

MOSCOW
and the
THIRD
WORLD
under
GORBACHEV

**W. Raymond Duncan and
Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl**

Westview Press

MOSCOW AND THE THIRD WORLD UNDER GORBACHEV

W. Raymond Duncan
and Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl

Westview Press
BOULDER, SAN FRANCISCO, & OXFORD

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not those of the U.S. government.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Copyright © 1990 by Westview Press, Inc.

Published in 1990 in the United States of America by Westview Press, Inc., 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301, and in the United Kingdom by Westview Press, Inc., 36 Lonsdale Road, Summertown, Oxford OX2 7EW

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Duncan, W. Raymond (Walter Raymond), 1936-

Moscow and the Third World under Gorbachev / W. Raymond Duncan and Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8133-0518-7. ISBN 0-8133-1052-0 (pbk.)

1. Developing countries—Foreign relations—Soviet Union.
 2. Soviet Union—Foreign relations—Developing countries. 3. Soviet Union—Foreign relations—1985-. 4. Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich, 1931-. I. Ekedahl, Carolyn McGiffert. II. Title.
- D888.S65D855 1990
327.4701724—dc20

89-78300
CIP

Printed and bound in the United States of America



The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

**MOSCOW AND
THE THIRD WORLD
UNDER GORBACHEV**

About the Book and Authors

Soviet policy toward the developing world has changed dramatically since Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in 1985. This book explores the shape and scope of Moscow's "new thinking" in its Third World context—highlighted by the USSR's surprising withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988. Other policies examined include putting pressure on allies such as Cuba and Vietnam to end their military involvement in Angola and Cambodia respectively; expanding relations with old adversaries such as China, South Korea, South Africa, and Israel; and pursuing closer ties to developed Third World countries while reducing support for weak states.

After reviewing the foreign policy record Gorbachev inherited, the authors assess his economic and strategic priorities in the diplomatic arena and their impact on specific regions. Each regional chapter reviews past Soviet policy, examines the rationale for Gorbachev's present initiatives, and weighs future trends—including implications for U.S.-Soviet relations.

Thoroughly updated through the winter of 1990, this book provides the most current analysis available of a vital and continuously evolving part of the world.

W. Raymond Duncan is Distinguished Teaching Professor at the State University of New York, Brockport. **Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl** is a senior analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Understanding Soviet relations with the Third World has challenged Western students and policy-makers since Nikita Khrushchev first courted emerging nationalist leaders in the mid-1950s. With the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev thirty years later, the subject has generated renewed debate. Some observers see Soviet foreign policy as substantively changed under Gorbachev. From this perspective, the underlying assumptions, basic concepts, and policy perceptions guiding Soviet foreign policy since World War II have been scrapped. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1989, Robert Legvold, Director of the W. Averell Harriman Institute of the Advanced Study of the Soviet Union, argues that:

A revolution is underway in Soviet foreign policy greater than any in the postwar period, indeed greater than any since Lenin in the early years of his regime accepted the failure of the pan-European revolution and allowed the Soviet Union to join in the game of nations.¹

That Soviet foreign policy may be undergoing change of revolutionary proportions is suggested by Gorbachev's claim in his historic speech to the United Nations in December 1988 that "the primacy of universal human values has been substituted for the battle between communism and democratic capitalism." Gorbachev has publicly expressed his view that class conflict, ideological confrontation, one-sided reliance on military power, and the use of force as an instrument of foreign policy are no longer viable and must be replaced by a reduction in East-West tension and an end to the Cold War. Many of those who hold the view that Gorbachev has forged a revolution in foreign policy tend to believe the West should cooperate with the Soviets to resolve key points of tension and thereby help Gorbachev with his reforms.

A second school of thought is more cautious in assessing Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev, viewing it essentially as a continuation of previous decision-making imperatives, operating within a traditional conceptual framework. From this perspective, Gorbachev's Third World ap-

proach continues many of Moscow's older policies and strategic-military objectives, although new tactics have been adopted here and there—as in the Afghanistan pull-out. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, a top scholar in the field of Soviet foreign policy, writes:

Soviet policy remains, in the main, unchanged. There has been essential continuity, with increments of intensity in a number of areas. Above all, there is no convincing evidence that Gorbachev is disposed to disengage from entrenched positions in the Third World because of a desire to focus on domestic problems or out of pessimism over the prospects of countries with a "socialist system" or out of a desire to improve relations with the United States.²

In support of this argument, Rubinstein cites Soviet efforts to maintain a presence in Afghanistan, continue close contacts with India ("the centerpiece of Soviet strategy in the Third World"), and retain solid relations with old clients, such as Syria, Libya, Algeria, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY)—all of which still receive Soviet arms.³

A third school of thought remains even more suspicious of Soviet intentions,⁴ arguing that, in the past, the Soviets have used "peace offensives" to gain time and advantage. Observers of this school believe that history is cyclical and that Moscow eventually will resume its aggressive policies. They support their thesis by arguing that Gorbachev's efforts to rejuvenate the Soviet system will fail. They tend to think that Western powers should not move quickly to provide support to Gorbachev and should be careful to protect their vital interests against the traditional Russian tendency to expand.

The view adopted here is very close to the first—that Gorbachev's policy initiatives do in fact represent a dramatic shift.⁵ At the same time, we believe that the same fundamental forces shape current policy formation and execution as have shaped them in the past—and that these forces include pragmatism, realism, and power politics. The changes Gorbachev is orchestrating are designed to maximize his ability to secure vital Soviet interests—national security, economic development, and protection of political sovereignty. These changes constitute a substantive and fundamental reorientation of Moscow's approach, including that to the Third World.

What is striking about Gorbachev's stance is its heightened pragmatism and the downgrading of ideological formulas and perceptions. This shift raises a number of questions. Does Gorbachev's brand of Third World politics represent a fundamental change in Soviet views about the USSR's role and strategy toward the developing countries? Will this shift in emphasis survive after Gorbachev? How has Moscow redefined its Third World presence? What are the implications of these new Soviet policies for Western diplomacy? How does Moscow seek to advance its influence in the Third World under Gorbachev? What lessons, if any, have the Soviets learned from their expansionism of the 1970s, and what are the implications of those lessons for US-Soviet relations? Has ideology disappeared from Soviet

decision-making? How, and in what ways, has Soviet behavior changed with respect to the local politics and economic performance of Third World countries? What is the nature of emerging Soviet-client relationships?

Developing cogent answers to these questions should help in understanding the complexity of Soviet-Third World relations and provide insight into how exposure to Third World behavior shapes Soviet decision-making. Soviet policy under Gorbachev, moreover, offers a valuable laboratory in which to probe underlying assumptions of US policy. What policies should the United States adopt in the 1990s to best serve its vital interests in view of shifting Soviet-Third World relations?

Among the many individuals contributing to this project, we would like especially to thank Professor Melvin A. Goodman of the National Defense University—who took extra time in reading the manuscript, making suggestions, and pointing out flaws in the argument—and Vicky Willis, of the Document Preparation Center, State University of New York, College at Brockport, who spent many hours typing and retyping the manuscript in preparation for its publication. We would also like to thank James B. McGiffert for his thoughtful editing, Wayne Limberg and Mark V. Kauppi for “brainstorming” on the Africa section, Dennis Andres for running down leads for the Latin American chapter, and Jorge F. Perez-Lopez for his insight on Cuba. The final version of the book—and responsibility for its contents—of course remain our own, and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institutions for which we work. Finally, we greatly appreciate the moral support and encouragement extended by Susan L. McEachern of Westview Press.

W. Raymond Duncan
Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl

NOTES

1. Robert Legvold, “The Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* “America and the World 1988/89,” Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., Vol. 68, No. 1 (1989), pp. 82–98. For other views of fundamental change in Soviet relations with the Third World, see Jerry Hough, *The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1986); Elizabeth Valkenier, “Revolutionary Change in the Third World: Recent Soviet Assessments,” *World Politics* 38, No. 3 (April 1986), pp. 415–434; and Valkenier, “New Soviet Thinking About the Third World,” *World Policy Journal* 4, No. 4 (Fall 1987), pp. 651–674. See also Jack Snyder, “The Gorbachev Revolution: A Waning of Soviet Expansionism?” *International Security* 12, No. 3 (Winter 1987–1988), pp. 93–131.

2. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, “The Future of Soviet Policy in the Third World,” in Carol R. Saivetz, ed., *The Soviet Union in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), p. 197. Rubinstein’s observations are drawn from his own book, *Moscow’s Third World Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

3. Rubinstein, “The Future of Soviet Policy in the Third World,” pp. 198 ff. Other observers who see Moscow’s approach to the Third World as essentially the same as in previous years include Daniel Papp, *Soviet Perceptions of the Developing*

Countries in the 1980's: The Ideological Basis (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1985); Francis Fukuyama, *Moscow's Post-Brezhnev Reassessment of the Third World* R-3337-USDP (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1986); Fukuyama, "Gorbachev and the Third World," *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1986), pp. 715-731; and Fukuyama, "Patterns of Soviet Third World Policy," *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1987), pp. 1-13.

4. See, for example, Robert M. Gates, "The Uneven Cycles of Kremlin Reform," *The Washington Post*, Outlook section, April 30, 1989.

5. For an insightful discussion of Gorbachev's views of the Third World as an amalgam of contending schools of thought among Soviet intellectuals regarding key trends in the developing countries and how Moscow should respond in foreign policy goals and techniques, see David E. Albright, "The USSR and the Third World in the 1980s," *Problems of Communism* (March-June 1989), pp. 50-70.

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| <i>List of Tables and Maps</i> | xi |
| <i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i> | xiii |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Introduction: Gorbachev and the Third World | 1 |
|--|----------|

| |
|-----------------------|
| Method of Approach, 3 |
| Chapter Outlines, 4 |
| Notes, 5 |

PART ONE

THE STUDY OF SOVIET-THIRD WORLD POLITICS

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1 The Study of Soviet-Third World Relations | 9 |
|--|----------|

| |
|---|
| Innovative Change Under Gorbachev, 12 |
| Traditional Assumptions Driving Soviet Policy in the Third World, 13 |
| Factors Driving Soviet Foreign Policy, 13 |
| The Complexity of Soviet-Third World Relationships, 16 |
| The Dynamics of Soviet Policy Toward the Third World, 19 |
| Conclusion, 20 |
| Notes, 21 |

PART TWO

SOVIET POLICY TOWARD THE THIRD WORLD: GORBACHEV'S NEW DIRECTIONS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2 Moscow and the Third World: The Record | 27 |
|---|-----------|

| |
|---|
| Motivations and Objectives, 27 |
| A World of Opportunities, 28 |
| Instruments of Soviet Policy, 29 |
| How Third World Countries Use the Soviets, 31 |
| A Record of Success, 33 |

Setbacks and Costs, 38
 The 1980s—A Decade of Stagnation, 39
 Constraints to Progress, 39
 Soviet Debate over Third World Trends, 41
 Shifting Priorities and Emphasis, 42
 The US Factor and Détente, 44
 Notes, 46

3 Gorbachev's "New Thinking": Economic and Strategic Priorities 49

"New Thinking" Axioms, 49
 Backdrop to "New Thinking," 53
 "New Thinking" in Practice, 56
 Policy Techniques, 61
 Successes and Limits to "New Thinking," 64
 Prospects, 66
 Notes, 67

4 "New Thinking" in Soviet-Third World Policy 71

The Third World in Broader Policy Perspective, 71
 New Themes in Soviet Rhetoric, 76
 New Directions in Policy, 82
 Limits of Change, 86
 Conclusion, 87
 Notes, 88

PART THREE REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

5 Afghanistan and South Asia 93

A Pyrrhic Victory, 93
 "New Thinking" and Afghanistan, 98
 Moscow's Concessions, 98
 Gaining International Support and UN Involvement, 103
 An Unresolved Issue, 103
 Reaction to Soviet Withdrawal, 104
 Broader Regional Impact of "New Thinking," 105
 Soviet-Indian Relations in the Era
 of "New Thinking," 106
 Pakistan, 108
 Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia, 109
 Outlook for Soviet Policy in South Asia, 110
 Notes, 111

| | |
|---|---------|
| 6 The Middle East | 115 |
| A Record of Success, 115 | |
| An Era of Stagnation, 117 | |
| Gorbachev's "New Directions" in the Middle East, 118 | |
| Improved Ties with Arab Moderates, 122 | |
| Pressure on Radical Clients—Syria and Libya, 126 | |
| Gorbachev's "New Directions" in the Persian Gulf, 128 | |
| Constraints to Soviet Progress, 135 | |
| Conclusions and Outlook, 136 | |
| Notes, 137 | |
| 7 Asia | 143 |
| The Record, 143 | |
| New Approach Articulated, 145 | |
| New Policies in Asia, 146 | |
| Modified Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula, 150 | |
| Japan: Impediment to Soviet Progress, 153 | |
| New Directions in Southeast Asia, 154 | |
| Outlook for Soviet Policy in Asia, 159 | |
| Notes, 161 | |
| 8 Sub-Saharan Africa | 167 |
| A Record of Success During the 1970s, 167 | |
| Deepening Problems in the 1980s, 169 | |
| Untangling the Angola-Namibia Knot, 171 | |
| Fresh Winds in Soviet-South African Relations, 175 | |
| "New Thinking" in Ethiopia, 178 | |
| Gorbachev and Mozambique, 181 | |
| Impediments to Soviet "New Thinking" in Southern Africa, 182 | |
| Prospects, 183 | |
| Notes, 185 | |
| 9 Latin America | 191 |
| The Latin American Setting, 193 | |
| Soviet Policy Toward Latin America Before Gorbachev: Successes and Failures, 194 | |
| Gorbachev's "New Thinking" in Latin America, 195 | |
| Dominant Trends Affecting Gorbachev's Latin American Policy, 197 | |
| Soviet-Cuban Relations, 198 | |
| Soviet Relations with Nicaragua, 207 | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Gorbachev's Latin American Policy on Balance, 210 | |
| Notes, 212 | |

PART FOUR PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

| | |
|---|------------|
| 10 Conclusions | 219 |
| Soviet Goals and Assumptions, 220 | |
| Soviet Policies in the Third World, 221 | |
| Successes to Date, 225 | |
| Impediments to "New Thinking" in Third World Settings, 227 | |
| Alternate Future Scenarios, 231 | |
| Notes, 233 | |
| Appendix A Arms Transfer Agreements with the Third World, by Supplier | 235 |
| Appendix B Arms Transfer Agreements with the Third World, by Supplier, 1981-1988 | 236 |
| Appendix C Regional Arms Transfer Agreements, by Supplier, 1981-1988 | 237 |
| Appendix D Percentage of Each Supplier's Agreements Value by Region, 1981-1988 | 238 |
| Appendix E Arms Deliveries to the Third World, by Supplier | 239 |
| Appendix F Arms Transfer Agreements with Cuba, 1981-1988, Suppliers Compared | 239 |
| Appendix G Arms Deliveries to Cuba, 1981-1988, Suppliers Compared | 240 |
| Selected Bibliography | 241 |
| Index | 245 |

TABLES AND MAPS

Tables

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 2.1 | Communist countries: Arms transfers to less developed countries, agreements and deliveries | 35 |
| 2.2 | Communist countries: Economic aid to less developed countries, extensions and drawings | 35 |
| 2.3 | USSR: Economic aid extended to less developed countries | 36 |
| 2.4 | Eastern Europe: Economic aid extended to less developed countries, by recipient | 37 |
| 3.1 | Average annual growth rates of real GNP | 54 |
| 9.1 | Distribution of trade and partner concentration | 203 |
| 9.2 | Cuban-Soviet trade turnover | 203 |
| 9.3 | Value of Soviet crude oil and oil products exported to Cuba | 204 |
| 9.4 | Soviet-East European economic and military assistance to Nicaragua | 208 |

Maps

| | |
|-------------|----|
| South Asia | 94 |
| Afghanistan | 97 |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Middle East | 116 |
| East Asia | 144 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 168 |
| Latin America | 192 |
| Cuba in its regional setting | 200 |

INTRODUCTION: GORBACHEV AND THE THIRD WORLD

By the time Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985 the Soviet Union had been deeply involved in the Third World for over three decades. Since 1954–1955, when Nikita S. Khrushchev first initiated a sustained drive to expand relations with the lesser developed countries, Moscow has used this part of the globe to break out of continental isolation, project power, and gain world class status as a superpower competitor with the United States. Third World countries, conversely, have taken advantage of Soviet attention to pursue their own foreign policy aims. How could Cuba, Vietnam, Syria, Ethiopia, Libya, and Angola have managed without the support and military assistance of the Soviet Union over the years? The impact of expanding Soviet–Third World relations—escalating East–West tensions, rising levels of world military spending, and protracted regional conflicts—make this a subject well worth examining.

Whether Moscow will be able to hold onto its expanded and costly Third World empire in the years ahead—as economic and political problems mount—remains an open question. But one thing is certain—Gorbachev’s “New Thinking” in foreign policy is having a significant impact on Moscow’s Third World relations as Soviet leaders seek to redefine the nature of their presence in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. While Moscow’s military withdrawal from Afghanistan has been one of the most dramatic events since Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the new Soviet leader also urged Cuba to pull its 50,000 troops out of Angola and put pressure on Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia. These moves illustrate Moscow’s new emphasis on the political settlement of regional conflicts as it seeks to reduce East–West tension and ease the burden of sustaining economically weak allies beleaguered by costly civil wars.

Hoping to reduce Moscow’s defense needs—and thus be able to shift investment from the military to the civilian economic sector—Gorbachev has tried to ease tensions with old adversaries, notably China. The May

1989 Sino-Soviet summit in Beijing was the first meeting between the communist giants after 30 years of intense hostility. Gorbachev has opened the door to improved relations with other countries previously treated as international pariahs, such as Israel, South Korea, and South Africa. And, Soviet officials have travelled throughout the Third World, outlining new diplomatic initiatives to endorse nuclear free zones, widen commercial ties, peacefully settle regional conflicts, and strengthen relations with moderate industrialized countries like Argentina, Brazil, India, and Mexico.

Gorbachev has advanced numerous diplomatic initiatives designed to ease military competition with the United States and strengthen international cooperation. His most dramatic efforts have been in the arms control field—and he has made effective use of public relations to advance his policies. In pressing his peace agenda with the United States, for example, Gorbachev sent Marshal Sergei F. Akhromeyev, former chief of the Soviet general staff and then Gorbachev's top military adviser, to the United States to make an unprecedented appearance as a witness before the House Armed Services Committee in late July 1989. Testifying before the House Committee, Akhromeyev said:

I am personally convinced that neither the United States nor its allies intend today to unleash a warfare against the U.S.S.R. and its allies. . . . We are telling our people that the tensions in the world, and war danger, have diminished. And this has been the result of positive changes in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and U.S.¹

Who could have imagined such a statement before members of the US Congress during the period of Soviet expansion in the mid-1970s or even in the early 1980s, when US President Ronald Reagan referred to the USSR as the “evil empire.”

These initiatives by no means indicate a Soviet withdrawal from the Third World, a point made clear when Gorbachev visited Cuba in April 1989. Gorbachev refused to use the occasion to reprimand Fidel Castro for Havana's notorious economic inefficiency or to threaten reduced support. Despite its military withdrawal from Afghanistan, Moscow has continued its support for the Najibullah regime. And the Soviets continue to supply sophisticated weapons to radical clients around the world.

Although the Soviet Union has not withdrawn from the Third World, the distinctly new patterns established by Gorbachev suggest fundamental change in the thought and action guiding Soviet-Third World decision-making. Driven by economic and security imperatives, Gorbachev's “new political thinking” represents a basic shift in policy assumptions, objectives and techniques. Gorbachev has downgraded ideology, rejected military expansion, pursued closer relations with capitalist-oriented Third World states and cooperated with the United States in negotiating political settlements to Third World conflicts. These shifts have been tailored to support the high-priority goals of reduced East-West tension, physical security