facilitated the near collapse of the Soviet economy in the early 1920's. Sharp decreases in industrial and agricultural production fomented popular dissatisfaction inspiring numerous peasant uprisings and encouraging worker discontent. The Kronstadt Mutiny of February and March 1921 led to the liberalization of certain sectors of the economy under the auspices of the

New Economic Plan (NEP). This temporary retreat from communism was necessary for economic rehabilitation.

Securing the Bolshevik "homeland" compelled the Soviets to formulate their own military doctrine and establish the forces to implement it. According to the Party stalwarts, such a strategy should be patterned after the military experiences of partisan warfare devised during the Great Civil War and distantly divorced from that of the capitalist countries. [Ref. 1: p. 19] Moreover, it was thought that the limited utility demonstrated by ships-of-line during World War I was indicative of their impending decline. Skepticism arose concerning command of distant seas as a viable naval strategy in future crises. Thus dreadnoughts were neither sought nor required to defend the water boundaries of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Navy was so weakened by years of warfare and neglect that it was forced to adopt a purely defensive strategy. This sad state of affairs was reflected in the 1921 decision by the Commission for the reorganization of the Navy to maintain only one battleship in operational status while remanding all others to the reserve. [Ref. 2: p. 13] Advocates of major ship construction were quickly refuted by superiors with statements such as the following from the Soviet Navy Chief of Staff in 1921:

Defense of the borders of the State from the water boundary is the cornerstone of our present day naval policy; for the time being we will relinquish broader tasks....Any

other interpretation of the direction of naval policy must be absolutely and categorically refuted as not corresponding to the economic conditions of the country. [Ref. 1: p. 7]

In a 1972 Morskoi Sbornik article, Gorshkov described the pitiful shape of the Soviet Navy immediately after the Great Civil War. Paraphrasing V.M. Frunze, Gorshkov asserts:

It was the lot of the Navy to sustain particularly severe blows in the overall course of the Revolution and in the events of the civil war. As a result of them we lost the largest and best part of its material, lost a vast number of experienced and knowledgeable officers who played an even greater role in the life and work of the Navy than all of the other forms of weapons, we lost a whole series of naval bases, and finally we lost the main nucleus of the other ranks of Red Navy personnel. In short, all this meant that we had no fleet. [Ref. 2: p. 13]

Much of the Russian Navy had either been destroyed during the course of World War I or had defected during the civil war that followed. Major remnants of the Russian Black Seas Fleet, under the command of the White Rear Admiral Kedrov, departed the naval bases at Sevastopol and Nikolayev en route to the Algerian port of Bizerte (then under the French flag) during October and November 1920. The ships arrived in Bizerte between December 1920 and February 1921. Several were used as floating hotels and schools. This fleet also served as a Russian government in exile until Paris officially recognized Moscow in October 1924. [Ref. 3: p. 346]

Thus, an economically deficient Russia served as a back-drop for Soviet military planning during the first two decades of existence of the Soviet state. Naval ship construction was closely in tune with economic progress.

Consequently years of economic recuperation instilled life into the proponents of a "small war" navy of coastal defense forces based on submarines, light surface craft and land-based aircraft, and silenced the Mahanian-inspired admirals of the "old guard" who espoused the virtues of the dreadnought and the naval imperative of gaining command of the sea. Hence, this new doctrine was embraced largely for reasons of economic expediency. Heavy industry, on which large scale naval armaments construction so crucially depends, was not yet capable of supporting the construction of large surface combatants, aircraft carriers or otherwise. This new naval defensive strategy was accepted by the Soviet leadership in the 1920's and it continued to dominate naval thinking into the mid 1930's when economic development was advanced enough to support a major naval construction effort.

Since Great Britain, a major naval power, was viewed as the most likely adversary in any future war, the Soviet government undertook prudent steps to defend against seaborne attack. Significant economic development during the First Five Year Plan enabled the construction of several major surface vessels during the Second Five Year Plan. During this period, the government allotted funds for the modernization of several battleships left relatively undamaged by the war, and the construction of six heavy cruisers of the Kirov class. Moreover, submarines and light surface forces were also constructed and, by the end of the Second Five Year Plan,

the Soviet Union possessed the largest submarine fleet in the world. [Ref. 4: p. 220] It is doubtful the construction of aircraft carriers was seriously considered during this period. Instead, Stalin was content to strengthen his coastal defensive forces and army, and broaden Russia's heavy industrial base.

In 1937 Stalin set out to construct a much more powerful navy. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov at the first session of the Supreme Soviet voiced the necessity for an ocean-going navy stating, "The mighty Soviet power must have a navy both on sea and ocean commensurate with its interests and worthy of our great cause." [Ref. 5: p. 142] Admiral Kuznetsov, then Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy described the proposed shipbuilding program for the Third Five Year Plan in his memoirs:

It was decided to build battleships, heavy cruisers, and other classes of surface warships; that is a big surface navy. A large number of submarines were also to be built. Not excluded either was the construction of aircraft carriers; rather they were only postponed to the last year of the [Third] Five Year Plan. This was explained I recall by the complexities of construction of this class and the aircraft designed especially for them. [Ref. 1: p. 31]

Thus according to Kuznetsov, the construction of aircraft carriers was apparently approved by Stalin and the Defense Ministry. Soviet naval analysts indicate that the construction of four aircraft carriers was planned with the first keel to be laid down in 1942 and all scheduled for completion by 1948. [Ref. 1: p. 32] But events discussed

later in this chapter raise doubts as to the veracity of claims that Soviet carriers were solidly planned into the Soviet defense budget for this period. Kuznetsov even admits that Stalin held grave reservations about the decision.

[Ref. 1: p. 32]

Stalin's support for large ships, especially battleships and cruisers, is undeniable. According to Admiral Kuznetsov, "Stalin had a special and curious passion for heavy cruisers."

[Ref. 1: p. 34] But a curious passion was not the only thing that convinced Stalin to embark on a large scale naval rearmament campaign. The London Naval Treaty of 1936, although signed by many of the Western naval powers, was stillborn due to the refusal of one of its major participants, Japan, to sign the treaty, thereby inciting an unlimited naval arms buildup between the major naval powers of the time. The impotent London Naval Treaty and the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty preceding it had limited the naval armaments of the major capitalist countries; hence working in Moscow's favor.

[Ref. 3: p. 370] Self-imposed limits on naval armaments and a Germany still hampered by Versailles ensured that the naval gap between the Soviet Union and its potential adversaries would not increase substantially. However, the tacit expiration of the London Naval Treaty in 1936 heralded an unconstrained naval armaments buildup which threatened, unquestionably, to leave the Red Navy far behind. Moreover, in March 1935, Germany formally denounced the clauses of the

Treaty of Versailles concerning German disarmament, announcing that her army would be increased to 36 divisions.\*

Furthermore, in March 1936, Hitler announced the repudiation of the Locarno Pacts\*\* and soon thereafter re-occupied the Rhineland. These two events, coupled with British and French inaction in the face of German aggressiveness, convinced Stalin of German bellicosity and of the imperative of military strength. Additionally, the civil war in Spain was going poorly for the Soviet-supported Loyalists providing inarguable evidence of Moscow's ineptness at influencing events not immediately adjacent to Soviet borders. With limited capabilities to project power, Stalin could do little more than file a letter of protest in the 1938 sinking of a Soviet merchant ship in the Mediterranean Sea by an Italian submarine. [Ref. 1: p. 27] By 1937, Stalin had become increasingly concerned about the possibilities of war with both Germany and Japan; hence presenting Moscow with the unenviable task of conducting war on its east and west fronts simultaneously. The November 1936 conclusion of the German-Japanese Anti-Communist Pact demonstrated Japanese antagonisms for the Soviet Union. Between 1935 and 1939, numerous border incidents threatened to trigger a Soviet-Japanese war. The Battle at

---

\*Germany had been limited by the Treaty of Versailles to an army of no more than 100,000 men and a navy of six major ships and no submarines.

\*\*The Locarno Pact, signed in October 1923, included a treaty of mutual guarantee of the post World War I Franco-German and Belgo-German frontiers. The pact was signed by France, Germany and Belgium with Britain and Italy as guarantors.

Changkufeng Hill in the summer of 1938 underscored the risks of full scale confrontation. Stalin prepared for war.

The Red Navy, long neglected, received a massive infusion of funds for its revitalization. Thus, it is no surprise that Soviet naval leaders greeted the start of the Third Five Year Plan with renewed optimism. A shipyard rehabilitation effort conducted during the Second Five Year Plan had established the foundation for a large ship construction program. Moreover, during the mid-1930s, other countries embarked on naval rearmament programs. The Soviets observed that by 1937 the British were in the process of laying down the first of six new aircraft carriers of the Illustrious class. The Illustrious, scheduled for completion in 1940, would have a displacement of 23,000 tons. Additionally, the British were continuing the construction of another aircraft carrier; the Ark Royal, a 22,600 ton ship to be completed in 1938. [Ref. 6] These new aircraft carriers would augment an existing force of six bringing the total to thirteen by the early 1940s. Furthermore, by the late 1930s, the British were engaged in a major battleship construction program with the laying down of two new classes; the 40,000 ton Lion and the 35,000 ton King George. Both series, consisting of four and six units respectively, were targeted for completion in the early 1940s.

The British Royal Navy was not the only navy in the midst of a substantial naval rearmament campaign. The Japanese, believing they needed to strengthen their position in the

Pacific vis-a-vis the British and the Americans, inaugurated a massive shipbuilding program in the mid-1930s. By 1937, Japan possessed five aircraft carriers, ranging in size from the 7,000 ton Ruio to the 27,000 ton Kaga, and was in the process of building two new aircraft carriers each displacing 10,500 tons. In addition to carriers, the Japanese had plans to construct four new 40,000 ton battleships. These new dreadnoughts were scheduled to be laid down in 1938-39 and programmed for completion in the early 1940's.

Germany, another potential Soviet adversary and free from the trappings of Versailles, was also busy rearming its navy under the aegis of Plan Z which envisioned constructing 13 battleships, 33 cruisers, 4 aircraft carriers and 267 submarines. [Ref. 7: p. 335] In 1937 Germany started the construction of its first aircraft carrier; the 19,000 ton Graf Zeppelin. Moreover, Berlin was building two classes of battleships; the 26,000 ton Scharnhorst class and the 35,000 ton Bismark.

Stalin, confronted with the above evidence, may have felt pressured to begin his own naval construction program. But the Soviet Union lacked the technical expertise and the modern construction methods to design and build ships of large displacement quickly without foreign assistance. With naval limitations removed and potential enemies embarked on major naval building efforts, Stalin attempted to strike a deal with US shipbuilders for the design and manufacture of naval combat vessels in the United States for delivery to the Soviet Union.

Research of the documents concerning this event reveals that the Soviet Union vociferously expressed its interest in US manufactured battleships and destroyers. However, Soviet desires, relative to the construction of aircraft carriers, were more ambiguous and less intense. Joseph C. Green, then Chief, Office of Arms and Munitions Control, in a letter to the Carp Export and Import Corporation (intermediaries representing the Soviet government) makes reference to earlier correspondence originated from Carp Corporation in which the latter requests "non-Confidential designs, plans, working drawings and specification of such vessels as the USS Lexington" and two additional old battleship designs. This is the only reference to aircraft carriers to be found in the text of correspondence included in the encyclopedic Foreign Relation of the United States. Even if other materials associated with this matter exist, which may or may not refer more often to Soviet desires to obtain working plans for US aircraft carriers, the scarcity of mention in the Department of State publication, which should include the most important documents of the time, suggests that the Soviet Union was not strongly interested in building aircraft carriers during this time period. Cordell Hull, then U.S. Secretary of State, describing this episode in his memoirs offers no mention of a Soviet request for design specifications for U.S. aircraft carriers. [Ref. 8: p. 743] Over a period of more than twenty-six months of negotiations with the US only one

reference to aircraft carrier construction was noted in the available correspondence concerning this episode in Russo-American interaction. The apparent scarcity of interest evident on the Soviet part leads this author to conclude Soviet decisionmakers (Stalin) were not serious in constructing aircraft carriers for the Soviet fleet during this time period. If they were, it seems that they would have put forth a more concerted effort to obtain plans and design specifications for them.

It is clear, however, that the Soviets were indeed interested in the US design specifications for a modern battleship and requested on many occasions that US shipbuilders construct such a vessel for export to the Soviet Union. From the available documents, the Soviets originally wanted a battleship displacing 62,000 tons and sporting 18" guns [Ref. 9: p. 683]. However, both criteria were unacceptable from the US view because they exceeded the 1936 London Naval Treaty limits on battleships (35,000 tons and 16" guns).

It is likely the major impetus behind the Russian attempt to purchase warship designs from the US was Soviet concern for another war in Europe. The Soviet Ambassador to the US voiced this fear during the negotiations when asking if his government "should place a contract in the United States for the construction of a war vessel the Neutrality Act would prevent delivery of the vessel if at the time of its completion his country should be at war." [Ref. 9: p. 489] On several

occasions through the course of the negotiations the Soviet ambassador expressed this concern. Though the State Department and President Roosevelt supported the Soviet request, vocal opposition from the US Navy Department and the worsening European geopolitical situation forced stalemated negotiations. The signing of the Russo-German nonaggression pact, the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland and the Russo-Finnish war forced the termination of the aforementioned negotiations.

According to Robert Herrick, Stalin yearned for a large surface fleet to garner international prestige and to deter aggression. [Ref. 1: p. 35] Originally Soviet desires to acquire a battleship displacing 62,000 tons and armed with 18" guns, which was nearly twice as large as any existing battleship, supports this conclusion. Such a man-of-war would certainly command the attention and the respect of other major powers, thus aiding in Soviet diplomacy. Moreover, with the climate of war fast approaching, a battleship of this size would serve as a visible deterrent to potential adversaries contemplating aggression against the Soviet state. Though Kuznetsov in his memoirs states that aircraft carriers were indeed planned in the defense budgets of the Third and Fourth Five Year Plans, the final decision, and hence Stalin's blessing, to build aircraft carriers may never have been made. On another occasion describing naval armament plans for the same period, Kuznetsov seems to contradict his earlier testimony, stating "the program [Third Five Year Plan] made

no provision at all for carriers." [Ref. 1: p. 32] Indeed, Kuznetsov has admitted on a number of occasions that Stalin was averse to the construction of aircraft carriers.

In criticizing Stalin's program of large surface ship construction which excluded aircraft carriers, Kuznetsov wrote:

Visualize for a minute that the programs were to have been completed in the second half of the forties. We should have had large squadrons with battleships, but.... without a single aircraft carrier. Then how far out to sea could they have gone?

....Stalin, who usually reckoned with the opinion of the experts, tended for some unexplained reason to underrate the role of aircraft carriers. I had repeated proof of this during discussions on naval affairs, especially during the approval of naval construction projects in 1939....I think all this was due to a tendency to underestimate the danger to ships from the air. [Ref. 1: p. 33]

Admiral Gorshkov, writing in 1967, repeated Kuznetsov's accusation that Stalin underestimated the effect of aviation on combat operations at sea.

Aviation during that period [1939] was assigned relatively minor roles of reconnaissance with a secondary role of surface ship protection. For these reasons, no aircraft carriers were constructed at that time. [Ref. 10: p. 6]

Furthermore, writing in 1976, Gorshkov, in his recollection of Soviet naval construction during the late prewar years does not mention any effort to build aircraft carriers. [Ref. 7: p. 348] Explaining the rationale behind the Defense Ministry's failure to build aircraft carriers, Gorshkov states:

In the last prewar years Soviet military thinking was oriented toward the establishment and employment of squadrons of major surface ships headed by powerful

battleships and cruisers. In this connection, the high combat capabilities of aircraft as attack forces in naval warfare were not given sufficient consideration. At the same time, Soviet military theory being oriented toward surface ships, was unable to justify the need to have in its ocean going naval inventory aircraft carriers capable of providing cover for ships with their weak anti-aircraft armament beyond the range of shore-based fighter aircraft. [Ref. 7: p. 348]

Thus according to both Gorshkov and Kuznetsov, the rationale behind the decision not to construct aircraft carriers during this juncture was more doctrinal than either technical or economic. In other words, Stalin did not feel that aircraft carriers could play any meaningful role in the overall military doctrine of the Politburo. If war was to erupt in Europe then the navy would have failed its primary function; deterrence. In retrospect, Stalin seemed content to provide only the appearance of deterrence to his navy rather than the true warfighting capabilities his navy would require in the event deterrence failed. Though Stalin had visions of a "Great Red Fleet", he failed to provide it protection, in the form of sea based air, which would be vital for operations far from the friendly umbrella of land based fighter aircraft. Thus, according to Gorshkov, "...even our big surface fleet, which began to be created on the eve of the war actually was doomed to operating solely in our coastal waters...." [Ref. 10: p. 7] It appears clear that this is all Stalin wanted from his navy; to protect the coastal ocean boundaries of the Soviet Union. To possess the capabilities to operate far from friendly coasts was not a requirement of

Stalin's navy. That the Red Navy would not operate far from Soviet shores was evident in Stalin's retort to Kuznetsov's request to increase the antiaircraft weapons on board existing Soviet ships; "We are not going to fight off America's shores." [Ref. 1: p. 34]

Though it is clear that the Soviet Union never laid down the keel of an aircraft carrier during the prewar years, the 1939 edition of Jane's World's Fighting Ships reported just such an event in the pages of that year's issue. According to the editors of Jane's, the Soviet Union was constructing not just one aircraft carrier, but two in that year. The first was alleged to be named Krasnoye Zenamya, displacing 9,000 tons and building in Leningrad. The other was a converted cruiser, the ex Admiral Kornilov renamed Stalin. In addition, a sister ship of Krasnoye Zenamya, the Voroshilov, was said to be projected. Jane's continued to list these ships as aircraft carriers until 1942 when that year's edition emended its previous error and stated that the Krasnoye Zenamya was, in fact, never laid down. Furthermore, the Stalin turned out to be a seaplane carrier in the Black Sea and a cruiser of the Kirov class, bearing the name Voroshilov, was identified at the end of the war. This confusion on the part of a naval journal as prestigious as Jane's suggests three things. First, in the Soviet Union, a closed society, correct information, especially on defense matters, is hard to acquire and when it does appear is often ambiguous. Second, it suggests

that the carrier debate within the Soviet Union may have been extremely vocal during this period and at times transcended the sacred confines of the Soviet Defense Ministry. Third, this could have been an attempt at Soviet disinformation; to convince potential adversaries just over the horizon that the Soviets were serious about their security, hoping to deter aggression.

All Soviet capital ship construction halted abruptly with the German dispatch of operation Barbarossa in June 1941.

Describing this period, Gorshkov states:

By the decisions of the State Committee for Defense, adopted in July 1941, construction of major ships requiring large expenditures of labor, long periods of time, and materials, equipment, and weapons which were in short supply was suspended. [Ref. 7: p. 352]

As a result, the Fourth Five Year Plan was never implemented. History shows that the Red Navy played a relatively minor role in World War II and was not a decisive factor in turning the tide of battle in Europe in favor of the Soviet Union. Although Admiral Gorshkov extols Soviet naval achievements during the Great Patriotic War in his book Sea Power of the State, he nevertheless agrees that the basic mission of the Red Navy was to support the Red Army.

The operations of our fleet against the sea foe formed an important part in the struggle as a whole. However, its principal efforts from the first few days of the war were aimed at solving the most important task--to assist ground troops, bearing the brunt of the defense of the country from the attacking enemy, and whose operations in the end determined the outcome of the war. [Ref. 11: p. 144]

But this was exactly the intended role assigned to the Navy under the unified military doctrine of the Soviet armed forces. In order to support the ground war, Stalin felt it imperative that the fleet operate close to the shore, under the land based air umbrella, and not far out to sea. In Stalin's mind, navies played a deterrent role and, when war came, they would not be decisive.

#### C. POSTWAR SOVIET IDEAS ON AIRCRAFT CARRIERS--STALIN PERIOD

The replacement of the battleship with the aircraft carrier as the new capital ship of modern ocean going navies was grasped by many Soviet naval leaders after World War II. This conclusion was evident in many post war writings concerning future naval combat operations. An article in a 1946 issue of the Soviet military journal Military Thought asserts:

The conditions of modern war at sea demand the mandatory participation and the combat operations of the navies of powerful carrier forces, using them for striking devastating blows against the naval forces of the enemy as well as for the contest with his aviation. Both at sea and near one's bases these tasks can only be carried out by carrier aviation. [Ref. 4: p. 222]

Sea battles in the Pacific, such as Midway and Coral Sea, fought with sea based aircraft as the primary weapons without having the two opposing task forces get within gun range of their battleships, changed the methods and tactics of warfare at sea and ushered in the era of the aircraft carrier and the demise of the battleship. Admiral Gorshkov, describing World War II naval combat operations in a 1963 issue of the Soviet

naval journal Morskoi Sbornik, emphasized the importance of strong air cover for surface ship operations far from friendly bases:

In all cases when line ships and cruisers were found to be without strong air cover, enemy aviation was able to reach them quite easily. When cruising in the ocean or open sea, large surface ships could count on success only when they operated in coordination with aircraft carriers. [Ref. 1: p. 55]

It was also clearly demonstrated during the World War II that even when operating within the friendly radius of landbased fighter aviation, surface ships were attacked, either badly damaged or sunk before friendly air cover could be mustered in their defense.

Though the importance of aircraft carriers in modern combat at sea was clear to Soviet naval leaders of that period, this view was not shared by Stalin. Kuznetsov writes, "The surprising thing is that his [Stalin's] view on this matter [importance of seabased aircraft] did not change, even after the Great Patriotic War." [Ref. 1: p. 34] Stalin's view of navies had not changed. Their major utility was derived in peacetime as a deterrent and as a tool for international prestige enhancement. In war, they assumed the defensive and were assigned the mission of supporting the Red Army. Command of the sea was not a goal of Stalin's navy; thus, his lack of interest in the construction of aircraft carriers. With deterrence and prestige in mind, his postwar naval construction program was designed to reestablish a large ship surface navy based on cruisers.

Not only was the Soviet Union materially devastated by war but a large porportion of its traditional maritime population had been lost with the decoupling of the Baltic republics and Finland from the USSR after the war. The post-war balance of power revealed that the Soviet Union's most likely adversaries in any future conflict, the United States and Great Britain, possessed massive and very capable naval forces. Stalin was convinced that in order to prevent the Western naval powers from exploiting apparent Soviet weaknesses on the seas, he must build a highly visible large surface ship navy; not to necessarily compete for command of the seas, but to serve as a deterrent to perceived Western plans for aggression. According to a former Soviet naval officer Nicholas A. Shadrin, this long term naval construction plan envisioned light cruisers and destroyers serving as screening and supporting units to the major striking units of the large fleet; the carrier task forces. [Ref. 1: p. 61] Apparently, from Shadrin's testimony, a decision to construct aircraft carriers at some future time was made in 1949. [Ref. 4: p. 222] However, since the war left the Soviet Union economically drained, the construction of aircraft carriers would have to wait until the devastation of the war had been repaired, the economy restored and large ship building expertise acquired. Hence cruiser construction would take precedence. As Gorshkov, in each edition of his book Sea Power of the State infers, the keel of an aircraft carrier was never laid down in Soviet

shipyards during the late Stalin years. According to Shadrin, Stalin avoided personally endorsing a project fraught with dubious prospects "until and unless the success of the project had been demonstrated by life itself." [Ref. 1: p. 64] It could be that Stalin issued the order to proceed with research into aircraft carrier construction, but never gave a final affirmative to commence building.

The Soviet Union did, indeed, possess an aircraft carrier at the end of World War II; the German Graf Zeppelin, captured by the Soviets at the end of the conflict. As Soviet armies approached the Oder, the ship was scuttled in shallow water by her crew. She was also hit several times by artillery fire and sustained minor damage. After the German surrender, the Graf Zeppelin was floated and towed to Swinemuende on the Oder. It seems plausible to expect that if the Soviets were truly concerned about the acquisition of aircraft carriers for their fleet they certainly would have taken better care of the one that happened to be in their possession. However, overloaded with war booty, she sank in rough Baltic seas on her way to Leningrad in 1947. [Ref. 12: p. 647]

D. POSTWAR SOVIET IDEAS ON AIRCRAFT CARRIERS--KHRUSHCHEV PERIOD

The death of Stalin and the ascension of Khrushchev as CPSU Party Secretary signalled a revision of Soviet perceptions of sea power. Large surface ship advocates were compelled to renounce their "archaic" way of thinking and to

embrace a new naval strategy espousing the virtues of a small defensive navy consisting of light surface craft, submarines, and land based aviation. These Khrushchevean military thinkers denounced the strategy of command of the sea and large surface forces, including carriers, required to implement it. Though this seemed to be an abrupt and radical change from the policies which governed naval procurement of the early 1950's, it nevertheless was indicative of the trend in Soviet public spending which would become even more apparent as the Khrushchev era gained momentum.

A small navy concept was in total compliance with Khrushchev's goal of increasing the economic viability of the Soviet consumer. Shortly after Stalin's death the independent Naval Ministry was abolished and the Red Navy was subordinated to the Army. In 1955 Admiral Kuznetsov presented a naval construction plan which included substantial cruiser and destroyer production. It is interesting to note that this plan, submitted by a staunch proponent of large ships and one who had criticized Stalin for not constructing aircraft carriers, did not include aircraft carriers. This may suggest that Kuznetsov believed such a request would have been met with such ridicule that he did not even attempt to tender it. Hence, Kuznetsov's apparent omission of aircraft carriers was indicative of the political climate in which it was offered. The political leadership was averse to carrier construction. Moreover, Khrushchev referred to advocates of carriers as

"loudmouths". The development of the Soviet air force and missile weaponry was accelerated at the expense of major surface ship construction. According to Khrushchev, "any future war should be won in the air and not the sea." [Ref. 13: p. 26] Khrushchev states that he took full responsibility for converting the Navy from the cruiser-centered deterrent fleet advocated by Stalin, to primarily a light force defensive force based on submarines and missiles. Submarines according to Khrushchev, were not only cheaper to "build and operate--[they were] also a more formidable and effective weapon." [Ref. 13: p. 30] Though Khrushchev expressed a desire for aircraft carriers, he emphasized that the Soviet Union could not afford to build them while at the same time financing other, more important, defense programs. Khrushchev insisted that since the Soviet Union was not an expansionist power, he had no requirement for an offensive navy:

We are a socialist country; in accordance with Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence, we are against imperialist wars and we do not aspire to occupy other countries. Therefore we have no need for those vessels that are used by countries like the United States to pursue aggressive and imperialist goals." [Ref. 13: p. 31]

Admiral Kuznetsov\*, one of the staunchest proponents of Stalin's large ship fleet was demoted and replaced by Admiral Gorshkov in 1955. Consequently, the postwar naval construction

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\*Khrushchev was never really impressed with Admiral Kuznetsov. He accused him of "looking at the present through eyes of the past", and of lacking the ability to critically assess the correct position of the navy. [Ref. 13: p. 26]

program was redirected concentrate on the construction of light surface forces and submarine construction was accelerated. The Skoryy large destroyer program was terminated in 1954 with completion of 72 ships, ten short of the planned 82 units. The Sverdlov light cruiser line was terminated at fourteen units in 1956, ten short of a programmed 24 units. In a 1967 article in Morskoi Sbornik, Gorshkov described the atmosphere which surrounded many of the top military thinkers during the early Khrushchev period:

It turned out, unfortunately, that as we had some very influential "authorities" who considered that with the appearance of the atomic weapons the navy had completely lost its value as a branch of the armed forces. According to these views all of the basic missions in a future war allegedly could be fully resolved without the participation of the navy....At that time it was frequently asserted that only missiles emplaced in ground launching sites were required for the destruction of surface striking forces and even submarines. [Ref. 10: p. 18]

After the replacement of Kuznetsov by Gorshkov no more was heard in favor of the actual construction of aircraft carriers for the next twelve years. With the dismissal of Kuznetsov in 1955, the navy lost its most vocal proponent for the construction of large surface ships, including aircraft carriers, and the old guard which pushed command of the sea role for the Soviet Navy was replaced by "light navy" proponents which espoused the economic and defensive virtues of a naval "small war" doctrine.

It was in 1954 when the Politburo decided to make the shift from "obsolete" surface ships to a navy based primarily

on submarines and land based aircraft [Ref. 1: p. 75]. This shift came less than a year after Stalin's death. The apparent ease with which this transition was made demonstrates just how little support proponents of large surface ships had in the Politburo and Defense Ministry. Thus, it is doubtful that aircraft carrier construction would have commenced even if Stalin had not died in 1953.

Khrushchev criticized Stalin for expending limited resources on the expansion of the Red Navy, rather than funnelling needed capital into the expansion of the air and missile forces. [Ref. 13: p. 19] Khrushchev often expressed his contempt for conventionally armed surface ships and the tremendous expense involved in maintaining these forces in an operational state.

We relegated our surface fleet to an auxilliary function, primarily for coastal defense. We built PT boats, coast guard cutters, and subchasers armed with depth charges. The next question was what to do with the destroyers and cruisers that we already had. Some of them had been built as long ago as World War I. They were creaky old slopokes, about as much good to us as a bunch of old shoes. With thousands of crewmembers, one of these ships cost an enormous amount of money to keep afloat. [Ref. 13: p. 26]

Though Khrushchev was clearly not an advocate of an ocean going surface navy, he impugned Stalin for not providing aircraft carriers to protect the latter's large surface ships commenting in his memoirs that "a navy without aircraft carriers is no navy at all." [Ref. 13: p. 20] This apparent contradiction between words and deeds suggests that Khrushchev,

although not advocating carrier construction, criticized Stalin for his improvidence in not providing his ocean going forces with critical air support. But it was clear due to early cuts in large ship construction that Khrushchev had no intention of constructing an ocean going surface fleet nor did his "small navy" defensive doctrine demand it. Nevertheless, Khrushchev laments that he did not have any aircraft carriers in his fleet referring to them as the second most important weapon (behind the submarine) in any modern navy. [Ref. 13: p. 27] Khrushchev was not willing to expend the enormous sums to construct this type of weapon system. These capital expenditures no doubt would have to come from other higher priority defense items, such as missile and aircraft development. Hence, simple desires do not necessarily translate into sound defense or political policy. The Red Navy, for all practical purposes, was configured to operate as a coastal defensive force. Protection of the maritime approaches to the Soviet Union was its primary mission; a policy which, according to Khrushchev, did not require aircraft carriers. Khrushchev was a firm proponent of the revolution in scientific and technical affairs which changed the methods of conducting warfare. Results of several seminars, convened by the Soviet General Staff of 1957-8 concluded that the "introduction of the nuclear weapons and the missile had brought about radical changes in all aspects of warfare, forcing revisions in basic concepts." [Ref. 14: p. 41]

Khrushchev, during the early years of his term, was motivated to cut the Defense Ministry's share of the budget in order to strengthen the consumer sector of the Soviet economy which had suffered years of neglect in the face of massive military expenditures. By May 1957, the Soviet armed forces had been reduced from 5,763,000 men at the time of Stalin's death, to a little less than 4 million. Since the army dominated General Staff would not receive favorably major reductions in the army's share of the budget, Khrushchev looked to the navy for defense reductions. As previously mentioned, cruiser and destroyer building programs were either ended or curtailed sharply in the mid 1950's. In the era of the scientific and technological revolution, nuclear-tipped cruise missiles would serve as a reasonably inexpensive counter to the aircraft carrier centered strike fleets of the United States. Heavy cruisers, Khrushchev thought, were only good for show pieces, to impress foreign visitors. [Ref. 13: p. 33] Although he referred to submarines as "floating metal cigars," he nevertheless called them the supreme weapon. [Ref. 13: p. 33]

With the adoption of a navy based on light surface forces and submarines, supported by land-based aviation, there simply was no role for large surface ships. They were considered an expensive luxury. Some of the reasons for opposition to the construction of aircraft carriers were voiced by leading Soviet military and political authorities during this period.

Marshal Georgii Zhukov, then Minister of Defense, commented that aircraft carriers could be employed only for "aggressive first-strike missions" against weak states. [Ref. 4: p. 224] According to Zhukov, since the Soviet Union was a peace-loving state, it had no aggressive designs on the rest of the world. Thus, carriers, which were considered tools of aggression, simply did not fit the Soviet scheme of things. Marshal Andre Eremenko stressed the vulnerability of such large ships when he noted in 1960 that, "with the emergence of the missile and of nuclear weapons, even aircraft carriers have become so vulnerable that their use appears to be inexpedient." [Ref. 4: p. 224]

The introduction of new seabased strike capabilities by the United States during the mid to late 1950's, such as carrier based nuclear armed aircraft and submarine launched ballistic missiles, each capable of launching nuclear strikes against the heart of the Soviet Union from areas far out to sea, did not excite the Soviet leadership into embarking on a major effort to construct large strike aircraft carriers. The Soviet Union did not attempt to counter US strike carriers with strike carriers of their own. Nor did it appear in Moscow's interest to put Washington in an analogous situation with the deployment of several Soviet strike carriers off US shores.

The elevation of the Polaris as the primary seabased threat to the Soviet Union, replacing the strike carrier,

appeared to be the major impetus behind the Soviet decision to send more and larger ASW capable surface ships to sea and explained the renewed interest in the production of large surface vessels able to survive for extended periods of time in a hostile environment. [Ref. 4: p. 225] The construction and deployment of the Moskva CHG appeared to be an attempt to directly counter US Polaris deployments in the Norwegian and Mediterranean seas. The Moskva program was ended in 1968 after the construction of only two units which initially appeared as an honest attempt to operate forward deployed ASW assets in the loiter areas of U.S. SSBNs. [Ref. 4: p. 227] Still, during this period of operating surface units in forward deployed areas, Soviet military leaders remained unanimous in their criticism of strike carriers. Admiral Gorshkov in a July 1962 Pravda article argued that aircraft carriers "like battleships which have become obsolete are irrevocably passing into oblivion. Their place is now being taken by missile-carrying vessels." [Ref. 4: p. 226] Similarly, Admiral Isakov emphasized the vulnerability of aircraft carriers. "My opinion is that these colossal aircraft carriers would be floating corpses should they be used against a powerful opponent who has modern means of conducting war." [Ref. 1: p. 121] Furthermore, in a 1964 book entitled Avianostsy, the three coauthors stress the limited utility of aircraft carriers in certain tactical situations and emphasized that they are restricted in wartime operations by "weather and

the efficiency of the supply system." [Ref. 4: p. 226]  
Aircraft carriers were also criticized for the tremendous outlay of resources required for their construction; thus they were viewed as simply not cost effective in an era when relatively small naval forces armed with "long range missiles and torpedoes with powerful warheads, [could] successfully conduct combat operations ...against carrier forces... destroying them in any part of the world ocean." [Ref. 4: p. 226] Thus, according to Soviet military planners, in the modern era of the scientific and technical revolution there existed less expensive and more effective ways of combating the Western carrier menace. Hence, a Soviet strike carrier was perceived as unnecessary in the overall Soviet defensive scheme.

The success of the 2,500 nautical mile Polaris A-3 system in 1964 and the announcement by the US of the even longer range and more capable Poseidon missile system in 1965 may have increased Soviet naval desires for a large ocean going navy, capable of operating great distances from friendly shores, positioned to counter the increasing western sea based strategic threat. However, advances in ASW technology lagged far behind the ships needed to carry them to sea and U.S. technological advances in SLBMs added to the difficulty of the problem. This shortcoming may have convinced the Soviet military thinkers of the futility of expending large amounts of limited resources in an enterprise which realistically

offered only limited chances for success. However, US advances in carrier based aviation and the SLBMs in the 1960's did not force the Soviets to build strike aircraft carriers. The official line on aircraft carriers remained unchanged. Gorshkov, in a 1967 article for Morskoi Sbornik, still predicted the inevitable decline of strike carriers and asserted that they were limited to "local wars against weak states." [Ref. 4: p. 227] Although other articles authored by a number of Gorshkov's subordinates during this period seemed to advocate the construction of aircraft carriers, the official party line, as expressed by the Soviet Navy Commander in Chief, did not deviate throughout the 1960s. [Ref. 4: p. 229] Aircraft carriers were perceived as extremely vulnerable to modern weapons, egregiously expensive and imbued with limited utility in major wars.

Through the 1960s, Soviet naval strategy, as in the past remained defensive in nature; more concerned with protecting sea approaches to the USSR than projecting Soviet military power and influence to distant areas. Characteristic of the Party line with respect to aircraft carriers was the 1968 edition of Military Strategy. In this work, Sokolovsky et. al. portrayed aircraft carriers as extremely vulnerable to nuclear strikes and claimed this vulnerability increases "during ocean crossings, during refueling, and launch and recovery cycles." [Ref. 15: p. 300] Sokolovsky went so far as to predict the "extinction", of not only aircraft carriers,

but also surface ships per se [Ref. 15: p. 203] and reemphasized that "submarines have become the main striking forces of our Navy." [Ref. 15: p. 301]

#### E. CONCLUSION

Some of the anti-carrier rhetoric espoused by Soviet authors during the 1950s and 60s may have been merely propaganda to rationalize Soviet naval weaknesses vis-a-vis the West. In retrospect it appears clear that although many variables played a part in the Soviet decision not to build a true strike aircraft carrier, including, at times, economic and technical constraints, the decisive criteria was doctrinal. Strike aircraft carriers did not fit comfortably into the Soviet naval thinking with its emphasis on the defensive.

However, the decade of the 1970s would usher in a new era of Soviet power vis-a-vis its most likely antagonists. Being the apparent beneficiaries of a hesitant America unwilling to become involved in another Third World quagmire, and of a massive nuclear and conventional weapons buildup, the Soviet Union was imbued with a sense of security heretofore unknown in its history. This perception of security would, in time, be translated into a sense of confidence in its abilities to participate in international events far removed from Russian shores. Russia, long a continental power, emerged as a global power during the early 1970s. This newfound status may have compelled the Politburo to shift from

a more or less passive role in the developing world to a more active, offensive-minded role.

### III. EVOLUTION OF SOVIET LOCAL WAR DOCTRINE

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Over the years Soviet local war doctrine evolved to provide for a greater Soviet military role in local conflict. Following their early doctrine, the Soviets avoided local conflict, largely because of fears that local wars could lead to a world war for which the Soviets were ill-prepared. However, in the early to mid 1970s after they reached strategic nuclear parity with the U.S., Soviet philosophy began to change. A greater willingness to assume a military role in local conflicts resulted from a shift in their belief that local wars lead necessarily to nuclear confrontations. There was also a dawning realization for greater military involvement to protect socialist gains outside of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This new interest in local conflict led naturally to a desire for the heretofore unnecessary strike aircraft carrier.

#### B. EARLY SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN EXTERNAL CRISES

The Bolsheviks were extremely active in exporting their revolution even before they had completely consolidated their own power in Russia. In the first few months after the Petrograd coup, the Leninists supplied small arms and ammunition to the abortive communist coup in Finland. The

Red Army nearly became directly involved in supporting Bela Kun's Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. However, before Red Army troops could be dispatched they were redirected to the Urals to counter a White offensive. Between 1919 and 1924, the Soviet Union supported a number of other communist and worker uprisings: the Berlin Spartacists and the Bavarian Soviet in 1919; the Maerzaktion in 1920, the attempted revolution by the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1923, and the Estonia coup in 1924. All failed, in part, due to Moscow's inability to provide necessary assistance [Ref. 16: p. 8].

Lenin, realizing the chances of overthrowing capitalism with a frontal assault were dim, conceived a strategy designed to strike at the imperialists from the rear by fomenting national insurrections in their colonial domains. [Ref. 16: p. 8] Since the colonial revolution would have to be a bourgeois-democratic movement, Lenin urged the relatively weak communist parties to cooperate with them in a "united front." However, Marxist-Leninist ideology was not the only driving force behind Soviet foreign policy during the early development of the Soviet state. More traditional world power concerns also occupied the Kremlin's attentions. Moscow's signing of a treaty of friendship with the Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal Pasha in 1921 who was then at war with the Greek army, was a clear example of early Soviet Realpolitik. Moscow's intent was to weaken further British influence in the Near East. According to the terms of the above agreement,

Moscow promised to supply military aid to the Kemal forces. This was the first instance of a Soviet government providing military assistance to a foreign polity at war.

Lenin, at the Second Comintern Congress in 1920, stated that all colonial and semi-colonial nations would experience a revolution and that this revolution would occur in two distinct phases. First, a national revolution, lead by the bourgeoisie, would establish independence from the colonial yoke. This would be followed by a second phase; a socialist revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie democracy resulting in the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. For Lenin, this sequence was important. Marxism-Leninism dictated the socialist revolution always followed the initial bourgeoisie-led struggle for independence. This was the first major Soviet statement about conflict in the Third World. [Ref. 17: p. 13] But this statement was immediately challenged by the Indian communist N. M. Roy who asserted that the national bourgeoisie in the Third World was too weak and dependent on the colonial powers and thus incapable of leading the first phase of the revolution. Consequently, the proletariat would have to lead the initial thrust for independence, bypassing Lenin's first step. Though each contradicted the other, the Comintern passed resolutions approving both, reasoning the colonial nations were so far removed that the apparent contradiction did not matter. [Ref. 17: p. 13] Lenin did not anticipate socialist revolution in

the Third World happening anytime soon and more pressing domestic problems and closer issues dominated his attention.

However, Third World revolution did come as early as the mid 1920's, in China. But by this time, Lenin was medically incapacitated and the ruling elite was still tethered to domestic concerns and could not devote much attention to areas of the world so seemingly distant. Between 1923-1927, the Soviet Union did provide military material assistance to the Kuomintang. However, the Shanghai Massacre of the communist wing of the Kuomintang in 1927 forced a reappraisal of the Soviet "united front" strategy and further diminished Moscow's motivation to participate in Third World conflicts. The latter half of the 1920's witnessed the Stalin-Trotsky succession struggle and the victor's enunciation of "socialism in one country" ensured the relegation of Third World concerns to positions of relatively minor importance. The decade of the 1930's revealed a Soviet Union more concerned with internal matters; collectivization and heavy industrialization. National security concerns dominated Soviet attention beginning in the middle 1930's and demanded the further invocation of Soviet realpolitik. The spreading Sino-Japanese conflict threatened to impel the Soviet Union into the struggle. Consequently, ideology notwithstanding, Moscow signed a mutual non-aggression pact with the Nationalist Chinese in 1937, the same regime the Kremlin attempted to liquidate in the past. Likewise, substantial Soviet support for the Republic during the Spanish

Civil War was a further attempt by Stalin to assemble Moscow, Paris and London into an anti-facist entente. [Ref. 18: p. 244] Although no Soviet troops were among the Comintern's 40,000 man International Brigade, 2,000 Red Army advisors did serve in Spain during the course of the conflict. [Ref. 16: p. 12]

All the conflicts discussed above occurred in regions of traditional Russian interest in areas relatively close to Soviet borders. It was not until the mid-1950's that the Soviet Union began to expand its influence in regions of the world lying outside these historical concerns. Third World issues did not occupy a favored position on the Soviet foreign policy agenda throughout Stalin's tenure. At the nineteenth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1932, Stalin articulated his "two camp" doctrine, stressing that the world was divided into a socialist and capitalist camp. Furthermore, according to Stalin, the emerging nations from the postwar period were "mere pawns of the former colonial powers." [Ref. 16: p. 14] Hence, a major Soviet effort to convert these new governments to socialism was seen as problematic. Moreover, throughout Stalin's era, the Third World did not receive any measureable degree of consideration in Soviet ideas about war. The dominant issue, by far, was the inevitability of war between socialism and imperialism fought on a world wide stage.

Stalin classified all wars into four categories: (1) war in defense of the socialist homeland, (2) civil wars between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, (3) national liberation wars, and (4) wars between imperialist states. Civil wars could not occur until national liberation wars had been fought and won by the oppressed people of colonialism. Thus, as did Lenin before, Stalin assumed the anti-colonial revolution would take place in two phases, with the bourgeoisie-led war of independence preceding the proletariat or socialist phase. Since the proletariat in the developing world was either very weak or in some cases non-existent, the working class would have to be strengthened and this would take time.

#### C. KHRUSHCHEV ERA 1955-1964

Though the developing world played only a minor role in Soviet foreign policy during the first three and one-half decades of Soviet rule, in the course of the Khrushchev era the Third World grew in importance for Soviet foreign policy. For the new Party Secretary, the developing nations presented Moscow with opportunities for spreading socialism with seemingly very little direct involvement by the Soviet Union. At the twentieth congress of the CPSU in 1956, Khrushchev announced that the newly independent states of the Third World along with the existing socialist states formed "a vast zone of peace." He asserted that the present disintegration of the imperialist colonial system is a "development of world

historical significance" and that the newly independent states "would play an active part in deciding the destinies of the entire world." [Ref. 16: p. 18] Khrushchev perceived the former colonies as natural allies of the Soviet Union eager to embrace the same socialist ideals. To accelerate the apparent shift in allegiance from former colonial territories to individual sovereign states on the path of socialist development, Khrushchev enunciated the policy of "national democracy" in 1960, allowing a shortcut to socialism for the newly independent states. Moreover, in this effort, local communists were encouraged to cooperate with progressive national revolutionary movements in a method strongly reminiscent of Lenin's "united front" formula abandoned by Stalin thirty years earlier.

In September 1955, using Czechoslovakia as a conduit, the Soviet Union concluded a major arms agreement with Nasser of Egypt. This marked the first occasion Moscow ventured the sale of arms to a non-communist nation. In late 1959, Guinea became the first sub-Sahara African nation to receive Soviet military material aid. Ghana and Mali soon followed in this respect in 1960. Furthermore, Moscow began to supply its favored factions in national civil wars: the Lumumba faction in the Congolese civil war and the Algerian rebels in their struggle for independence against the French. However, he still urged a cautious approach toward Third World crises

believing there to be a causal link between local war\* and world war; i.e., he feared that any conflict in the Third World could escalate and engulf the planet in nuclear world war. Though Khrushchev announced that war between socialism and capitalism was no longer inevitable at the 20th Party Congress, war was still possible and he believed such a war would not lead to a socialist victory, but to mutual annihilation. After all, Lenin, in prophecying the inevitability of war between the two opposing social systems, could not have foreseen the advent of nuclear weaponry. Since local wars would inevitably lead to major wars, local wars should be avoided. Emphasizing the threat local wars posed, Colonel General Lomov stated in 1962:

In actuality, such wars (local wars) cannot remain local for long: They contain a threat for all humanity. A small imperialist war [one unleashed upon newly independent countries], as N. S. Khrushchev has noted, regardless of which of the imperialists started it, can develop into a world nuclear conflict. [Ref. 17: p. 3]

Ideologically, local war was regarded as an imperialist tool of coercion and not something socialist countries became involved in unless it furthered the cause of world peace.

Soviet participation during crises involving the possibility of a direct U.S. response displayed a characteristic pattern of circumspection; "combining verbal threats with

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\*According to the Soviet Military Encyclopedia, local war is limited by the number of countries involved, usually two or few, to the territories on which it is fought and by the weapons used.

military caution." [Ref. 19: p. 19] During the 1956 Suez adventure, Khrushchev hinted at launching Soviet rockets against both France and the United Kingdom if they continued their aggression against Egypt. However, this instance of "missile diplomacy" was voiced after the seriousness of the crisis had dissipated. During the 1958 Lebanese crisis, Khrushchev's announcement of Soviet maneuvers in the Transcaucasus and Turkestan military districts in the face of U.S. and U.K. intervention was the extent of the Soviet response. Khrushchev's threat of nuclear retaliation on the U.S. if the latter should attack the Chinese mainland during the 1958 Quemoy Strait crisis was subsequently discounted by a Chinese official as empty Soviet blustering [Ref. 19: p. 19]

At the beginning of the Khrushchev era, Soviet military thinkers continued to classify wars in the same manner established earlier by Stalin. In addition to classifying wars as to type, wars were also arranged as to their nature; either just or unjust. The Socialist states were always just in their wars against the imperialists and the proletariat was always considered just in their struggle for independence against the bourgeoisie in civil wars. Moreover, in wars of national liberation, the forces fighting for independence were always viewed as just. Hence, the determination of the just side in a conflict was made solely on the basis of their ideological or sociopolitical characteristics. Non-ideological factors such as scale of warfare or type of weapons employed

were not considered determinants on the categorization of conflict. [Ref. 16: p. 31]

In 1960, Khrushchev repudiated the traditional classification of war and substituted three categories of his own: world wars, local wars, and wars of national liberation. Furthermore, Khrushchev for the first time incorporated non-ideological factors in determining the nature of war. According to Khrushchev, world wars were unjust because they threatened to destroy socialism. Moreover, local wars were also considered unjust because they could very likely escalate to world war. Only wars of national liberation could be considered as just and thus encouraged and supported. [Ref. 17: p. 23] Thus in Khrushchev's classification system, non-ideological factors, scale of war and type of weapons employed, were considered more crucial in determining the nature of warfare than purely ideological or sociopolitical factors.

However, the implication that local wars were unjust did not prevent the Politburo from supplying military material to favored clients involved in "small wars." From 1958 to 1965, the Soviet Union supplied Indonesia with more than \$1 billion worth of arms to support Sukarno's efforts in three conflicts. [Ref. 16: p. 19]\*

It appears evident that Khrushchev's main purpose in arranging the new classification scheme was to prevent a major

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\*The Three conflicts included: the Sumatran rebellion (1959-60), the West Irian Crusade (1961-62) and the Malaysia campaign (1963-65).

war from occurring between the U.S. and the USSR and to deter direct American involvement in Third World conflicts. Since Moscow lacked symmetrical U.S. power projection capabilities, Khrushchev's heralding of the dangers of local war seemed the only available tactic to use. However, increased U.S. involvement in Indochina during the 1960's exposed the futility of this machination.

For most of Khrushchev's tenure, socialism appeared to be making impressive gains in the Third World without significant direct Soviet involvement. When delegates from Guinea, Ghana and Mali attended the twenty-second Congress of the CPSU in 1961, Soviet optimism was high that these former colonial countries would adopt the "socialist path." Additionally, New Third World leaders in Egypt, Algeria, Borneo, Morocco and Indonesia, though not ardent Marxists, embraced socialist ideals and were favored by Moscow for their leftist, anti-Western outlook; labeled by the Kremlin as possessing "genuine revolutionary potential." [Ref. 19: p. 21] Thus, no escalation of Soviet involvement in Third World conflicts was warranted. The Khrushchev era was one of optimism relative to the enhancement of socialist, as well as Soviet, influence over the former colonial states of the Third World. Soviet foreign policy was rewarded with substantial geopolitical achievements in the developing world with little more than Soviet ideological and moral support. More importantly, limited Soviet involvement entailed very little risk.

#### D. BREZHNEV ERA 1964-1982

During the early Brezhnev years, from 1964-1968, Soviet foreign policy vis-a-vis the Third World was characterized as cautious and circumspect. There still remained, quite ensconced in Soviet political and military thinking the idea of a causal link between local war and major war; hence direct Soviet participation in local war was viewed as anathema to the welfare of the Socialist system. But this juncture revealed a change in Soviet perceptions of local war and Soviet involvement in such wars. International affairs, especially in the post-colonial Third World, appeared more complex and did not lend themselves to easy Marxist interpretation. After the fall of Khrushchev, the Party and military restored the traditional classes of war: (1) world war between opposing social systems; (2) civil wars; (3) national liberation wars; and (4) wars between imperialist states. Socio-political factors were once again reasserted as the primary determinants of nature (just or unjust) of war. During the mid 1960's, Soviet military thinkers began to direct their attentions to several new types of warfare, which, though not unprecedented in the developing world, were nevertheless erupting during this period at a furious pace and did not fit comfortably in the accepted categories of war. Previously, Soviet thinkers, both Party and military, considered national liberation wars as the most prolific type of warfare taking place in the Third World. However, Third World

hostilities during this juncture demanded the revamping of the Soviet definition of warfare in the developing world.

During this period, Soviet thinkers found it necessary to establish a second type of civil war which differed significantly from the traditional Marxist-Leninist definition. This new type of civil war pitted the people, both proletariat and bourgeoisie, against a "regime of extreme reaction." [Ref. 17: p. 23] Such struggles were taking place or had already taken place in Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, countries which had previously won independence from the "colonial yoke." Civil wars of this type were viewed as unique opportunities for the enhancement of Soviet influence in the Third World. The U.S., being a conservative power, would want to uphold the status quo and hence was inclined to support the regime in power. Consequently, the people against the regime would seek the Soviet Union to counterbalance American support creating a potential Soviet ally if the people won. Thus, in this type of war, the people were always just and the regime always unjust. This type of struggle did not necessarily mean that socialism would automatically come to power, only that conditions for the establishment of socialism would be enhanced. [Ref. 17: p. 52]

A second type of warfare erupting in the developing world during this period was war between sovereign, nonaligned Third World states and was classified as war between "nations of equal status". The wars in the Middle East and the 1965

Indo-Pakistani war were included in this category. Furthermore, wars between states of equal status did not have overriding ideological or sociopolitical origins. Rather, these conflicts were rooted in traditional state to state interests and were driven by the politics of the region. Unlike conflicts between the people and regime of extreme reaction, the nature of these wars was not easily discerned. But this dilemma was alleviated when the U.S. became involved; hence the just side were those forces fighting against those receiving American support. But even when the U.S. was not directly supporting one side or the other, imperialism was still condemned as the agent which created the conditions for conflict. Moscow's inability to consistently decipher the just and unjust forces in a Third World conflict involving states of equal status prevented the Politburo from formulating a coherent policy towards this type of conflict in general. Consequently, Moscow decided it should act in whatever way would further Soviet foreign policy interests, because doing nothing risked the loss of potential allies in the Third World. [Ref. 17]

Though Soviet public statements during the early 1960's advocated increased support for Third World clients engaged in local wars, it was clear that the degree of Soviet military involvement should remain limited. The threat of local wars escalating to world wars remained deeply imbedded in the Soviet psyche and governed the manner Moscow approached

international affairs. In a speech to the twenty-second Congress of the CPSU in 1961 Minister of Defense Marshal Malinovsky cautioned:

The fact is that in contemporary circumstances, any armed conflict inevitably will escalate into general nuclear rocket war if the nuclear powers are involved in it. Thus, we must prepare our armed forces, the country and all the people for struggle with the aggressor, first of all and mainly, in conditions of nuclear war. [Ref. 14: p. 45]

Active Soviet involvement in local conflict was relatively new and during the early 1960's caution remained the watchword of Soviet policy toward Third World conflict. But a totally passive role for Moscow was out of the question for such a policy implied relatively uninhibited Western movement. However, during the latter 1960's a shift in Soviet policy towards the Third World was noted. Beginning in this period there was a greater emphasis on the use of limited force to promote Soviet objectives in the developing world. [Ref. 19: p. 34]\*

This apparent shift to a more active role was put to practice in a number of Third World crises occurring in the latter 1960's and early 1970's. Soviet military intervention

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\*Thomas Wolfe cites as evidence of this shift certain doctrinal signals; for example the 1968 edition of Sokolovsky's Military Strategy was revised from earlier editions to include the statement: "The USSR will, when necessary, also render military support to peoples subjected to imperialist aggression." Further evidence in this doctrinal shift was provided by Brezhnev in his address to the twenty-third CPSU congress in 1966 when he asserted that the USSR would "extend all possible support" to the national-liberation movement, including "political, economic, and where necessary, military support." [Ref. 19: p. 34]

on the side of the Republican regime during the Yemeni civil war was the first instance of Soviet power rescuing a non-communist regime from probable defeat. Additionally, the Yemeni case provided the first example of Soviet fighter pilots in combat in the Third World. [Ref. 16: p. 24] The dispatch of Soviet air defense personnel and fighter pilots to Egypt in March 1970 to shore up the sieve-like Egyptian air defense network against the Israeli practice of deep penetration air strikes during the "war of attrition" provided another example of the Politburo's increased acceptance of a more active military role in distant crises.\* Moreover, the Soviet Union became a direct participant in the Dhofar liberation campaign when the Red Navy transported by sea a small number of PDAY troops from Aden to the Dhofar region of Oman.

The early half of the 1970's presented Moscow with several opportunities to enhance its influence in the Third World. The United States failure in Vietnam, represented a major victory for socialism. Marxist oriented governments were established in former Portuguese colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. More importantly, the military correlation of forces had also shifted in favor of the Politburo and by the early to mid 1970's the Soviets had reached rough

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\*The Soviet controlled air defense network in Egypt during this period effectively served to deter further Israeli strikes and helped set the stage for the August 1970 ceasefire along the Suez Canal. [Ref. 19: p. 47]

strategic nuclear parity with the United States. SALT I had codified Soviet numerical superiority in both ICBMs and SLBMs and represented a commitment by each bloc to prevent world war. Furthermore, the Soviet Union commenced operational deployment of its third generation ICBMs incorporating MIRV technology for the first time, and the deployment of the Delta SSBN in 1973 enabled the General Staff to operate its strategic retaliatory forces in relatively protected waters close to the Soviet Union. Additionally, the Soviet Union had made both significant quantitative and qualitative improvements to their conventional forces as well. Consequently in the Soviet view, the threat of major war with the United States had diminished. This favorable shift in the correlation of forces demanded of the Soviet Union a more active role in Third World events.

During the early 1970's the Soviet view of the relationship of local war and world war underwent a significant change. [Ref. 17: p. 66] In 1971, the Nauka publishing house of the Soviet Academy of Sciences issued a book written by Major General A. A. Stokov entitled V. I. Lenin on War and Military Art. In his book Stokov states that "world war might break out by growing out of a local conflict - a local war." [Ref. 14: p. 55] The use of the word "might" in describing the eventuality of major war erupting out of a local conflict was a definite change from the soothsayers like Malinovsky a decade earlier who had warned that any war will inevitably

lead to major nuclear war. This statement by Strokov seems to imply that since local wars may not inevitably escalate to nuclear conflagration, the Soviet Union may be acting irrationally in its attempt to avoid greater involvement in local struggles; thus forfeiting lucrative opportunities to enhance the success of Soviet political objectives. While admitting the possibility that local war still could escalate to major war, V. M. Kulish, a recognized military strategist, believed that this would not necessarily nor inevitably occur:

Inasmuch as world war can arise as the consequence of extremely aggravated economic, political, social, and other basic contradictions between international systems and the leading powers of these systems, in it can be used the most effective weapons of armed struggle, up to nuclear missiles. However, since a world war can be simultaneously a nuclear missile one, and consequently, extremely dangerous for humanity, the probability of its unleashing is limited. [Ref. 17: p. 67]

Thus according to Kulish, the massive destructive capability of nuclear weapons may well act to deter their use in conflict. Colonel General Malinovskiy, who earlier spoke of a definite causal link between local war and world war, stated in 1974 the forces of socialism were now strong enough to prevent local wars from escalating to major wars. [Ref. 17: p. 68] Furthermore, General of the Army I. Shavrov, Commandant of the General Staff Academy, echoed a similar thought:

In terms of scope and weapons employed, a local war is a local, small war. In comparison to world war, it can be limited by the number of participant countries and the limits of a defined geographic region of military actions and, as a rule, is waged with conventional weapons. [Ref. 17: p. 69]

From comments such as these, a general shift can be detected in Soviet perceptions of the link between local war and major war. Soviet thinking increasingly emphasized the probability that local wars escalating to major wars had iminshed. No longer was Moscow faced with the choice of either cowering in the face of Western involvement and thus risking Western gains, or risking world war if the Politburo elected to oppose the West in Third World conflicts. No longer was local war only considered a tool of imperialist expansion. With the threat of general war diminished in light of a favorable shift in the correlation of forces, the Soviet Union could participate more actively in Third World conflict; hence enhancing the chances of Soviet expansion in the developing world. Thus, a more active Soviet policy towards the Third World would be rewarded with further foreign policy gains without necessarily risking major confrontation with the U.S. In 1972, a book edited by V.M. Kulish, entitled Military Force and International Relations, stressed the importance of developing the capability to project military power:

Greater importance is being attached to Soviet military presence in various regions throughout the world, reinforced by an adequate level of strategic mobility of its armed forces.

In connection with the task of preventing local wars and also in those cases wherein military support must be furnished to these nations fighting for freedom and independence against the forces of international reaction and imperialist intervention, the Soviet Union may require obile and well-trained and well-equipped forces.... Expanding the scale of Soviet military presence and military assistance furnished by other socialist states is being viewed today as a very important factor in international relations. [Ref. 14: p. 58]

Hence, Kulish was not only advocating the more aggressive use of military force in the developing world, but was admonishing the Soviet leadership to develop the necessary forces to implement such a strategy.

The nature and types of war in the Third World also underwent further revision by the mid 1970's. General of the Army Shavrov introduced a systematic classification of Third World conflicts which included ideological and socio-political as well as non-ideological factors. In classifying Third World conflicts, Shavrov defined all conflicts taking place in the Third World (including wars of national liberation) as local wars and classified these in terms of three factors: (1) sociopolitical, (2) scale, and (3) nature of the weapons and forces employed. [Ref. 17: p. 76] Unlike Khrushchev, who considered all local wars unjust because they inevitably escalated to world war, Shavrov considered the concept of justness to be neutral and made no specific mention that the Soviet Union should avoid involvement in local wars. [Ref. 17: p. 76] On the contrary, local wars could be entered by all nations, including socialist states, to promote foreign policy objectives.

This new definition of the types and nature of Third World conflict allowed the Soviets to make judgements about wars which did not have a clearly definable class basis. This understanding was a prerequisite to Moscow's formulating a more active foreign policy which could be utilized in the

Kremlin's formula of realpolitik in the developing world.

[Ref. 17: p. 77] The inclusion of non-ideological factors in the classification of wars at a time when the Soviet Union was militarily strong implied an increased willingness to become more directly involved in local wars. The scale and the types of weapons employed in combat, obvious military shortcomings before, were now viewed as Soviet advantages and rationale for an increased military role. In 1974, Minister of Defense Marshal A. A. Grechko, writing in "Problems of History of the CPSU", a leading Party theoretical journal, stated:

At the present stage the historic function of the Soviet Armed Forces is not restricted to their function in defending our Motherland and the other socialist states. In its foreign policy activity the Soviet state purposely opposes the effort of counterrevolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggle, and resolutely resists imperialists' aggression in whatever distant region of the planet it may appear. [Ref. 14: p. 59]

Emphasizing that the Soviet armed forces were no longer restricted to simply the defense of the homeland, Grechko revealed a new thread in Soviet military doctrine; that Soviet forces may operate anywhere in the world in pursuit of the Politburo's interests. [Ref. 14: p. 59] By the mid-1970's the subject of local wars was given increased attention in Soviet writings. In War and Army, a 1977 book written by the faculty members of the leading Soviet military academies, discussed the new "external function" of the Soviet Armed Forces. The authors of this book asserted that the

"international obligation of socialist states is to give support and aid to liberated countries in suppressing the imperialist export of armed counterrevolution." [Ref. 14: p. 61] Although Soviet involvement in local wars was still perceived as dangerous because they still had the capacity to escalate into world nuclear war, Soviet participation in them may be necessary to prevent them from spreading. [Ref. 14: p. 60]

Inasmuch as Moscow realized that greater gains could be accrued through increased direct involvement in Third World crises, in practice direct Soviet intervention was not seen as necessary. After all, the Vietnamese prevailed over a much stronger adversary with relatively little direct Soviet support. Hence small scale involvement was perceived as effective in halting large scale imperial military operations. However, the decade of the 1970's was a period of mixed optimism in terms of Soviet advances in the Third World.

Closely following Hanoi's victory over South Vietnam in the spring of 1975, the Marxist MPLA came to power in Angola. In the 1970s, Moscow signed treaties of friendship and cooperation with Angola, Mozambique, the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen, Afghanistan, Egypt, Somalia and Syria. However, during this same period, Moscow suffered several crucial foreign policy setbacks. First, socialist Allende government in Chile was forcibly replaced by a right-wing military regime in 1973. Both Egypt and Somalia abrogated

their treaties of friendship and cooperation with Moscow in 1976 and 1979 respectively, and events elsewhere created Soviet apprehension about its abilities to manage events in the Third World. Though the MPLA emerged victorious in the Angolan civil war, indigenous anti-government forces remained a threat to the Marxist regime. Similarly, Vietnam, after triumphing over imperialism, had yet to subdue anti-Hanoi forces in Kampuchea and the Marxist Taraki regime in Afghanistan also faced serious opposition from internal forces.

Moreover, the American isolationist residue left from the Vietnam experience showed signs of lessening in the face of anti-U.S. events in Latin America. The dynamism of international affairs during the 1970's forced a reassessment of Soviet political and military policy in the Third World. By the mid-1970s, it was no longer thought that Soviet Third World interests could be protected with limited moral, economic, and weapons support. A more active military role seemed to be required to regulate Third World situations in ways favorable to Soviet foreign policy objectives. Furthermore international events of the latter half of the 1970's demonstrated the difficulty confronting new Third World countries attempting to maintain themselves on the path of socialist development.

In 1978, still another type of Third World warfare was introduced into the Soviet lexicon. This new type was termed a war "involving a nation on the path of socialist development

in defense of socialism." [Ref. 17: p. 73] Hence, nations such as Angola, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, which had undergone socialist revolutions and confronted by internal or external opposition, fit comfortably in this category. It must be kept in mind these conflicts were not classified as wars of national liberation because the unjust side was not one of the imperialist states vying to maintain control of its errant colony. Instead the unjust side consisted mostly of indigenous Third World forces. It is also important to note that even though these wars involved the defense of socialism, they were not elevated to the level of wars between opposing social systems. Thus, by not including this type of war in the more serious category, Moscow emphasized, like other local wars, wars in defense of socialism could be prevented from escalating to world war. Furthermore, since these wars were not classified as wars between opposing social systems, greater Soviet military effort could be expended without risking escalation. Thus, in light of these new developments the Soviet military advocated a more active role for Soviet foreign policy.

The experience of the revolutionary liberation struggle of the peoples shows that at critical moments solidarity with a victorious revolution calls not only for moral support, but also for material assistance, including under definite circumstances, military assistance.  
[Ref. 17: p. 114]

Thus, the protection of Soviet international interests demanded an increasingly larger role for the Soviet military. The

classification of this newest type of Third World conflict and the Brezhnev Doctrine enunciated nearly ten years before provided the doctrinal foundation for greater Soviet military involvement.

#### E. CONCLUSION

From the above analysis of the evolution of Soviet local war doctrine it can be ascertained that Moscow's acceptance of an increased Soviet role in regional crises was a function of two primary factors: (1) a significant increase in both Soviet strategic and conventional military capabilities, and (2) ideological acceptance of a socialist role in local struggles other than "wars of national liberation". When the Soviet Union perceived itself weak vis-a-vis its most likely adversary, it viewed local war as something that should be avoided. However, as Moscow became militarily stronger and could roughly match Washington's strategic nuclear strike capabilities, Moscow perceived in its newfound strength a deterrent to U.S. willingness to expand the scope of the small war and hence a key component in Soviet management of Third World crises. Moreover, in order to pursue its foreign policy objectives in the developing world more effectively, these policies had to be ideologically sound. The Politburo's acceptance that not all causes of war were class based represented a dramatic shift Soviet military doctrine and enabled Moscow to interpret nontraditional international

situations. Consequently, this realization served as the foundation for a more aggressive Soviet policy in the Third World.

#### IV. SOVIET NAVY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL WARS

##### A. INTRODUCTION

The Soviet navy's role in local wars soon became apparent. The Soviets discovered that navies have inherent qualities making them extremely useful in local wars far from their borders, especially the ability to project power and influence to distant areas of the world. Increasingly, the Soviets began to use their navy in local crises to effect solutions to these crises in their favor. In short, they saw a need to develop their naval forces to participate more effectively in the defense of their state interests outside of the traditional Soviet sphere of influence.

##### B. RATIONALE FOR NAVAL INVOLVEMENT

The Soviet leadership was well aware of the crucial role the Red Navy would play in such conflicts. The February 1972 issue of Morskoi Sbornik contained the lead article in a series of eleven articles by Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergei G. Gorshkov entitled "Navies in War and Peace." Gorshkov asserts that naval might is one of the important factors enabling certain states to become great powers. Appealing to the maximalist tendencies of certain Politburo members, Gorshkov stated "history shows that states which do not have powerful naval forces have not been able to hold the status of a great power for a long time." [Ref. 22:

p. 12] Gorshkov, emphasizing his point, used the paradigm of the great Spanish Armada whose defeat by the British fleet exposed a Spain which could no longer protect its foreign possessions; eventually lost them, and never again was considered a great power. [Ref. 22: p. 14] Furthermore, he invokes the lessons of the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish war stressing the Russians inability to consolidate their impressive victories against Turkey in the face of the British fleet. The Russians were forced to agree to a settlement without achieving one of the main goals of the war--free access to the Mediterranean. [Ref. 24: p. 10]

Gorshkov argues that the U.S. involvement in local wars is more serious and sinister than simply squelching national liberation movements. He regards such U.S. involvement as an extension of Washington's "flexible response" strategy:

In seizing individual areas of the globe and in interfering in the internal affairs of countries, the imperialists are striving to gain new advantageous strategic positions in the world arena which they need for the struggle with socialism...." [Ref. 24: p. 21]

Hence, not only does U.S. involvement in local wars directly threaten "newly independent countries," but more importantly, is part of the "imperialist" strategy designed to roll back communism and undermine the existence of the Soviet state itself. For these reasons, protection of state interests may be just as important as defending the homeland. This appears to be part of the basis for implementing in the late 1960s the forward strategy of the Red Navy.

In the final article of the series, Gorshkov asserts the mission of the Red Navy is to "...defend state interests on the seas and oceans, and to defend the country from possible attacks from the direction of the seas and oceans." [Ref. 24: p. 13] Hence, it appears that he was elevating "protection of state interests" to the same level as "defense of the homeland," essentially making them the same. If this be the case, then the Soviet Navy must be given the material capabilities with which to perform their mission. To do less risked painful U.S. successes and the dimunition of Soviet influence. From Gorshkov's following statements, it would seem that the Politburo concurs. Heralding a new era of naval construction, Gorshkov states:

[T]he Communist Party and the government fully appreciated both the threat to our country arising from the oceans, and the need to deter the aggressive aspirations of the enemy through construction of a new ocean-going navy. [Ref. 24: p. 16]

After analyzing the operations of the United States and her allies in the Korean and Vietnam wars, Gorshkov remarked:

The role of the fleet in local wars is determined by the fact that among the other branches of the armed forces it is best fitted to carry out, on a wide scale, military actions against countries well away from the territories of the aggressor. In the last two decades in all military conflicts where the geographical conditions have allowed, an active part has been taken by large forces of the fleet....[Ref. 11: p. 235]

Soviets recognize that navies possess certain inherent and special qualities enabling a country to extend or project its influence to areas of the world not contiguous to one's

national borders. In other words, the navy is the only branch of the armed forces with the necessary reach and flexibility (as opposed to Soviet air forces) to effect solutions to events favorable to the foreign policy objectives of Moscow. Navies are not constrained by the baggage apparent in the operations of the other branches but embody the mobility and staying power which make them the ideal conveyor of foreign policy goals to distant areas of the world.

The navy, as an instrument of foreign policy, has demonstrated that it can be both beneficial and non-belligerent. The Soviet fleet accomplishes a wide spectrum of politico-military tasks, ranging from port visits by naval subordinated ships to direct military intervention in order to influence the outcome of crises in ways beneficial to the Kremlin.

Admiral Gorshkov asserts:

Friendly visits by the Soviet seamen offer the opportunity of the peoples of countries visited to see for themselves the creativity of socialist principles in our country, the genuine parity of the peoples of the Soviet Union and their cultural level. In our ships they see the achievement of Soviet science, technology, and industry. Soviet mariners, from rating to admiral, bring to the peoples of the other countries the truth about our socialist country, our Soviet ideology, and culture and our Soviet way of life....Official visits and working calls of our ships to foreign ports make a substantial contribution to the improvement of mutual understanding between states and peoples and to the enhancement of the international authority of the Soviet Union. [Ref. 11: p. 252]

The peacetime Red naval mission is not entirely one of blissful exchanges of pleasantries. Its utility during distant international crises is also extremely important.

Its mere presence in a crisis situation may demonstrate resolve to carry out national interests and/or support for one side in the struggle without necessarily committing forces to armed combat. Hence, it is the application of military power deriving influence in circumstances barring the initiation of hostilities. Admiral Gorshkov understood the significance of this role, adding:

Demonstrative actions ...in many cases have made it possible to achieve political ends without resorting to arms struggle, merely by putting on pressure with one's own potential might and threatening to start military operations....[Ref. 11: p. 248]

Furthermore, Admiral Gorshkov explains the reasons the Soviet navy is better equipped to accomplish this task than other branches of the armed services:

As is known, in the last few years it has become common to hold displays of missile weapons, combat aviation and various military equipment on an international scale, pursuing ...to surprise potential enemies with the perfection of this equipment, exert on them a demoralizing influence by the power of one's weapons even in peacetime, instill in them in advance that efforts to combat aggression are futile. This technique has often been employed throughout the history of military rivalry. True, such a propaganda technique far from always reaches the goals set, primarily because the means of war displayed impressed the viewer merely as a potential force. The navy is another matter. Ships appearing directly offshore represent a real threat of actions. [Ref. 11: p. 247]

During crisis situations, the strike formations of the fleet can be dispatched to "restive" areas before a diplomatic settlement has been reached. These forward forces could be maintained in a high state of readiness. In certain situations, according to Gorshkov, the timely dispatch of naval forces

with limited power would be substantially more important "than large forces which might be deployed in 60-90 days." [Ref. 11: p. 168] Thus, in peacetime and in circumstances of local war, the fleet can play an instrumental role in the pursuance of a nation's political objectives.

### C. SOVIET NAVAL INVOLVEMENT IN THIRD WORLD CRISES

Prior to 1967 the Soviet Navy was too weak to confront Western sea power directly in remote crisis situations. Although Moscow realized a definite need to project influence into the Third World, the Kremlin perceived its strength to do so as inadequate until the mid to late 1960s. Furthermore, as a precondition to their excursions into the developing world, the Soviets noted the requirement to develop strong strategic nuclear forces. Although a large strategic arsenal and the means to deliver it would not directly be a part of Soviet Third World strategy, it would be necessarily but not directly linked. Strategic weapons would help contain the expansion of local wars, thereby preventing small wars from escalating into general war and engulfing the world in a nuclear holocaust.

The navy's role during the infant stages of the Soviet forward foreign policy since the 1950s was almost exclusively in the form of port visits and "show the flag" demonstrations. The first post World War II visit by a Soviet naval subordinated ship to a port of a developing country was made in 1957.

[Ref. 25: p. 89] On this occasion, a cruiser and a destroyer were dispatched from the Baltic Sea en route to the Mediterranean Sea and were scheduled for visits to a number of European littoral ports. Instead, the task group was redirected to Syria and anchored in Tartus during the Syrian-Turkish crisis in October of that year. During this visit, Vice-Admiral Kotov, in charge of the visiting ships, expressed Moscow's readiness to help Syria "safeguard its independence, bolster its sovereignty, and resist foreign interference." [Ref. 25: p. 8] This promise was issued at a time when the Soviets could not match Western firepower, either strategically or regionally. This was probably more an idle bluster by Khrushchev than a willingness to intervene militarily.

Foreign port visits did not increase substantially until the late 1960s. Between 1953 and 1966, the Soviets conducted only eight diplomatic visits to ports of less developed countries with the large proportion of these to the Mediterranean African littoral countries and Syria. [Ref. 25: p. 89] These visits were non-belligerent and intricately orchestrated affairs. State officials arrived to formally greet host country representatives and much effort was expended toward gift presentation and the exchange of pleasantries. Such visits were designed as feelers to divine Russian acceptance by the developing world.

Port visits remained the only method the Soviets had available at the the time to demonstrate their power influence.

They did not have the real power to counter U.S. moves. Moscow was not able to commit naval forces to the Mediterranean in 1958 in large enough numbers to counter the U.S. intervention into Lebanon. During this Lebanese crisis, Khrushchev reportedly rebuffed Nasser's pleas for military support by saying, "....[T]o be frank, the Soviet Union is not ready for a clash with the West, the result of which would be uncertain." [Ref. 26: p. 80] The Soviet response to the U.S. landings in Lebanon was typical of a major power which perceived its own strength as far weaker than that of its potential adversary's. Soviet reaction, for the most part, was limited to verbal denouncements of the United States and widely publicized naval exercises in the Black Sea prudently far removed from the immediate crisis area. Hence, the Soviet response was viewed as meager in the eyes of the Egyptians who were attempting to subvert the Chamoun government. The Egyptians, after observing the Soviet show of support in the Syrian crisis the year before, had expected more. However, for the Kremlin, the indirect response was the only viable option. An attempt to inhibit the movements of the U.S.'s Sixth Fleet armada would have proved fruitless and could have caused the Politburo extreme embarrassment at a crucial time when the Soviet Union was trying to establish itself as a major global power in the eyes of the Third World. Khrushchev was correct in his analysis of Soviet capabilities to affect the outcome of the Lebanese crisis in 1958; Moscow was not ready or able to deal the military card.

The Lebanese crisis of 1958 occurred at a time when Soviet military writers believed war, any war, with the West would inevitably escalate into general nuclear war. Wars of this type would be conducted with unlimited means and, if such a war was to occur, the Kremlin perceived itself as hopelessly outnumbered. The Lebanese crisis did indeed serve to diminish Soviet credibility in Egypt and any other developing countries, but it was a price Moscow felt compelled to pay.

It was not until the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war that the Soviet Union was able to field a naval force capable of intervening effectively against a worthy opponent. This episode served as a test of the Russian will to confront the U.S. directly in an area that heretofore had been considered under Washington's "sphere of influence." The members of the Politburo who still doubted the worth of an interventionist policy needed proof that Soviet military capabilities were strong enough to effect favorable outcomes to situations notwithstanding U.S. actions and without risking nuclear war. This crisis served as a turning point: it marked the first extensive use of naval power in a military crisis. [Ref. 26: p. 87] The war offered Moscow its first opportunity to recoup some of the credibility it had lost in the previous Lebanese crisis. Unlike its low-keyed involvement in the Lebanese affair, the Soviet Union fielded a modern and militarily capable surface squadron in the Mediterranean. According to

Bruce Watson, when war erupted in June, "the U.S. Sixth Fleet confronted the greatest fleet assembled by any nation potentially hostile to the United States since World War II." [Ref. 026: p. 88]

This war served as a touchstone to the utility of Gorshkov's "oceangoing" fleet and its abilities to participate in remote international crises. The occurrence of certain events may have left the Kremlin with the perception that its involvement narrowed the range of U.S. military and political options. For instance, scheduled port visits by U.S. ships were not curtailed during the crisis and a 2,000 man marine contingent remained in Malta throughout the affair many days from the area of hostilities. Furthermore, most Sixth Fleet assets underway remained in the vicinity of Crete and never ventured closer than three hundred miles from either the Egyptian or Israeli coasts. [Ref. 26: p. 88] The Soviet Union, on the other hand, bolstered its naval squadron in the Mediterranean throughout the conflict and it eventually numbered slightly more than seventy ships. [Ref. 26: p. 88]

If, in fact, Soviet naval actions did influence U.S. decision makers not intervene on behalf of Israel during the crisis, then Gorshkov's arguments for a large "oceangoing" navy would have certainly gained credence in the Politburo and may have convinced certain factions of the utility of the navy as a foreign policy tool. But evidence to support this contention is inconclusive. After all, the war was extremely

short and America's client, Israel, was never really threatened. Thus, there was really no genuine requirement for a more active role by the U.S. Sixth Fleet. The proof needed to convince the "doubting Thomases" of the Politburo that the Soviet Union could conduct a potentially dangerous foreign policy in the Third World under the shadow of U.S. military power was not sufficiently provided by the June war experience. This is not to say that the Soviet Union did not benefit. Soviet involvement demonstrated national resolve to commit military forces in support of a "friendly" country. This event along with supporting Egypt against Israel in the wake of the June war helped restore Soviet credibility in the developing world lost during the weeks of the Lebanese affair of 1958 and opened Egyptian facilities to Soviet military personnel. Moreover, the June war altered regional perceptions of the balance of power in the Middle East. Although Arab countries were defeated decisively by the preemptive tactics of the Israeli military, Moscow's willingness to commit military forces to support the cause against Israel may have convinced the Arab governments that there was indeed an alternative to U.S. power in the region; the Soviet Union. The large scale Soviet naval response in the June war demonstrated that the U.S. was no longer free to act in remote areas of the world with impunity; that in future international crisis Washington would have to weigh more closely the ramifications of its policy decisions in light of new Soviet power capabilities. The June 1967 war

served as a prelude to future Soviet operations in the Third World.

One operation followed the seizure of two Soviet fishing trawlers off the coast of Ghana in October 1969. During stalemated negotiations for their release, the Soviet Union dispatched a small surface action group (SAG) off Ghanaian waters. This movement was widely publicized and the Ghanaian government was undoubtedly aware of its presence. The trawlers and their crews were quickly released. Although the presence of the naval units was clearly not the decisive factor in the release of the two trawlers, the Kremlin probably thought that the SAG would strengthen its diplomatic leverage.

After the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke of Somalia, a coup placed a pro-Soviet regime in power. During the subsequent period of instability, the Soviet Navy conducted several visible and widely publicized official visits to the Somali ports of Berbera and Mogadiscio. [Ref. 25: p. 127] These naval units demonstrated support for a favored regime faced with internal instability.

In November 1969, the Soviet Union responded to the Portuguese attempt to oust Guinean President Sekou Toure a month earlier. A small contingent of Soviet naval combatants deployed to the area immediately off the coast of Guinea. This deployment represented an effort to deter further Portuguese-led attacks against the Toure government or, if

necessary, to intercept such attacks at sea. [Ref. 25: p. 130] Moreover, this deployment had the additional mission of bolstering the government against domestic opposition. On several occasions a Soviet combatant was anchored immediately opposite the presidential palace to ensure the president's safety. [Ref. 25: p. 131] The nearly constant presence of an LST during the patrol reflected the possibility of direct Soviet troop involvement to protect the regime and/or the readiness to evacuate Soviet diplomatic personnel quickly should a crisis develop. With the threat of Portuguese-led insurrection high, the Soviet naval patrol provided the Soviet Union political leverage over the Toure regime that it would not have had otherwise.

The Jordanian crisis of September 1970 and the Indo-Pakistani war of December 1971 were both important events in Soviet naval diplomacy. Each crisis and subsequent Soviet naval response provided evidence that Soviet capabilities to intervene in areas of the world not adjacent to Soviet borders were increasing and that the power projection role continued to receive major emphasis in the Soviet armed forces, especially the navy. However, neither crisis could be viewed as a touchstone of Soviet military power to deter U.S. direct intervention because the patron/client relationship in each case was obscure. For instance, the United States did not have a security commitment with either Jordan or Pakistan. Hence, superpower options were extremely limited and the question of who deterred whom is difficult to decipher.

The Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, or Yom Kippur war, offered an entirely different setting. Here, the patron/client lines were clearly drawn. Thus, with this as a backdrop, the results of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation could be used to determine who won. At noon on October 6, 1973, elements of the Egyptian army crossed the Suez and engaged Israeli positions on the East Bank. This spearhead was followed by a series of surprising Arab victories on the battlefield during the first several days of the conflict. Two days prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the Red navy numbered fifty-two ships including eleven submarines (two were probably guided missile equipped), three cruisers (two guided missile equipped), six destroyers, five frigates, two mine sweepers, and two amphibious ships. [Ref. 26: p. 103] By October 10, the Soviets had increased the number of submarines to sixteen and the surface combatants to twenty-one, of which many were guided missile equipped. [Ref. 26: p. 104] During the next two weeks, the Soviets continued to augment their Mediterranean eskadra with assets from the Black Sea. On October 24, Soviet ships in the Mediterranean numbered eighty units. This force included thirty-one surface combatants and at least sixteen submarines. Many of these were guided missile equipped, ideal platforms to counter the two U.S. carrier battle groups in the Mediterranean at that time.

Initially, this unprecedented concentration of Soviet naval power was reflective of Moscow's determination to deter possible U.S. military support of Israel in the wake of inaugural Egyptian victories. Though the U.S. Sixth Fleet posed no threat to Egypt during this phase of the crisis, further Egyptian successes might have convinced Washington to intervene to save Israel, its client. However, as the tide began to turn in favor of the Israelis, Soviet naval power remained high to support further unilateral military moves, first to assist the rearming efforts of its clients, Egypt and Syria, and second, to support possible direct military intervention by Soviet armed forces.

The initial U.S. response on 6 October was uncharacteristically indecisive. It can be inferred from the memoirs of Admiral Zumwalt, then Chief of Naval Operations, that his behavior reflected concern for the inadequacy of available U.S. sea power. [Ref. 27: p. 446] Orders emanating from Washington were so strict that even ships' latitude and longitude were precisely delineated. Thus, U.S. Sixth Fleet ships remained tightly tethered to the White House, dangerously curtailing freedom of movement and complicating the conduct of naval operations. [Ref. 27: p. 435] Vice Admiral Murphy complained to higher authority on several occasions, but to no avail. He was denied a request by the White House to move some of his units eastward in order to clearly assess the tactical situation and to be in better position to evacuate

Americans from the crisis area if the order was given. [Ref. 27: p. 436] Additionally, Vice Admiral Murphy was denied permission to redeploy the U.S.S. Roosevelt battle group eastward in order to complement the Independence battle group which was on station in the eastern Mediterranean. [Ref. 27: p. 436] This augmentation appeared prudent and necessary to ensure the defense of U.S. naval forces. The U.S.S. Kennedy and her escorts were dispatched from the North Sea to the Mediterranean but were ordered to hover west of the Strait of Gibraltar and, thus, not "chopping" to Sixth Fleet. [Ref. 27: p. 436] It would not be until the early morning hours of the 25th, minutes before world-wide DEFCON 3 was set, that the Kennedy was ordered into the Mediterranean. [Ref. 27: p. 436] This was in direct response to Brezhnev's ultimatum to send Soviet ground troops into the war zone.

Tensions remained high for the next several days. The Soviet Mediterranean squadron conducted large-scale anti-carrier warfare (ACW) exercises which lasted until the 1st of November. [Ref. 27: p. 443] This was a very crucial period for the U.S. naval units in the eastern Mediterranean because it was and is difficult to distinguish an ACW exercise from the real thing. A high state of tension complicates the problem and sets the stage for misinterpretation which might lead to a "hot" situation. The Soviet willingness to take that chance confirms their presence was more than simply "showing the flag."

By the 31st of October, the Soviet Mediterranean squadron consisted of "96 units, including 34 surface combatants and 23 submarines, possessing a first launch capability of 88 SSMs (surface to surface guided missiles), 348 torpedoes, and 46 SAMs (surface to air guided missiles)." [Ref. 27: p. 447] These figures for Soviet naval ships in the Mediterranean were unprecedented and reflected the Kremlin's willingness to commit National military forces on behalf of a Third World client. In the words of Bradford Dismukes, the Soviet forces could have given a "good account of themselves," which was well understood by the joint chiefs of staff. Admiral Moorer, then Chairman JCS, commented that under the circumstance which prevailed immediately after the setting of DEFCON 3, "we would lose our ass in the eastern Med" [Ref. 27: p. 444]....[V]ictory in the Med would have depended on who struck first." [Ref. 26: p. 107] Admiral Zumwalt concurred with Admiral Moorer's assessment adding that the eastern Mediterranean was the worst place to fight the Soviets. [Ref. 27: p. 444] The Soviet Union not only enjoyed geographic closeness to the crisis area, facilitating easy force augmentation, but during and immediately after the setting of DEFCON 3, clearly commanded local military superiority. The carrier Roosevelt had yet to join Independence in the eastern Mediterranean and Kennedy was just then transiting the Strait of Gibraltar still nearly four days steaming time from the crisis area and clearly in no position to support the vulnerable Independence battle

group. Describing the days immediately following the setting of the alert, Admiral Zumwalt reflected, "I doubt the major units of the U.S. navy were ever in a tenser situation since World War II ended than the sixth fleet in the Mediterranean was for the week after the alert was declared." [Ref. 27: 447]

The belief that local U.S. military power had indeed been checked by the Soviet display is supported by Admiral Zumwalt's analysis of the situation:

I myself regret that in the crunch we lacked either the military strength or the stable leadership ...to have supported the Israelis instead of forcing to draw back from the encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army. However, we had no choice, the Soviets derived great benefits from the war. [Ref. 27: p. 449]

This statement cannot be discarded as merely idle lamentations by the former CNO. If not the actual balance of power, then at least the perception of the balance of power had shifted dramatically from the status quo and in favor of the Soviet Union. Moscow's demonstration of power and its apparent willingness to use it confined the United States to the role of observer. Although it is probably true that it was in the U.S.'s best interest not to have the Egyptian Third Army crushed in the final days of the Yom Kippur War, it may have been perceived by the international community that the Soviet Union had indeed forced Washington's hand into constraining its client. Hence, on this occasion, the determination as to who forced whom may have convinced some observers to decide in favor of Moscow.

The Soviet Union garnered tremendous propaganda value for their efforts in the war. They had proved once again that they were the self-proclaimed protectors of the Arab peoples and the Arab cause against the Israelis. Furthermore, there is substantial evidence to support the contention that the Soviet threat to intervene was more than just an idle gesture. [Ref. 26: p. iii] The apparent Soviet decision to commit ground troops to fighting could only have been made if and only if the Politburo perceived an overwhelming chance for the success. Therefore, at the time the decision was made, the Politburo must have discerned its regional (Middle East) military power as strong enough to negate any intrusion by the United States in Soviet designs. However, in the Russian mind, regional power alone would not be enough to ensure success in "local war" operations. It was necessary for the Soviet Union to possess a powerful arsenal of strategic nuclear weaponry which would preclude another Cuban missile episode of Soviet embarrassment and political prostration before the United States. Moreover, a strong strategic nuclear force would prevent the escalation of the Middle East crisis from a "small war" to a nuclear conflagration engulfing the superpowers in a third World War that nobody wanted. The Yom Kippur War occurred at a time when the Soviet Union felt comfortable with and confident in their strategic nuclear arsenal. SALT one had become law a year earlier essentially giving Moscow de jure numerical superiority in strategic

delivery systems. By 1973, the Soviet Union had fielded more launchers of ICBMs than the United States, 1600 to 1054.

[Ref. 28: p. 53] Hence the perception of power at least may have compelled the Kremlin to follow a policy of brinksmanship in the Middle East in 1973.

In the final analysis, Soviet power, or at least Washington's perception of Soviet power, had a significant impact on U.S. decision-making concerning a region of the world far removed from the Soviet Union and tacitly accepted as lying in the Western sphere of influence. As a result of the events of October 1973, the balance of power, or at least the international community's perception of the balance of power, had shifted in favor of the Soviet Union. Moscow gained an appreciation of the benefits which may be accrued to the side which has the capabilities to project power and influence. However, Moscow also learned that though military power can be decisive in effecting an immediate solution to a crisis, it does not guarantee continued long lasting influence in the client country after the crisis itself has dissipated. The Soviet Union emerged from the war with noticeably less influence over Egyptian affairs than they had enjoyed during the antebellum. This turn of events certainly brought to light that military aid, even the commitment of national forces, must be coupled with equal or greater amounts of political, ideological, and economic support.

After Portugal's decolonization of Angola in January 1975, fighting broke out between three competing factions: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and the National Union (UNITA). The Soviet client MPLA with large scale support from Cuba and the Soviet Union quickly assumed the upper hand in the struggle and continued the offensive until October when the FNLA and UNITA joined forces and began to threaten MPLA control of Luanda. The Soviets responded with a massive rescue mission; injecting massive amounts of supplies and large numbers of Cuban troops into the crisis area.

The initial Soviet naval response came in late November when it became clear that Soviet merchant ships required protection from anti-MPLA forces including a number of Zairian naval units. In reaction to this potential threat, an Alligator LST was dispatched from its patrol areas near Conakry, Guinea to Angolan waters. Its mission was twofold. Its first task was to protect Soviet merchant ships unloading supplies for MPLA and Cuban forces, and second, to be in position to quickly evacuate Soviet personnel in Luanda if the situation worsened. A Kotlin DDG was also sortied from the Mediterranean to south Atlantic waters.

By mid-December the situation had stabilized in favor of MPLA forces and on December 19 the U.S. Senate voted to terminate support for anti-MPLA elements. However, the Soviets

were not totally convinced that the Senate vote meant the end of U.S. involvement in Angola. Understandably, the President of the United States does not need Congressional approval to commit military forces in a crisis situation. In early January 1976, a Kresta II sortied the Gibraltar Strait and sailed south along the west African coast. Furthermore, a mod-Sverdlov was ordered to assume a position near the Gibraltar Strait and was soon joined by a Kresta I and mod-Kahin from the northern fleet. [Ref. 25: p. 148] Moreover, a Juliet SSG operated in west African waters for most of the crisis period. These ship movements were probably made in reaction to U.S. ship movements. The U.S.S. Saratoga had recently sortied from Mayport, Florida en route for a scheduled deployment to the Mediterranean. Moreover, Soviet naval units in the area were also instrumental in supporting the airlift of Cuban troops from Havana to Luanda and at one point provided naval gunfire support for MPLA forces, shelling FNLA forces near Lobito and Bensuela. [Ref. 26: p. 62] The Soviet naval operations during the Angolan civil war were measured and anticipatory. It further demonstrated the utility of an "oceangoing" navy and reemphasized the advantages of forward deployed naval units.

The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese conflict represented the first time the Soviet Union defended a socialist state against the PRC. During the early part of the crisis, Soviet Pacific fleet combatants were dispatched in two action groups to

waters contiguous to the crisis area. Eventually the Soviet naval force totalled nearly thirty ships and, according to Watson, provided enough power to safeguard ongoing Soviet operations. By establishing a strong naval presence before the outbreak of hostilities, Moscow hoped to deter Chinese actions against Hanoi. However, once hostilities began, Moscow moved quickly to support its client and also to protect its own forces in the area. Throughout the crisis, the Soviet Union maintained a considerable naval presence, conducted reconnaissance and protected airlift and sealift lines of communications.. Furthermore, Soviet naval units visited Vietnamese ports of Cam Ranh, Da Nang, and Haiphong, ostensibly to deter Chinese air strikes on these ports.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Soviet capabilities to project power into the Third World increased substantially during the decade of the 70s. It was also at this juncture that the concept of local war as it relates to Soviet military doctrine was put into practice and matured. Crises in the Third World resulting in Soviet-American confrontation did not lead to general war as opponents of aggressive foreign policy had warned. Furthermore, the apparent success of Soviet military power in narrowing the range of options available to Washington during the Yom Kippur War may have convinced Moscow it could participate in Third World crises, at least militarily, on the same level as the

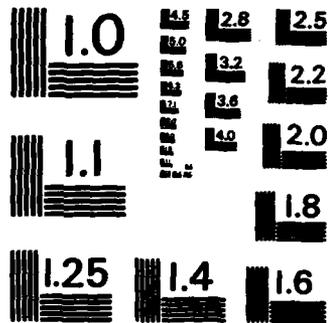
United States. In other words, Moscow perceived it could influence the outcomes of remote international crises notwithstanding U.S. participation.

In each crisis examined above, the Soviet Union utilized its naval forces not only to project influence and power, but also to demonstrate national resolve to support its client and an apparent willingness to commit armed force if determined necessary. This is not to say that the primary objective of the Politburo in each of these cases was the employment of actual military force; it clearly was not. The Soviet naval forces had an explicit political mission. However, the presence of military forces displaying the capabilities to intervene may have affected the perceptions of Soviet clients, instilling in them a false sense of security and a greater inclination to confront opposing forces. Furthermore, the demonstration of Soviet firepower in a crisis situation may also affect the perceived freedom of action of the opposition's patron. For instance, it is quite plausible to imagine the Politburo departed from the Yom Kippur War with the perception that it had indeed limited Washington's scope of action.

Soviet naval participation in Third World crises represents a realization in Moscow that, in order to protect state interests in this area of the world, a more active and direct politico-military policy is required. Socialist gains had to be protected and the navy, as Gorshkov has stated, was and

remains the best equipped to accomplish this mission in  
remote regions.





MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

## V. SOVIET AIR-CAPABLE SHIPS

In the 1970s we witnessed the beginnings of Soviet discussions about the development of a new type of aircraft carrier. This ship represented a significant departure from previous classes of Soviet carriers. Its potential for use in local wars suggests that its development was probably linked to the changes in Soviet thinking on local war outlined in a previous chapter. This chapter seeks to briefly detail the operational/technical differences between the capabilities of previous carriers and the Kremlin's latest offering. Additionally, the following chapter seeks to provide a more detailed analysis of the doctrinal changes that led to Soviet perceptions of the need for a carrier with such capabilities.

The Moskva was laid down at Nikolayev South shipyard on the Black Sea in 1963, suggesting that the decision to build this ship occurred during the late 1950s or immediately at the turn of the decade. It was launched in 1965 and commissioned in March 1967. Its sister ship, Leningrad, was laid down in 1965 and commissioned in 1968. As mentioned above, this line of ships was terminated after the construction of two units, ten short of a programmed twelve. This was probably in reaction to advances in U.S. submarine launched ballistic missiles requiring these ships, not exhibiting the

most stable ship design techniques, to conduct operations farther away from Soviet bases. Consequently, the Kiev was designed and built to meet these new Western threats. The lead unit of this series, Kiev, was laid down at the Black Sea shipyard at Nikolayev in September 1970 suggesting that the decision to build probably occurred during the mid-1960s. She was launched in December 1972 and, after nearly 2½ years of fitting out and sea trials, was commissioned in 1975. Four units of the Kiev class have been built with the latest, Kharkov, still at the latter stages of its precommissioning.

The Kiev represents the first line of Soviet ships capable of operating and supporting a complement of fixed-wing jet aircraft at sea. It displaces roughly 43,000 tons making it 2½ times the size of its predecessor, Moskva. It operates a mix of Yak-36 Forger VTOL aircraft and Ka-25 helicopters. It was originally classified by the Soviets as a Protivolodochny Kreyser (anti-submarine cruiser) but in 1978 received a new designation of taktychesky avionosny kreyser (tactical aircraft carrying cruiser) suggesting Moscow appreciates its mission flexibility. Kiev represents Moscow's first attempt to provide its fleet with sea-based aircraft capable of providing a viable air defense for its naval forces at sea; thus allowing the conduct of anti-submarine warfare (ASW) in hostile areas. Though it has taken part in a number of amphibious exercises demonstrating limited power projection

capabilities\*, according to Western naval analysts, its primary purpose remains ASW.

Both the Moskva and Kiev could be described as naval hybrids, incorporating design features of both cruisers and aircraft carriers. Though both exhibit the capabilities to perform multiple missions, their primary task appears to be ASW. Soviet VTOL aviation could not match the range and payload capabilities of conventional aircraft required to extend the range of its defensive zone during distant naval operations and to launch meaningful strikes on targets ashore. As mentioned above, the Soviets appeared to take steps designed to enhance its naval power projection role in the form of their own CTOL aircraft carrier in the early to mid 1970s.

The keel of the Soviet's first legitimate attack carrier was laid down in late 1982 at the same Black Sea shipyard that constructed the first two classes of air-capable ships, Nikolayev South. [Ref. 20: p. 77] According to Norman Polmar the facilities at this shipyard were expanded shortly following the keel laying of Kiev unit four in December 1978. The March 1981 issue of Naval Scientific and Technical Intelligence Register, states that the Soviet Union purchased

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\*According to naval analyst John Jordan, this mission is obviously subsidiary to its primary role of ASW. Jordan suggests that Kiev's participation in such events was to test the viability of future concepts and hardware which may be related to the new CTOL aircraft carrier.

two massive gantry cranes from Finland to be used in ship construction. These cranes were delivered in June 1979 and March 1980 respectively and both were subsequently installed at Nikolayev South shipyard. Each crane has a separate lifting capacity of 900 tons and a combined lift capacity of 1500 tons.\* This enhances Soviet abilities to construct large ships such as aircraft carriers. Moreover, the September 24, 1979 edition of Aviation Week and Space Technology noted that U.S. reconnaissance satellite photos revealed that the Soviets were conducting catapult and arresting gear tests at an unspecified airfield. The above evidence suggests that the formal decision to build their first legitimate aircraft carrier occurred in the early to mid 1970s and thus framed in the events and doctrine of that period.

The carrier, being built in two sections, will have a full-length flight deck with steam catapults and arresting gear accommodating CTOL aircraft. Possible candidates for its airwing include models of the Mig 27, SU 27, and the SU 25. According to Rear Admiral John L. Butts, Director Naval Intelligence, the ship will displace between 65-75,000 tons, accommodate 60 tactical aircraft and will probably be nuclear powered. Moreover, according to this source, sea trials for the new carrier could begin as early as 1988. However, due to

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\*Comparable U.S. cranes utilized in the construction of aircraft carriers could lift 800 tons without a tandem lift capability.

the Soviet navy's relative unfamiliarity with carrier and  
airwing operations, full operational capability is not  
expected before 1992. [Ref. 21: p. 348]

## VI. SOVIET THOUGHT ON AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IN LOCAL WARS

### A. INTRODUCTION

Following the evolution in Soviet naval doctrine and their desire to involve themselves in regional conflicts, the USSR recognized the aircraft carrier's role in local wars. This chapter traces the general shift in Soviet attitudes toward aircraft carriers. The Soviets emphasized the aircraft carrier's utility in power projection in local war operations and also underlined their need to provide air support to naval operations. There was a renewed emphasis on sea control in the Soviet Union that extended to a desire for power over both the air and underwater realms. Carriers were the only means of providing air support to naval operations in remote areas of the world and Soviets recognized their viability in conventional warfare even while realizing these warships remain vulnerable in nuclear warfare.

Beginning in the latter years of the 1960's and continuing through the early 1970's Western analysts discerned a discontinuation of the derogatory remarks Soviets made about attack aircraft carriers which appeared to signal the Defense Committee's desire to construct them. Beginning at this juncture, a more favorable appraisal of the utility of aircraft carriers in general and attack carriers in particular was openly apparent. During this period, although still pointing

out certain weaknesses of strike carriers, the articles for the first time identified certain advantages of aircraft carriers as well. This chapter details a number of Soviet authored articles pertaining to aircraft carriers published during the first half of the 1970s and includes this writer's analysis of these writings in an attempt to ascertain the Kremlin's views of the utility of aircraft carriers in local wars.

The theme of a large portion of Soviet military writings is never easily discerned and often ambiguous. Attempts to decipher statements out of context are exercises in futility and will often lead to error. It is the overall tone of the article which is important. The tone, either favorable or unfavorable, is the best guide to understanding the author's main premise and whether he is simply stating a fact or advocating a certain position.

Soviet writers use abstract terms and sometimes write about the past or the future as if they were happening now. They often use surrogates to state a position which they may agree with but which has not received widespread support among the politico-military bureaucracy. Soviet military writers rarely state their position unambiguously on an issue which may be perceived as controversial.

The writings of Admiral of the Fleet Gorshkov are the most important of the Soviet Naval writers. A member of the Central Committee and the Defense Committee, Admiral Gorshkov's words

are not taken lightly and often reflect subtle shifts in Soviet naval development and doctrine. Though every Gorshkov statement does not necessarily reflect a wide concensus among the "nomenklatura," it does suggest that he has solid support among the decisionmakers for his stance. A number of Western analysts believe that Gorshkov will often use a subordinate to initiate the debate on a certain controversial subject. Vice Admiral K. Stalbo, Doctor of Naval Sciences, may provide this role of "ghost writer" on occasion.

#### B. SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF ATTACK AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

Admiral K.A. Stalbo's contribution to a 1969 book entitled History of Naval Art asserts:

Combat actions in the naval theatres in the Second World War demonstrated that the large-gunned surface combatants had ceded their leading role to aircraft carriers....

The advent of aircraft carrier aviation made possible the projection of the air threat to virtually all regions of the World Ocean. At the same time groups of surface ships that were provided air cover by carrier fighter airplanes gained the capability for operating in the zone off the enemy's shores within the range of his land-based aviation. [Ref. 29: p. 522]

Explicit in Admiral Stalbo's remarks is the aircraft carrier's inherent capability to project power into distant reaches of the globe. Conducting naval operations close to a belligerent's shores can entail operating far from friendly bases. This had long been held by naval analysts as a risky task without local air support. The attack aircraft carrier mitigated the risk somewhat. Stalbo continues his praise of aircraft

carriers later in his chapter, lauding the high mobility and mission flexibility of these ships:

The great mobility of strike carrier task forces, their thorough electronic countermeasures, and their freedom to choose the direction of movement, in the opinion of the Americans, made difficult the search for them in the oceans, and the delivery against them of air and submarine strikes. For changing its front of attack, the strike carrier task force could move 600 miles in 24 hours. Strike carriers represented a considerable threat and warfare against them was a major and difficult mission. [Ref. 29: p. 536]

Although using the American surrogate once again, Stalbo appears to be admitting that due to their inherent qualities of survival, aircraft carriers may not be as vulnerable as previously assumed. After stating his case in apparent support of the strike aircraft carrier, he catalogues the shortcomings of such ships. He comments that aircraft carriers remain extremely vulnerable to "detonations of nuclear bombs and missiles." [Ref. 29: p. 536] He emphasizes the operations of carrier-based aircraft are very much a function of hospitable weather conditions, asserting that "...when the seas were rough, the takeoff and landing of planes were made difficult; or were excluded." [Ref. 29: p. 536] Moreover, Stalbo concludes that:

It was not essential to destroy a strike carrier to break up his attack. It was enough to damage the flight deck to cause a small list or loss of fore and aft trim. [Ref. 29: p. 536]

Though detailing the deficiencies of aircraft carriers, Stalbo did not launch into the winded diatribe announcing the inevitable capitulation of the carrier which was characteristic

of many writings before. Stalbo makes clear that these ships remained vulnerable to modern defenders armed with nuclear weapons, but to potential belligerents less equipped, the aircraft carrier could be a viable force. Hence, still somewhat vulnerable, aircraft carriers permitted wartime operations which, in their absence, would be extremely problematic. According to Stalbo:

The lack of aircraft carriers in our Navy limited the possibilities of the employment of surface ships during the war. They could operate only in relatively narrow coastal sectors of the sea in which they could be given air cover by fighter aircraft from airfields ashore. [Ref. 29: p. 562]

Hence, Stalbo seemingly laments the absence of attack carriers in the Soviet Navy. Without such ships, the Red Army would remain prisoner to the Russian littoral in wartime, ensconced in its defensive and support roles.

A May 1970 Red Star article noted the multipurpose aspects of aircraft carriers:

....it is stated that the extensive and flexible capabilities of aircraft carriers enable them to be employed for carrying out the most diverse and strategic and tactical mission. [Ref. 30]

Indicative of an apparent carrier debate prevailing in the Defense Ministry during this time were comments by Chief of the Main Staff of the Navy, Admiral N.D. Sergeyev, in an April 1970 Morskoi Sbornik article entitled "V. I. Lenin on the Mission of the Navy." Though Sergeyev devotes much of the article to praising Lenin's early efforts to revive the Soviet Navy, he provides some oblique insight into the minds

of many of those who advocated aircraft carrier construction. In the course of lauding the Party-accepted naval superweapon, the submarine, Sergeyev states, "[N]uclear submarines constitute the main attack force of the Navy at present." [Ref. 31: p. 9] (emphasis added) Hence, Sergeyev may be implying that the submarine, as it has been for many years, is the accepted superior weapon of modern navies today; however; it may soon be replaced. Though he does not mention aircraft carriers per se, Sergeyev does write favorably about the capabilities of American mobile armed forces; of which attack aircraft carriers are an integral part. It could be that he had the aircraft carrier in mind as a viable replacement for the submarine.

A June 1970 article in the Soviet naval journal Morskoi Sbornik entitled "Aviation in Warfare Against the Strike Forces of a Navy" advocates the construction of aircraft carriers including the following comments on the need for such naval forces:

Striving to use aviation at great distances from the coast has brought about the creation of seaplanes. These planes, however, could not support actions of surface ships for a long time and could not strike enemy ships, without entering the zone of their gunfire. Thus, a need arose for airplanes based directly on ships. This was the basis of the beginning of the development of carrier aviation. [Ref. 32: p. 33]

Moreover, although the author repeats the long voiced contention that large surface ships are vulnerable to submarines and air strikes, he does devote special attention to the

defensive means which have been developed to protect those high value surface units, including surface to air missiles and guns "deeply echeloned [in an] antiaircraft system," [Ref. 32: p. 34] integrated into a very sophisticated system of electronic countermeasures. Hence, although aircraft carriers were essentially imbued with certain vulnerabilities to modern weapons, active and passive protective means could be implemented to mitigate this deficiency. Seemingly, the author was advising the General Staff to provide the Navy with the means with which to successfully implement forward missions which displaced forces far from friendly bases.

In the September 1970 issue of Morskoi Sbornik, Captain 1st Rank V.N. Shevtsov asserted that since their withdrawal from the first echelon of strategic nuclear forces in the early 1960's, the primary mission of aircraft carriers was that of operations in local wars. Shevtsov, in an article entitled "Present State of and Trend in Development of the U.S. Navy" claims:

Strike aircraft carriers, although taken out of the strategic strike forces not too long ago, are now viewed as on their reserve. They are an important type of ship for use in local wars and in a nuclear war, as well as the main means for the conduct of the notorious politics of force. [Ref. 33: p. 30]

He notes that the U.S. ballistic missile submarine is the only naval weapon system recognized as part of the strategic forces; all others, including the aircraft carriers, make up the general purpose forces. [Ref. 33: p. 27] Though this

was not the first occasion in which aircraft carriers were identified with a local war mission, this aspect of carrier operations was emphasized throughout this period. Shevtsov's assertion that the aircraft carrier could be used effectively in both local as well as major wars, seems to satisfy the requirements of which Gorshkov spoke in his 1967 article advocating the construction of a balanced navy.\*

The aircraft carrier had indeed been relegated to the nuclear reserve forces, but Shevtsov cautioned their use in major wars should not be overlooked:

It is not an accident that the U.S. naval command particularly emphasizes the fact that "the significance of attack carriers as strategic reserve force in event of general war in the near future has obviously not diminished. [Ref. 33: p. 30]

But Shevtsov was not content on seeing just any kind of aircraft carrier enter the Red Navy. He appeared to be particularly interested in one which was nuclear powered.

In the future, the American command plans to build only attack carriers with nuclear power plants. Under construction at the present time are the nuclear-powered aircraft carriers Nimitz (CVAN-68) and the D. Eisenhower (CVAN-69). CVAN-70 is to be laid down somewhat later. [Ref. 33: p. 31]

Hence, Shevtsov appeared to speculate that if the most advanced naval power, the one with the most aircraft carrier construction experience, commits itself to the construction of only nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, should not the Soviet shipbuilding experts do likewise?

### C. SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF ATTACK AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IN LOCAL WARS

Aside from a growing Soviet appreciation for aircraft carriers in general, they began to show specific interest in carrier utility in local wars. Though expressed previously, this became evident in a number of articles written during the early 1970's. Indicative of this was a statement which appeared in the February 1971 issue of Red Star.

Almost everywhere that imperialism undertakes regular acts of aggression, the sinister silhouette of an aircraft carrier appears with its Stars and Stripes.  
[Ref. 34]

The author, Captain 1st Rank Petrenko, was drawing attention to the fact that the aircraft carrier remained the primary participant in local wars involving the U.S. Furthermore, Petrenko emphasized another benefit of the aircraft carrier which heretofore had not often been addressed. He stressed the carrier's ability to serve as a base in forward areas when foreign bases were unavailable.

In the July 1971 issue of Military Thought, Captain Second Rank Bestuzhew spoke favorably of aircraft carriers emphasizing their inherent mobility and flexibility:

Construction of aircraft carriers is continuing. In contrast to ballistic missile submarines, which are designed to attack targets on land, the principal offensive mission if the embarked airwing are:

- [1] Attacks of surface units at sea and in port;
- [2] Search for and destruction of submarines; and also
- [3] Support of ground forces in overseas theaters.

They [aircraft carriers] can move fast and they unprecedented freedom of choice of areas for combat employment. [Strike carriers] in contrast to nuclear-powered

ballistic-missile submarines, are capable of mounting attacks with conventional as well as nuclear weapons. Possessing an extremely high degree of mobility, strike carriers can cover a thousand kilometers and more in 24 hours. [Ref. 35: p. 6]

Hence, in his subtle defamation of submarines, Bestuzhev seemed to be advocating the construction of strike aircraft carriers, which, unlike ballistic missile submarines that could only be used in nuclear war, the aircraft carriers could be used in either conventional or nuclear war. Since a major war would inevitably involve nuclear weapons, it seems that Bestezhev may have had in mind local war when referring to the conventional scenario. Thus, unlike the ballistic missile carrying submarine, strike aircraft carriers could be used in local conflicts to project power ashore, utilizing conventional weapons and more importantly, in conflicts less than world war. It was clear that ballistic missile submarines had no role whatsoever to play in local war. Hence it would be unwise to continue to allocate the majority of resources to the construction of weapon systems which could only accomplish a narrow range of missions. Even if the Soviet Union elected to employ nuclear weapons against a foe in a local conflict, it is doubtful that they would release a portion of their strategic retaliatory force to take part in such a "small" war. Furthermore, Bestuzhev's emphasis on the strike carriers mobility seemed to imply that these big ships were not as vulnerable as previously believed.

The issue of strike carrier participation in local wars was again put forward in an article appearing in the July 1971 issue of the Army magazine Master Sergeant, entitled "Floating Bandit Airfields." This article, authored by Captain First Rank Aleksandrov, asserted once again that the strike carrier was the primary military force used in local wars:

The purpose of this striking force is no secret: pursuit of a bandit policy "from a position of strength," provocations mounted against peace-loving people, and support of rotten, reactionary regimes. Let us recall recent events in the Near East and the loathsome role of aircraft carriers in the war in Indochina. From three to five carriers are continuously on station off the coast of Indochina. Aircraft take off from flight decks of these carriers for bombing missions in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. More than 20,000 bandit sorties into much suffering Indochina have been launched from the Enterprise alone during its "service" in the Seventh Fleet."

At the present time, the U.S. Navy has sixteen attack carriers on the line, not including antisubmarine carriers. One of these, the Enterprise is nuclear powered. The naval shipbuilding program calls for three additional nuclear carriers to be commissioned by 1977. [Ref. 36: p. 7]

Singling out the achievements of the nuclear carrier Enterprise, Aleksandrov, like others before him, seemed to be interested in the construction of nuclear powered carriers for the Soviet fleet. Moreover, when he asks his readers to recall "recent events in the Near East," he was stressing the fact that these ships could be very important even in situations where they did not engage in hostilities. Aleksandrov makes no secret of the primary purpose of strike carriers. In his view,

these ships are used by Washington in support of its "militaristic" foreign policy vis-a-vis the developing world. It is apparent from Aleksandrov's remarks the strike aircraft carrier is an extremely vital means of projecting power in support of client regimes in the Third World.

In another paragraph, Aleksandrov addresses the vulnerability issue of aircraft carriers; however, he differentiates carrier vulnerability in a major war and in a conventional one.

Considerable difference of opinion still exists on the relative vulnerability of aircraft carriers. For example, the magazine Aeronautics says the following: "...a single nuclear warhead of 30 kilotons or so striking less than 500 meters from a carrier of the Forrestal class would send it to the bottom." As for conventional weapons, World War II demonstrated that these ships, even after sustaining considerable damage, not only remained afloat but continued operating effectively. [Ref. 36: p. 9]

Hence, according to Aleksandrov, strike carriers remain vulnerable to nuclear weapons; the type of weapons that will most likely be used in a world war. However, aircraft carriers are very much survivable in a conventional war or local war. To stress this fact further he states that the Forrestal "is divided into more than 1,200 water-tight compartments, a fact which undoubtedly makes it very difficult to sink." [Ref. 36: p. 9] Hence, in a local war scenario, aircraft carriers are not only very useful, but also extremely survivable. The carrier's survivability was very much in question in world war.

According to Gorshkov, it would be folly to enter into a potential combat situation with the U.S. lacking symmetrical capabilities to repel the adversary because every battle contains the possibility of defeat. [Ref. 2: p. 6]

In "Navies in War and Peace," Gorshkov writes favorably about aircraft carriers stressing the requirement of maintaining air superiority in the theater of operations. He states that military operations in the Great Patriotic War demonstrated that:

Air superiority in the area of operations became the indispensable condition for the successful conduct of it even when the enemy was superior in other forces. [Ref. 37: p. 13]

This is indicative of the great respect Gorshkov had for aviation and the realization of the importance for gaining command of the air. Hence, even at a quantitative disadvantage in overall forces, the smaller force might still prevail if it controlled the airspace over the battle area. Since the dynamism of international relations did not guarantee timely access to foreign bases, the only viable means for vying for air superiority in theaters of operations far from Soviet borders remained sea-based aviation; hence the attack aircraft carrier.

Gorshkov presents an argument for the construction of specific aircraft for the naval branch of the armed forces. Analyzing naval aviation in the pre-war years and during the war he asserts:

[Naval aviation] did not have special naval aircraft and therefore was equipped with aircraft designed for the other branches of the armed forces. While effective for operations against land targets, they were poorly suited for carrying out combat missions at sea.

Due to the short operating range, weak armament and short endurance, naval fighter aviation was not in condition to reliably cover forces at sea even at relatively short distances from shore. This considerably limited the employment of major fleet surface forces in zones accessible to hostile aircraft. [Ref. 38: p. 6]

From the above statement, it is clear Gorshkov desires specialized naval aircraft capable of accomplishing missions in direct support of the fleet. Furthermore, according to his last statement, it appears that Gorshkov is stressing that these aircraft be based at sea in order to provide timely support in the theater of naval operations, which may be in areas within reach of hostile aircraft but far removed from friendly bases.

Gorshkov continued his favorable appraisal of aircraft carriers and provided further evidence that he had aircraft carriers in mind when calling for the construction of a balanced fleet. Stating the importance of aircraft carriers rose during the war and that superiority in surface ships had completely shifted to these types of ships, Gorshkov gave no indication, as he had given previously, this superiority had diminished. Unlike his 1967 Morskoi Sbornik article which announced the "inevitable demise" of the aircraft carrier, the "Navies on war and in Peace" series contained no derogatory remarks about aircraft carriers. This aspect of the series

could possibly reflect a shift in Soviet decisionmakers' thinking towards aircraft carriers. Though for many years Gorshkov's naval subordinates had written about aircraft carriers, this was the first occasion when a member of the Central Committee had come out so openly in support of such ships.

In a book published in 1972 entitled Aircraft Carriers and Helicopter Carriers, the authors appear to clearly advocate the construction of attack aircraft carriers for the Soviet Navy. The authors asserted unequivocally that the attack aircraft carrier was survivable in limited war:

As concerns the survivability of aircraft carriers, for the conduct of limited wars with the employment of conventional weapons, the large aircraft carriers have protective protection and so have greater survivability than ships of small displacement. [Ref. 39: p. 298]

Hence, in limited wars in which conventional weapons were used, aircraft carriers were less vulnerable than other classes of ships. They still remained extremely vulnerable to nuclear weapons, thus their efficacy in world war would be marginal.

Moreover, the authors are emphatic in their support for a nuclear powered attack aircraft carrier. While admitting that the cost of building aircraft carriers was very great, nuclear powered carriers were said to be more effective than their conventional counterpart. [Ref. 39: p. 158] Stressing that the attack aircraft carrier is the sine quo non of a balanced fleet, the authors stated:

Strike carriers belong to the general purpose forces and ...are capable of carrying out many tasks sufficiently effectively in general war as well as in local wars. [Ref. 39: p. 295]

An article entitled "U.S. Aircraft Carrier Operations off the Coast of Vietnam" appeared in the December 1972 issue of Morskoi Sbornik. Though pointing out several shortcomings of aircraft carriers, it nevertheless stressed the major role these combatants were playing in the Indochinese conflict. The authors were cognizant of the dangers posed by "the huge stores of aviation fuel, bombs and missiles [that] created a never ending threat of fire and explosion." [Ref. 40: p. 72] They state that serious fires have broken out on the carriers Enterprise, Forrestal, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Kitty Hawk, Oriskany, Independence and Saratoga.

Overall, this accounted for a fairly mild criticism of the aircraft carrier. Published late in 1972, during the Paris Peacetalks, the authors may have felt restrained in their praise of the aircraft carrier so as not to lessen American frustrations or to increase Hanoi's anxieties.

An article in the August 1973 issue of Morskoi Sbornik by Engineer-Captain 2nd Rank V. Yeliseyev entitled "Strategic Forces Reserve," focused on the non-strategic missions of the U.S. attack carrier fleet. According to the author, the American attack carrier forces are now the main forces of the Navy in limited warfare....[Ref. 41: p. 40] Quoting the then Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs Admiral Moorer, Yeliseyev writes, "(E)xcluding general nuclear war, the aircraft is the

main striking force of the Navy for all types of combat operations." [Ref. 41: p. 40] Yeliseyev also stated that the advantages of attack carriers forces are their high mobility and maneuverability. Moreover, he asserts that aircraft carriers serve as an invaluable alternative to the "reduced number of (American) overseas naval bases." [Ref. 41: p. 40] The argument stressed by Yeliseyev above concerning the substitute of aircraft carriers for elusive foreign bases is significant in its timeliness. The Soviet Union suffered a major drawback in its foreign policy in the Mediterranean with the mass expulsion of Soviet military advisors and operational troops from Egypt in July 1972. The number of Soviet personnel expelled during this period was put at 15,000. [Ref. 42] The author, in his favorable portrayal of strike aircraft carriers, espouses the advantages of nuclear powered carriers over conventionally powered ones. Nuclear power untethers the ship from its potentially vulnerable rear services. Since aircraft carriers are overly susceptible to attack when replenishing, the fact that nuclear powered ships do not need to be constantly refueled makes them more survivable. [Ref. 41: p. 43]

Along the same lines using American naval experts as surrogates, he states that the "nuclear-powered aircraft carrier has a combat efficiency coefficient of 1.2 compared to conventional types of carriers." [Ref. 41: p. 43] Though initially more expensive to build, nuclear carriers were less

vulnerable and more efficient than conventionally powered carriers.

In the July 1974 issue of Morskoi Sbornik an article very much in favor of aircraft carriers appeared. This article, entitled "The Present and Future of Attack Aircraft Carriers," again listed the power projection role as the primary mission of modern attack aircraft carriers. Though the attack carrier had been removed from the primary strategic mission of nuclear strike in U.S. war plans, they still occupied a valuable place in American strategy:

The removal of attack aircraft carriers from the first echelon to the reserve of strategic forces in a general nuclear war by no means excludes the broad use of carriers to carry out important missions. The command of the U.S. Navy names at least three of these important missions: first, shipboard aircraft remain the chief component of tactical aviation in a local war; second aircraft carriers are an integral part of the forces which provide for "supremacy at sea;" third, aircraft carrier formations are an irreplaceable tool of "gunboat diplomacy" which provides for a "military presence" wherever needed in peacetime. [Ref. 43: p. 56]

The author, R. Tumbovskiy, appeared to be alerting the reader to the fact that though the aircraft carrier had indeed been removed from the category of first strike nuclear forces, its utility had not diminished. To Tumbovskiy, the attack aircraft carrier represents an invaluable asset in the conduct of local wars. Quoting then U.S. Chairman of JCS, General Wheeler, he offers another benefit associated with the aircraft carrier:

If the war in Vietnam ends, in order to realize the Nixon Doctrine which calls for rendering support to all our allies with a lessening of the involvement of the United

States in small conflicts, I think it desirable to have 16 attack carriers, based not on a peacetime situation but on a possible war in the future. [Ref. 43: p. 57]

Thus, according to Tumovskiy, the attack aircraft carrier could reduce, in certain situations, direct Soviet involvement in crises which do not necessarily guarantee a large chance of success. With the addition of strike carriers to the Red Naval inventory, the Politburo could better direct its actions in a Third World crisis providing effective support to its favored clients without becoming deeply and dangerously entangled in a potentially unrewarding situation. Hence, the attack aircraft carrier could act as a seagoing surrogate of Soviet power and influence. It appears that Tumbovskiy was using the aircraft carrier to allay the fears that certain Politburo members may have voiced about risk-filled Soviet involvement in "small wars."

After establishing that the primary role of the attack aircraft carrier was in local wars, Tumbovskiy set out to convince the reader that if such a ship should become a part of the Soviet fleet, it should be nuclear powered. He states that nuclear powered ships have many tactical advantages over their conventionally powered counterparts, including endurance and greater survivability.

The largest ships ever built in the USA will be the carriers of the Nimitz class. The supply of nuclear fuel should assure such a ship 13 years of sailing without recharging the reactors (this is equivalent to the expenditure of 1.32 million tons of oil).

An ACG (Aircraft Carrier Group) with a nuclear carrier can carry out combat operations for 12 days without replenishment (7 days with a conventional carrier).

The range of nuclear-powered carrier with a screen of four frigates with conventional propulsion plants increase twofold in comparison with the range of an ACG consisting completely of ships with steam power plants.

The capability of nuclear power plants for rapid operational maneuver will permit delivering airstrikes over a large area and at a large number of targets; selecting departure routes for the combat area with the least probability of detection of the ACG by the enemy and thereby better providing tactical and operational surprise; proceeding to their destination while skirting storm and hurricane belts, which is very important for carrier forces, which are very dependent on the weather; spending prolonged periods in the ocean in constant readiness to transfer to an assigned area. [Ref. 43: p. 59]

Tumbovskiy's statements concerning reducing the load on the naval support forces and dependence on bases probably struck a nerve in the Politburo. At-sea replenishment has long been considered by Western analysts to be imperative to a forward operating strategy and something that the Soviet Navy was not terribly proficient at. Moreover, the lesson of the Soviet forced withdrawal from Egypt less than two years earlier could not have been so easily forgotten. Foreign bases had long been a problem in supporting their fleet in the forward area.

Tumbovskiy continues with his positive portrayal of nuclear powered attack carriers and though admitting that they are very expensive to build, they could be in operation with the fleet for over "30 years." [Ref. 43: p. 61] Hence,

they were not systems that needed replacement right away and if the cost were spread over 30 years, then yearly costs would certainly not be exorbitant. This may have been directed towards the member of the Army-dominated Defense Council who voiced opposition to the construction of aircraft carriers on the grounds that they were too expensive and would drain resources away from other more important weapons systems.

An article appearing in the August 1974 issue of Morskoi Sbornik entitled "Multipurpose Aircraft Carrying Ships" seemed to advocate the construction of relatively small "sea-control" ships (SCS) capable of operating VTOL aircraft. Though the author asserts that the SCS would be much cheaper to build than attack carriers, the SCS was incapable of accomplishing all the missions that a strike carrier would. Stating that current VTOL aircraft could only carry out defensive missions because of limited "speed and small radius of operation," the execution of other missions "above all, offensive missions, will be entrusted to aircraft of attack carriers." [Ref. 44: p. 50] Hence, he was admitting that current VTOL technology was not sufficient to accomplish the power projection mission.

In October 1975, an article entitled "Some Trends in the Development of Naval Tactics" was published in the Morskoi Sbornik. The author, Captain 1st Rank N. V'yunenko, states that aviation is playing an increasingly important role in

the evolution of naval tactics. In advocacy for the construction of aircraft carriers, he asserts that:

The joint employment of aircraft carriers with other surface ships, submarines, and anti-submarine aircraft makes it possible to create effective mobile zones of supremacy on the high seas....

Within this space the assumption is to provide absolute supremacy beneath the water surface, on the sea, and in the air, that is, to destroy enemy forces before they are able to attack ships and transports located within that zone. [Ref. 45: p. 14]

V'yunenko's failure to include submarines in his list of assets which need protection implies that these mobile zones of supremacy are not analogous to the SSBN bastion defensive scheme.

A later statement stressing that "under today's conditions the struggle against enemy aircraft has also been extended to remote regions of the oceans, including those regions which quite recently were considered out of range for aircraft...." indicates these zones of supremacy may have to be established to support Soviet military contingencies in the Third World. Though speaking favorably of VTOL aircraft, he adamantly states that the primary mission of VTOL carriers is to provide air defense for other "air capable" ships and a secondary mission of operation against surface targets only in the absence of attack aircraft carriers. [Ref. 45: p. 40] Hence, if anything, V'yunenko is calling for the construction of both and not advocating substituting the construction of less expensive VTOL air-capable ships for more capable attack aircraft carriers.

The June 1974 issue of Morskoj Sbornik carried an article entitled "Carrier Aircraft in Local War." This selection detailed the American sea-based involvement in the Indochinese war from 1964-72. Overall, the author, Captain 2nd Rank V. Katin, dealt a favorable critique of the capabilities of carrier based attack aircraft in what the author called "combat conditions of a complex theatre of military operation." [Ref. 46: p. 72] The article begins by emphasizing the crucial role aircraft carriers have played in local wars since 1945:

Without exception in all military conflicts unleashed by the imperialists since 1945, naval aircraft ...have played a most important role in combat operations on the ground. [Ref. 46: p. 60]

Hence, aircraft carriers have been very instrumental in projecting power ashore, a critical capability of naval forces are to participate more directly and effectively in the combat situation ashore.

Moreover, according to Katin, carrier based aircraft were used, especially during the last few years of the war, to make up "for the shortage of their own (U.S.) ground forces." [Ref. 46: p. 60] By this time, the American ground withdrawal was well underway and TACAIR, including carrier-based aircraft, was given the responsibility of supporting this decreased complement. This issue is very important to a Politburo which is not prone to taking chances especially when outcomes cannot clearly be foreseen. Carrier based

aircraft could serve as surrogates of Soviet ground troops in a crisis in which direct Soviet troop involvement may not be politically expedient; hence provoking an unwanted response from the United States. Carrier based strikes in support of clients are not synonymous in the realm of high geo-politics with direct troop involvement on the ground. Each event would not elicit identical responses from the other super-power. Actual ground troop employment would undoubtedly be perceived as much more severe than the conduct of air strikes during the same crisis. Providing remote fire support for favored Soviet clients would not be unprecedented. The Soviets have provided this on numerous occasions in past Third World crises.

Katin writes, almost enviously it seems, about U.S. power projection capabilities. He laboriously recounts the number of aircraft used in the total number of bombing sorties conducted during the course of the war.\* He further cites as another advantage of carrier based strike aviation the fact that they do not require foreign bases to conduct their operations. [Ref. 43: p. 62] Moreover, he states that during the early phase of the stepped up American bombing campaign in Vietnam (1965-1966) when U.S. land operating

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\*According to Katin's figures, the U.S. conducted more than 1.5 million combat sorties and expended more than 6.5 million tons of air to ground ordnance. He states that this was more than triple the total weight of bombs dropped during World War II.

bases were few, "the role of the carrier aircraft was a decisive one." [Ref. 43: p. 62]

This issue of unavailability of foreign operating bases is a very important one for the Soviet Union. Simply stated, the aircraft carrier precludes the requirement for friendly bases which are seen by the Politburo as elusive. Again, as in so many articles written about aircraft carriers and carrier aviation during this period (early seventies), this selection was totally void of any derogatory remarks directed at aircraft carriers. It was obvious from Katin's favorable account of aircraft carriers in the Indochina War that he was advocating their construction for the Soviet Navy, and that they are a very important and extremely capable weapons system in the conduct of local wars.

In February 1976 a book by Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union, Sergei G. Gorshkov entitled Sea Power of the State was published by the Military Publishing House in Moscow. The timing of the publication, just two weeks prior to the 25th Congress of the CPSU, apparently was intended to increase its impact within Soviet political society. Sea Power of the State was printed in 60,000 copies, an unusually large number for a military work. The size of the printing indicates that the book was aimed at the influential decision makers of the Politburo and Central Committee and not just the Soviet military establishment. [Ref. 47: p. 1] Though most of what Gorshkov writes is not new, it appears as an

attempt to justify past and future Soviet program planning decision concerning the Navy.

In *Sea Power of the State*, Gorshkov elucidates categories of naval combat: fleet against fleet and fleet against the shore, with the latter concept occupying the most important position in naval warfare. Though Gorshkov clearly states that the attacks launched from ballistic missile carrying submarines against "strategically and economically important land targets" is the most important aspect of fleet against shore operations, it is clearly not the only component of it. He concludes very concisely that attacks by carrier aircraft also play a large part in "fleet against shore" operations. [Ref. 7: p. 272] Fleet against shore operations have subsumed the primary mission of naval warfare because unlike "fleet against fleet" operations, fleet against shore has a direct "territorial" invasion. "Fleet against fleet" operations only "created the conditions" for the subsequent accomplishment of territorial missions. To emphasize that the fleet against the shore role was not totally the domain of the ballistic missile carrying submarine, Gorshkov states:

The explosive development of aviation and shipbuilding in the Second World War brought about the appearance of a new form of employing naval forces against the shore, i.e. the delivery of attacks by carrier aircraft against enemy territory and troops.

It is true that the experience in such operations was limited to the employment of aircraft carriers by only three countries, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States. However, this experience has become convincing proof of the practicality of employing this form of operation, which has led to a considerable expansion in carrier construction. [Ref. 7: p. 281]

Hence, aircraft carriers also have a major mission of "fleet against shore" combat operations, in other words, the aircraft carrier has a recognized power projection mission. Moreover, carrier operations have provided convincing proof of the utility of operating carrier-based aircraft in this role, and hence the need for their construction. Furthermore, Gorshkov states in a subsequent paragraph that the "experience" of operating aircraft carriers against the shore has seen widespread use in local wars:

The experience during the Second World War in employing carrier aircraft against land objectives has been widely used by American militarists in local wars, especially to deliver attacks against troops, cities, bases, airfields and ground communications....[Ref. 7: p. 282]

Hence, it may have been the operations of carrier forces in local wars which provided the actual "convincing proof" of their "practicality" in conducting attacks ashore. Gorshkov continues to herald the ever-increasing importance of "fleet against shore" operations in any future conflict:

In our day, a navy operating against the shore possess the capability not only of prosecuting missions related to territorial changes, but also of directly affecting the course and even the outcome of the war. In this connection, naval operations against the shore have assumed dominant importance in naval warfare, and both the technical policy of building a navy and the development of the art of naval warfare have been subordinated to them. [Ref: p. 282]

Since admittedly carrier-based aircraft also have an important "fleet against the shore" role, Gorshkov could be announcing the construction of an attack aircraft carrier when he affirms that both the "technical policy of building a navy and the

development of the art of naval warfare" have been focused on the "fleet against the shore" mission.

Later in his book, Gorshkov devotes several pages to the concept of sea control and the naval imperative of achieving it during hostilities. According to Gorshkov, sea control is not a goal in itself, but only "a path to establishing certain conditions" which permit naval forces to accomplish subsequent missions within a specific period of time. [Ref. 7: p. 295] The gaining of sea control would enable the formation of necessary groupings of forces to successfully carry out assigned combat missions. It is important to note that the acquisition of sea control in a certain theater of military operations is important in major wars as well as local or small wars. Additionally, he claims that no longer does sea control mean simply the acquisition of dominance on sea surface. The definition of sea control has been extended to encompass the "depths of the oceans and to the airspace above it." [Ref. 7: p. 298] Hence, if air superiority was in fact one of the prerequisites for gaining control of the sea, then in theaters of military operations far from Soviet territorial waters, sea-based aircraft remained the only viable means with which to provide for this contingency. Without air superiority the success of subsequent operations could not be guaranteed. The effectiveness of Western carrier operations in local wars was not lost on Gorshkov. He states that the capability of aircraft carriers to deliver attacks

on targets located at great distances, serves to expand the area of operations in favor of the attacker. Moreover, on several occasions, Gorshkov emphatically affirms that the attack aircraft carrier is the most important weapon system in local wars. [Ref. 7: p. 300] According to Gorshkov, "carriers are frequently the sole means permitting the bases of attack aircraft to be moved closer to the area of combat operations." [Ref. 7: p. 301]

Stressing that submarines have a very limited role to play in local wars, Gorshkov states "Aircraft carriers and their aircraft, and other surface ships have played the main role among the naval forces participating in local wars." [Ref. 7: p. 303] Also, noticeably absent from this list of primary forces in local wars was any mention of land-based aircraft. In fact, Gorshkov explicitly states that it is "aircraft carriers and their aircraft" which have fulfilled the primary role in local conflict. Hence, it would seem that land-based aircraft have a very limited role in small wars, probably because of the inavailability of foreign air bases. Again, Moscow remained sensitive to the geopolitical importance concomitant with their forced withdrawal from Egypt in 1972. Thus, aircraft carriers seemd to offer the only legitimate substitute.

This favorable portragual of carrier based aviation continues in his discussion of the combat operations during the Korean and Vietnam wars. Although he refers to the

amphibious landing at Inchon during the Korean War as a "Pyrrhic victory" for the Americans, carrier-based aircraft performed extremely effectively. Gorshkov goes so far as to suggest that the "interventionists" would have lost the war if not for the crucial support provided by their forces. Gorshkov presents some impressive statistics to support his contention that the trend in the use of aircraft carriers in local conflicts was indeed increasing. He asserts that more than 50% of all combat sorties in South Vietnam originated from the decks of the U.S. aircraft carriers operating in the Gulf of Tonkin. According to Gorshkov, between 1965 and 1972 carrier aircraft made up to 8,000 aircraft sorties per month, with a single aircraft carrier flying as many as 178 sorties per day. [Ref. 7: p. 317] In listing statistics such as these, Gorshkov appeared impressed, almost envious, of U.S. attack carrier capabilities.

In the chapter entitled "Problems of Balancing Navies," Gorshkov uses the examples of naval unpreparedness to carry out various missions during the course of World War II to plead his case for a balanced fleet. To Gorshkov, a balanced fleet is one which maintains "all the elements comprising its combat strength in the most favorable combination...;" [Ref. 7: p. 322] hence one which is capable of effectively participating in any type of war, nuclear or conventional. Moreover, he asserts that military doctrine determines the role of the military and the types of forces comprising it.

From this, it is military doctrine which presupposes the the types and mix of forces required to achieve politico-military objectives. Hence, any shift in the military doctrine may also foretell changes in force structure and signal new weapons development. Furthermore, Gorshkov states that the "manner of balancing a navy is not fixed; under certain historical conditions it can change." [Ref. 7: p. 324] Among the factors affecting the determinants of a balanced navy, its mission is of primary importance. Using examples of combat failures during the two world wars, Gorshkov appears to be exhorting higher authority to provide the necessary means with which to carry out successfully new and more difficult operations. For instance his criticism of the British Admiralty in its planning and execution of the amphibious landing at Gallipoli during World War I is a notorious example of a navy ill-prepared to accomplish its assigned mission. Simply, the British lacked special landing ships with which to attempt such a feat and this contributed decisively to the failure of the mission.

Similarly, Gorshkov criticizes the German high command for fielding a navy based "primarily on one arm, the submarine force," which constrained the range of missions of the German Navy through the course of World War II. [Ref. 7: p. 336] Hence, he was asserting that a navy designed to accomplish only a narrow set of missions will be predisposed to the fulfillment of only those and will be hardpressed to prevail in its quest of new tasks. In other words, unless given the

proper tools of warfare, the Soviet military could also suffer a similar fate in its attempt to carry out new assignments associated with a new military doctrine. The only thing Soviets lack in their quest for a balanced fleet is assured air support for distant operations which can only be provided by aircraft carriers in areas not adjacent to Soviet borders. Soviets learned in Egypt in 1972 that they cannot depend on the use of foreign bases and must have ships from which to launch attacks and defend their forces.

Strike aircraft carrier advocates remained extremely vocal through the 1970s and the pro-carrier rhetoric espoused during the early part of the decade extended into the 1980s. In assessing the Japanese aircraft carrier operations against the British Fleet during World War II Indian Ocean operations, Captain 1st Rank G. Gel'fond asserted that although the Japanese Imperial Navy was inferior to the British Navy in all types of ships except aircraft carriers, the Japanese dominated the early years of the war. [Ref. 48: p. 18] Gel'fond concluded that this "superiority in aircraft carriers to no small degree, favored the achievement of success by the Japanese." He also ascertained from his analysis of Anglo-Japanese wartime operations that the aircraft was a formidable force in areas remote from friendly bases. [Ref. 48: p. 19]

Later the same year, Admiral Stalbo contributed an extremely favorable opinion of aircraft carriers in local wars in an article entitled "Naval Forces in Local Wars."

Stalbo extols the local war capabilities of aircraft carriers, asserting "the combat attributes of aircraft carriers fully satisfied the plans of the American command in local wars...."

[Ref. 49: p. 29] Stalbo continues his obvious pro-carrier advocacy but emphasizing that, during local wars, aircraft carriers "reaffirmed" their high combat capabilities. Hence, it appears that Stalbo was informing his readers that though the aircraft carrier had limited use in a major nuclear war between opposing social systems, they can play an extremely important part in local or small wars. In a 1977 Morskoi Sbornik article entitled "Winning Sea Supremacy," the author articulated the requirement of naval forces engaged in combat to gain "sea supremacy." This concept of military science long neglected during the 1960s was resurrected in the early 1970s. [Ref. 50: p. 6] The author vehemently states that the achievement of "sea supremacy" in designated areas of operations is essential to the successful execution of subsequent operations in the theater. He also states that war experience showed that "winning supremacy is impossible without a preponderance of forces in the air as well."

[Ref. 51: p. 24] Thus, it appears that the author was obliquely referring to the efficacy of aircraft carriers as the sole providers of this "preponderance of forces in the air" during naval operations in remote oceans of the world.

Another extremely favorable account of carrier operations in local wars was contained in the June 1978 issue of

Morskoj Sbornik. The author, Admiral Stalbo, was extremely vociferous in his praise of carriers in local wars. Stalbo asserts that the utility of aircraft carriers in local wars has had a definite impact on the development of naval theory.\* Hence, it seems that naval operations in local wars, especially those of aircraft carriers, help determine the development of the navy. Furthermore, he states that it was the Korean War (local war) which enhanced the aircraft carrier's importance in American military doctrine. He stresses that aircraft carriers are the most important element of the American navy. Moreover, Stalbo asserts that aircraft carriers are a very "important means of sea control and are the most versatile of all weapons systems." [Ref. 52: p. 67] According to Stalbo, aircraft carriers are a "most important weapon capable of accomplishing all major missions in local wars." [Ref. 52: p. 68] He asserts that aircraft carriers can be used in lieu of ground forces in local conflicts. This advantage is very important to a government averse to employing its own forces in combat. Moreover, Stalbo emphasizes that in all local wars, aircraft carriers have performed the "functions of the chief strike force of the aggressor" and at times were the "only platforms for concentrated striking power...." [Ref. 52: p. 68]

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\*The theory of the navy is a system of scientific knowledge revealing the laws and regularities of naval warfare and the principles of the Navy's organizational development and of its preparation and employment in the Armed Forces system during a war and in peacetime. It defines the prospects and direction of the Navy's development on a scientific basis. [Ref 53: p. 27]

Stalbo's preference for nuclear-powered aircraft carriers appears clear. He devotes several long passages praising the advantages of nuclear-powered carriers stressing nuclear carriers have the capability to conduct "protracted operations" and "long passages" without replenishment. [Ref. 52: p. 76] In addition to their wartime missions, the aircraft carrier also fulfills "gendarme" functions as well. [Ref. 52: p. 69]

Stalbo concludes his favorable appraisal of aircraft carriers stating that there is "no basis to speak of a future reduction in the importance of carriers in armed warfare at sea." On the contrary, according to Stalbo, "we must speak of an increase in their role in military operations." [Ref. 52: p. 78]

The second edition of Gorshkov's Sea Power of the State, appearing in 1979 reiterated the favorable treatment of attack aircraft carriers apparent in his earlier edition. The fact that the 1979 rendition was for all practical purposes identical to the 1976 edition implies that the policy line pertaining to attack aircraft carriers remained intact. Gorshkov still referred to attack carriers as the basic means of power projection in local wars and emphasized that aircraft carriers provide a base of operations where no base had existed. [Ref. 11: p. 165] He again stressed the importance of aircraft carriers in providing aircraft in the "fleet against the shore" role which remained of primary

importance in Naval Art. Americans apply this "fleet against shore" role of navies in local wars with aircraft carriers. He states that the increased range of their aircraft make them the most important forces in local wars. At times they were the only means "for bringing the bases of strike aviation closer to the areas of combat operations." [Ref. 11: p. 236]

The efficacy of aircraft carriers in local wars continues to receive favorable press in the 1980s. They are still referred to as the primary weapon system in the conduct of local wars and are still viewed as the only viable means of providing air defense to naval forces operating far from friendly bases. [Ref. 54: p. 19]

The Anglo-Argentine Falklands campaign seemed to reaffirm to Soviet authors the requirement for air support of naval forces during naval combat operations. According to Rear Admiral I.F. Uskov, the war for the Malvinas "showed with full clarity ...that under modern conditions no ship formation (including an amphibious assault formation) is capable of effectively carrying out assigned missions without reliable air cover." [Ref. 55: p. 110] Captain 1st Rank B. Rodionov, in an article appearing in the January 1983 issue of Morskoi Sbornik, emphasizes the "necessity of winning supremacy in the air and maintaining it for a prolonged time both on an operational as well as a tactical scale." [Ref. 56: p. 75] Admiral I.M. Kapitanets, describing the Falklands war, echoed similar thoughts one month later:

....there is a continuing increase in the role of aircraft in combat actions at sea. Without winning and holding air supremacy on an operational and tactical scale, it is impossible to count on success of an action or an operation as a whole. [Ref. 57: p. 17]

The British Sea Harrier and Harrier USTOL aircraft received mixed reviews by Soviet naval analysts. One analyst emphasized that although "vertical take-off aircraft showed relatively high tactical qualities," there remains "no basis for overestimating their combat capabilities." [Ref. 56: p. 75] Offering further criticism of the Harrier, the author asserts that the British never did achieve air supremacy. [Ref. 56: p. 75]

Most commentary on the Falklands War seemed to vindicate the advocates of modern CTOL aircraft. Though Soviet writers pointed out that the USTOL Harrier was more maneuverable than its Argentine counterparts in close-in combat, [Ref. 58: p. 64] the overall appraisal seemed to denigrate the capabilities of the Harrier.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the leaders of the Soviet Union now view the attack aircraft carrier more favorably, especially when one compares contemporary Soviet writings with those prior to the 1970s. Noticeably absent from present carrier rhetoric are the flagrantly anti-carrier statements heralding the inevitable demise of this type of ship. Furthermore, the Soviets perceive a definite link between carriers and

their efficacy in conventional warfare even though they are still viewed as extremely vulnerable to nuclear weaponry. Regardless of this disadvantage, the Soviets, upon observing U.S. experiences in Third World conflicts, perceive the definite utility of aircraft carriers in local wars.

The Politburo has come to accept the role of attack aircraft carriers in the pursuit of their foreign policy objectives in the developing world. The aircraft carrier complements well their apparent acceptance of a greater military role in Third World crises. The Soviets realize that the attack aircraft carrier provides certain military advantages not apparent in other forms of weaponry. They perceive in aircraft carriers a means of projecting Soviet airpower to distant areas of the world where access to land-based airfields is not guaranteed. It is also a means of protecting naval assets at sea and of competing for "air supremacy," a critical prerequisite for gaining sea control in theaters of operations areas far removed from friendly fighter bases.

The local war mission will not be the aircraft carrier's only role in the overall Soviet military doctrine. The Soviets appreciate the mission flexibility of this type of ship and it will surely be tasked to perform many missions of which defense of the homeland is primary. However, the local war mission appears to be extremely important and probably provided one of the major rationales for the decision to

build it. The Soviet Union has learned that it is not enough to establish a "socialist oriented" regime in some remote Third World outpost. It is also necessary to maintain them and this may require a more direct Soviet military role.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Although economic constraints and technological deficiencies played an inhibiting role, at times, in Soviet plans to construct true aircraft carriers, the primary reason for their failure to construct such ships until now has been doctrinal. During the early years of Soviet development and the immediate post World War II period, Soviet industry could not support the construction of such large and sophisticated naval combatants. But during times of relative high Soviet industrial growth occurring in the late 1930s and again in the 1950s, the Politburo, probably heeding the advice of its ground oriented Defense Committee, refused to build true attack aircraft carriers. It is difficult to believe, as some in the West have contended, that the Soviet Union was incapable of building such large ships. Soviet military equipment is in many areas qualitatively similar or in some cases superior to its Western counterparts. The Soviets commit large amounts of resources to military research and development and failings in the consumer sector do not appear so frequently in the military hardware sector.

It appears that the decision not to construct carriers was based on military doctrine. Stalin and his military advisors failed to foresee the efficacy of sea-based aviation in the Second World War. Naval aviation was relegated to

missions of reconnaissance with a distant secondary role of fleet air protection. The battleship and heavy cruiser were the dominant naval weapons during the interwar period and Stalin seemed infatuated with them; not so much with what they could do during wartime as what they could accomplish in peacetime. The Soviet Union was a continental power, openly disinterested in areas of the world not immediately adjacent to the USSR or which did not impact directly on its security.

With Stalin still at the helm, the postwar Soviet defense planners did not alter their ideas of naval forces. The USSR remained a continental power. Although the tremendous utility of aircraft carriers was demonstrated during the Second World War, Moscow did not perceive a requirement for them in its overall defensive doctrine.

Khrushchev, upon consolidating his power in the mid 1950s, redesigned the Soviet Navy, but its missions remained the same: defense of the homeland. He criticized Stalin's large construction program and rejuvenated the small army psychology of the late 1920s and 1930s. In the era of nuclear weapons, large naval forces, including aircraft carriers, were viewed as extremely vulnerable and hence their construction inexpedient during the time when relatively small and inexpensive naval forces armed with nuclear-tipped missiles and submarines could accomplish the defensive mission quite well. Khrushchev advocated a modern air force and rocket forces. Again naval

forces, especially large surface forces, had limited utility in modern war and, as in continental wars in the past, they would not be decisive.

Western advances in carrier aviation and sub-launched ballistic missiles raised Moscow's interest in oceanic defense and fomented interest in deploying large and more capable naval forces to combat this threat. The Soviets constructed their first air-capable ship during the mid 1960s in an apparent attempt to counter Western SSBNs. Soviet strategic naval advances (Delta/SSN-8) caused a shift in their naval doctrine inspiring the construction of the Kiev to defend their bastions. However, both of these platforms were defensive naval weapons. Although both are imbued with the capabilities to accomplish a range of tasks, their primary role is ASW. The construction of a true Soviet attack aircraft carrier with modern CTOL capabilities would signal another shift in naval doctrine; from one primarily of defense to one of offense.

The premise of this paper contends that the Soviet decision to construct their first true attack aircraft carrier utilizing CTOL technology and the Politburo's acceptance of a greater role for their military forces in Third World crises including local wars was probably more than a mere coincidence. This writer argues that the efficacy of aircraft carriers in distant areas, tried and proven in the West for decades, was one of the primary rationales for its construction.

The apparent shift in Soviet local war doctrine seemed to coincide with the construction of the CTOL aircraft carrier. Before the late 1960s, Soviet policy towards Third World crises was cautious and circumspect. The thought of local wars escalating into nuclear major war remained a powerful determinant of Moscow's foreign policy vis-a-vis the developing world. However, growing Soviet military strength, especially in the strategic area, convinced the USSR of a favorable shift in the correlation of forces. Furthermore, the evolution of a world power in the early 1970s demanded a greater Soviet role in the Third World. With the favorable shift in correlation of forces, no longer would local wars automatically or necessarily escalate to major wars. Having achieved rough strategic nuclear parity with the U.S., the USSR would not have to cower to American movements in the developing world. Parity provided Moscow with the perception that local wars could be managed and escalation contained. Moscow would still remain cautious, but a greater interventionist role in remote crises was discerned.

Furthermore, events in the Third World during the 1970s and early 1980s (Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia) demanded greater participation by the Soviet military. These revealed a definite requirement to develop capabilities to maintain and defend "a nation on the path of socialist development in the defense of socialism."

Moscow had long appreciated the utility of naval forces in the support of "state interests;" however, it wasn't until the early 1970s that this naval mission received widespread dissemination. Admiral Gorshkov's series entitled "Navies in War and in Peace" articulated the special advantages for projecting power and influence into distant regions of the world that are not readily apparent in the other branches of the armed forces but which the navy has. The Soviets understand that navies in peacetime represent a clear potential force, able in many cases to effect a solution to a crisis favorable to the aggressor without resorting to hostilities. This is very important to a conservative-minded Politburo, cautious in their policy applications. However, if war occurs, the Soviet navy would be, in many situations, the only viable means of projecting power to areas distant to Soviet borders. Moscow appreciates the mission flexibility and mobility of naval forces, and recognizes that navies do not require foreign bases whose access may not be forthcoming in time of crisis.

Moscow began to put historical platitudes into practice in the mid 1960s and in the process realized that its navy could play a critical part in molding Third World crisis situations. Beginning in earnest with its substantial dispatch of naval combatants to the Mediterranean during and after the June 1967 Arab-Israeli six-day war, the Politburo has employed its navy in many incidents in the Third World.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War (Yom Kippur) represented a watershed in Soviet practice in local wars involving the U.S. Though the Soviet Union possessed the capabilities before to inflict damage to American naval units, this marked the first occasion when the display of Soviet potential force was underlined by roughly symmetrical Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities vis-a-vis the U.S. This fact could not be overlooked by U.S. policymakers and probably served to enhance the credibility of that potential naval force. Although the large Soviet naval presence may not have restricted the movement of U.S. Navy ships during the crisis, seemingly cautious movements may have been perceived by regional players as a diminution of U.S. influence in the area. In today's international environment, perceptions are at times just as, if not more, important as reality. In any event, Washington can no longer arbitrarily conduct its policy in a crisis environment where Soviet interests are concerned without taking into account Soviet power.

Not lost on Soviet military strategists is the role of the attack aircraft carrier in Third World crises. Although Soviet military writers had reflected earlier on the utility of such ships in local wars, this concept became a primary issue in Soviet military writings (especially navy) beginning in the late 1960s and has continued to be an important topic in military contemporary scholarship. Through most of this period Soviet authors wrote favorably about aircraft carriers

in general and their role in local wars in particular. Absent in the wide preponderance of these writings were the flagrantly disparaging remarks about aircraft carriers so prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s. Though Soviet writers still voiced their concern for the vulnerability of aircraft carriers to nuclear weapons, they asserted that these ships are surprisingly survivable in conventional wars. Furthermore, aircraft carriers provided a ready base from which to conduct air operations in remote areas of operations. In light of the Soviet forced withdrawal from both Egypt and Somalia, this advantage became extremely important. Moreover, as has long been emphasized by naval writers, carriers provide the best means of defense for ships operating at sea and are the only realistic means of competing for air superiority. The latter was recognized by the Soviets as a prerequisite for winning control of the sea. Since land-based aviation may not be available in certain Third World crises, air capable ships, especially CTOL aircraft carriers, would be required to project Soviet air power to distant theaters of operations.

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