CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA, 1975-1980:  
THE QUESTION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE ON CUBA

by

JAMES FRANCIS ROCHLIN

B.Sc., B.A., California State University, Humboldt, 1979

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

in  
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
Department of Political Science

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
December, 1980

© James Francis Rochlin, 1980
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Political Science

The University of British Columbia
2075 Wesbrook Place
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1W5

Date Dec. 16, 1980
Abstract

Cuba's role in Africa in the 1970s has been the subject of numerous and diverse interpretations. Students of Cuban politics sometimes tend to take a general view of Cuban policy toward Angola, and so important differences between each issue or situation are overlooked. This study offers separate accounts of the role of Cuba in Africa and in Ethiopia since 1975, with the purpose of exploring the possibility of an influence relationship between Moscow and Havana.

Influence analysis is an extremely subjective task. That is, it appears to be virtually impossible to document Soviet influence on Cuba. Nevertheless, it remains possible to examine available evidence with respect to each situation, and then to construct what appears to be the most coherent argument regarding the possibility of Soviet influence on Cuba.

I shall conclude that the body of evidence suggests that Cuba did not intervene in Angola chiefly to conform to Soviet preferences or interests. In this sense then, Cuba probably was not influenced by the Soviets to any great degree with respect to the Angolan episode. In contrast, Cuba's role in each of the two Ethiopian incidents seems to exemplify the rather strong possibility of Soviet influence on Cuba. Further, it appears probable that the Soviets influenced Cuba through diplomatic persuasion with regard to the two Ethiopian incidents.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>Cuba's Role in Angola</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Angolan Civil War</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cuba: Pawn or Partner?</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>Cuba's Role in Ethiopia</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Ethiopian-Somali War</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes:</td>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Since 1975, Cuba has collaborated militarily with the Soviets in three separate incidents in Africa, one in Angola and two in Ethiopia. Commonly it is charged that the Cubans are serving as Soviet puppets or proxies to advance the interests of the Soviet Union in Africa. Scholars familiar with Cuban-Soviet relations assert that 'Soviet control' or influence on Cuba in the 1970s primarily has been a result of Cuba's economic dependency upon the Soviet Union. Further, it is useful to note that the Soviets have increased their economic assistance to Cuba some 350% since 1975 when Cuba commenced its military intervention in Angola.

The central purpose here is to examine Cuban-Soviet military collaboration in Angola and Ethiopia since 1975 in terms of an influence relationship between Moscow and Havana. Therefore, it is necessary to address the issue of whether Cuba intervened in Angola and Ethiopia chiefly because Cuba was influenced by the Soviets to do so, or whether there are other coherent explanations of Cuba's role in Angola and Ethiopia.

Political influence shall be defined here as a power relationship, as a process, as a means to an end. A salient characteristic of influence is that:

It is issue-specific and situation-specific: the duration of influence is restricted to the life of the issue or the situation within which it transpired, and so when this changes, so does the influence relationship...It is a short-lived phenomenon.

Since influence is time-specific and issue-specific by definition, it seems
appropriate to analyze separately the Angolan and two Ethiopian affairs. Thus, this essay will attempt to examine apparent differences with regard to the role of Cuba in Angola and Ethiopia. Furthermore, the issue of possible Soviet motives for influencing Cuba in each of these case studies will be addressed. In addition, there will be a discussion of some likely tactics potentially employed by the Soviets to influence Havana.

**********

In the case studies to be presented here it appears necessary to assess: (1) whether or not Cuba acted in accordance with their own presumed interests and goals; (2) whether or not the Cubans acted in accordance with Soviet interests.

If for example, a specific issue/situation is examined and: (1) the Cubans seem to have acted in accordance with their own presumed interests independent of the Soviet-Cuban relationship; and (2) Cuba's actions in this case seem to have contradicted the presumed interests of the Soviets, then it would appear doubtful that the Soviets had influence on Cuba. This is because, in this situation, Cuba's behaviour apparently had not been modified to fit the preferences of the Soviets.

Now a second hypothetical situation will be discussed. If, for example, Cuba: (1) seems to have acted in accordance with its presumed independent interests with respect to a given situation; and (2) Cuba also has appeared to have acted in accordance with presumed Soviet interests, then it would remain a distinct possibility that Cuba was not influenced by the Soviets in
this case. This is because one could construct an argument to the effect that Cuba acted only in its own interests which just happened to coincide with Soviet interests, therefore Cuban behaviour was not modified as such. On the other hand, another argument could be constructed to suggest the possibility that Cuba had been influenced by the Soviets in this case. This is because, despite the fact that Cuba superficially seemed to be acting in accordance with its own presumed interests, it remains possible that Cuba may not have actually behaved the way it did with respect to this given situation had it not been for Soviet influence (i.e., in this case Cuban interests may have been misread or an unapparent variable may have been present).

Now a third and final hypothetical situation will be discussed. If, for example, Cuba: (1) seems to have acted in accordance with the presumed Soviet interests in a given situation; but (2) Cuba appears not to have acted consistently with its own presumed interests aside from its interest in the Cuban-Soviet relationship, then it would appear distinctly possible that the Soviets influenced Cuba in this case. This is because Cuban behaviour appears to have been modified to fit Soviet preferences. Again, if Cuban or Soviet interests were misread then this conclusion might prove false.

Now that the questions that will be explored here have been presented, a discussion is in order regarding six categories of information that would be pertinent to such an analysis. First, it appears necessary in each case study to present briefly the circumstances and events which led to the conflict or war; and further, to examine what role, if any, Cuba played with
respect to the events that led to the conflict or war. This will provide
a background for which other sorts of pertinent information may be assessed.

Second, Cuba often explains its foreign policy chiefly in terms of
its revolutionary-internationalist ideology. Thus, Cuban ideological ex-
planations ought to be examined in terms of whether or not they appear to
be a coherent explanation for Cuban behaviour in each of the three case
studies. If, for example, Cuba genuinely appeared to be adhering to its
ideological interests with respect to a given situation, then it could be
argued that Cuba was behaving consistently with its independent interests
to this extent.

Third, it appears necessary to identify some presumed foreign policy
interests of the Cubans, other than the presumed Cuban interest of main-
taining a warm Cuban-Soviet relationship. Cuba, for example, seems to
display an interest in maintaining or increasing its prestige among the non-
aligned nations. Further, Cuba presumably wishes to avoid actions which
would yield a direct American military retaliation against Cuba. Thus,
Cuban behaviour should be examined in each case study to ascertain whether
or not these presumed Cuban foreign policy interests are contradicted.

Cuban policy toward the situation in each affair shall be examined
for continuity or contradiction. If, for example, Cuba has demonstrated
a historical continuity of policy with respect to a given situation, then
this could be construed as one element to support an argument that Cuba
was behaving consistently with its independent, historical interests and
policies. Conversely, if Cuban policy with respect to a given situation
exemplifies contradiction, then it would be necessary to examine the nature
of this contradiction. That is, the question regarding whether or not Cuba contradicted its presumed independent policies and interests to promote the interests of the Soviets would need to be addressed.

Fifth, the situation in each case study shall be scrutinized for the extent of apparent coordination of Cuban and Soviet policies. If the Soviets influenced the Cubans with respect to a given situation, one could probably expect to note a relatively high degree of coordination of Cuban-Soviet policy. Of course, the apparent presence of a high degree of Soviet-Cuban coordination of policy with respect to a given situation does not necessarily imply Soviet influence on Cuba.

Finally, possible Soviet strategic and political interests shall be presented with respect to each case study, so that Cuban behaviour may be compared to Soviet interests or preferences.

*****

An analysis of a potential influence relationship between Moscow and Havana entails some significant methodological problems. As Rosenau indicates, the most prominent difficulty with this sort of analysis is that "Influence is extraordinarily difficult to trace empirically." That is, it seems virtually impossible to document Soviet influence on Cuba. It is a profoundly subjective task, then, to determine whether or not Cuban behaviour has been modified by the Soviets. Further, if an influence relationship between Moscow and Havana seems likely with respect to a given situation, it also remains a subjective task to determine what the independent behaviour of Cuba would have been if Cuba had not been influenced by the Soviet Union. Thus, an element of educated conjecture is involved in this sort of analysis,
since it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty whether or not Cuba had indeed been influenced by the Soviets with respect to a given situation.

Further, it is possible only to present a probable model of Cuban and Soviet interests with regard to a given situation. Here again, conjecture is involved, and so actual Cuban and Soviet interests may be misinterpreted.

Chapter Two is devoted to a study of Cuba's role in Angolan Civil War. Chapter Three contains separate analyses of Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War and the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. Following Chapter Three there is a concluding section.
Chapter II  CUBA'S ROLE IN ANGOLA

The Angolan Civil War

Since the 1960s, three major Angolan political movements have struggled among themselves to gain control of Angola. These political movements include the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA).

Founded in 1956, the MPLA is the oldest of the three political movements and was born of a fusion of the Communist Party of Angola and several Marxist nationalist groups. Since its conception, the MPLA has dedicated itself to the goals of political and economic independence under a non-aligned, democratic-socialist government. Traditionally, the MPLA's general appeal has been to the intellectual, mestico and black population of Luanda. Cuba and the Soviet Union, among other nations, historically have pledged both material and political support to the MPLA.

The FNLA drew its support largely from the Bakongo people of northern Angola. Ideologically, the FNLA advocated tribalism and anti-communism. Further, anti-mestico and anti-white positions were rooted in the FNLA's political platform. A purely military approach to attain independence from Portugal was advocated by the FNLA. The FNLA historically has relied on the support of China and Zaire.

UNITA is the youngest of the three political movements and was founded in 1966 by Jonas Savimbi, a former member of the MPLA. UNITA spokesmen have repeatedly pointed out that their liberation movement was the first in the history of
African struggle for liberation borne of action within the country, instead of being created in the military camps and emigre milieu in neighbouring countries.\(^3\)

Ideologically, UNITA's positions were almost identical to those of the FNLA. The chief difference between the FNLA and UNITA is their different tribal appeals. UNITA's traditional appeal has been to the Ovimbundu tribe of southern Angola.

Armed struggle continued between the three groups throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. On April 25, 1974, the Armed Forces Movement, consisting chiefly of disillusioned military personnel, successfully launched a coup against the Portuguese regime which had governed Angola. Immediately after the coup

Angola's three liberation movements rejected the notion of a referendum and, projecting ahead on the basis of distinct histories, character and strategies, reconnoitered and girded for what looked increasingly like a wide-open race for political power.\(^4\)

The jockeying for power among Angola's political factions during the 1960s and 1970s did not go unnoticed by the superpowers and other international actors.

Cuba established relations with the MPLA in 1965, when Che Guevara met with MPLA President Agostino Neto in Congo Brazzaville.\(^5\) Cuban military assistance to Angola began in 1966 and continued relatively consistently until 1975. Cuban aid to Angola before 1975 chiefly consisted of a very limited amount of arms and military training programs conducted in Congo Brazzaville and also within Cuba.\(^6\) Regarding the military training programs Cuba conducted in Congo Brazzaville beginning in 1966, the New York
The number of Cuban military personnel serving in the former French Congo has increased in the last six months from about 500 to more than 1,000 according to officials here. The purpose of the Cuban soldiers is to train and probably to staff guerrilla groups in support of dissident elements in other countries in the area.... The principal focus has been in the Portuguese territories, Cabina, Angola and Portuguese Guinea.

Cuba's original attraction to the MPLA over the two major Angolan political factions presumably was ideological in nature.

The Soviets, on the other hand, seemed to have experienced a stormier and less consistent historical relationship with the MPLA than did Cuba. While Cuban aid to the MPLA has been continuous since 1966, Soviet aid to the MPLA was interrupted on two notable occasions since 1962:

Once in 1963-1964 and again in 1972. The first interruption in Soviet support followed the MPLA's 1963 diplomatic debacle in the Organization of African Unity. In October, the OAU's African Liberation Committee granted recognition to the FNLA's Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE), largely because of the MPLA's military weakness. A year later, the OAU adopted a new position favouring unity between the FNLA and MPLA (thus granting the MPLA tacit if not official recognition), and Soviet aid resumed. In 1972-1973, the Portuguese army launched a series of major offensives in Angola which resulted in severe military setbacks for the MPLA. These defeats exacerbated political divisions within the movement, leading to a number of defections. With the MPLA in military retreat and political disarray, Soviet aid began to wane in 1972 and by early 1974 had been halted altogether. The Soviets apparently found Neto a difficult person to deal with, and for a brief period courted favour with Chipenda.

Although Soviet support to the MPLA ceased for a period of six months in 1974, presumably sparked by the Soviet's apparent lack of confidence in the MPLA leadership during this period when the MPLA weathered serious internal disputes, Soviet aid to the MPLA resumed in October 1974:
With independence promised and the Chinese in league with the FNLA, which had American connections as well, the Soviet Union faced the prospect of being shut out politically after years of diplomatic and material investment in the Angolan cause. Interpreted in Washington at the time as a move to strengthen the MPLA so it could compete militarily with the then much stronger FNLA, Soviet assistance apparently resumed in August via the OAU Liberation Committee. Then in October and November, the Soviets began to send military supplies through Congo-Brazzaville. Also, according to American government sources, in December, the MPLA sent 250 men to the Soviet Union for military training.

Even in 1975, during the Angolan Civil War, the Soviets appeared to be more hesitant than the Cubans to become more deeply involved in the war on the MPLA's behalf. In August, 1975, for instance, the Soviets initially refused the MPLA's request for military advisors, although Soviet advisors were provided later. According to American government sources, in December, the MPLA sent 250 men to the Soviet Union for military training.

Representatives of the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA met together on January 15, 1975 to sign the Alvor Accords, an agreement which aimed to establish:

a traditional regime that would lead to the proclamation of independence on November 22, 1975. The transitional regime would be presided over by a Portuguese military officer while administrative posts in Angola would be evenly divided among the contenders. Elections were to be held in October, 1975, to decide who would have control. The three separate armies, under the supervision of the Portuguese, were to be unified during the transition.

Immediately following the signing of the Alvor Accords, the U.S. National Security Council, at the request of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), authorized the provision of $300,000 in covert funds to support the FNLA. This marked the first time since the 1974 coup that the U.S. showed serious interest in the power struggle involved in the Angolan Civil War. The FNLA, at this time, was much weaker militarily than the MPLA. At this juncture, Washington apparently considered it critical to step up aid to the FNLA if anti-communist forces in Angola were to be defeated. In addition
to the American aid, both Zairian and Chinese instructors had been training FNLA forces for several years.

In March, 1975, the FNLA and UNITA combined forces to combat the MPLA. Soon after the signing of the Alvor Accords, on March 23, 1975, the FNLA/UNITA coalition launched a military attack on the MPLA forces. Later in March, 1975, 1,200 Zairian troops entered Angola to assist the FNLA/UNITA coalition.

The MPLA, apparently realizing its severe underdog position after the FNLA/UNITA attack in March, 1975, responded by requesting additional aid from the Soviet Union and Cuba. As a result:

The Soviets quickly stepped up their flow of arms. After a meeting between Neto and Cuban Comandante Flavid Bravo in May, 1975, Cuba agreed to provide several hundred instructors to open four military training camps for MPLA recruits. Most accounts indicate that 230 Cuban instructors arrived in June.

By mid-July, 1975, the MPLA had increased its strength in urban areas of Angola. As a result of the MPLA's relatively strong military position at this time, the FNLA/UNITA coalition requested assistance from South Africa. South Africa responded by starting military training camps in southern Angola and Namibia. Also at this time, Zaire and Zambia requested additional U.S. aid to support the FNLA/UNITA forces.

On July 17, 1975, the U.S. '40 Committee' authorized a massive expansion of arms to both the FNLA and UNITA, as well as a program of covert action by the CIA. "Operation Feature," as the covert program was called, included the recruitment of mercenaries, the use of CIA personnel as military advisors in both Zaire and northern Angola, and $32 million in armaments.

Once again the MPLA requested additional aid from the Soviet Union and Cuba. General Paul Diaz Arguelles led the arrival of Cuban reinforcements to Angola in late 1975. The Soviets responded by providing additional
military hardware to the MPLA.

In the summer of 1975, the Cuban military may have been preparing for the possibility of an increased Cuban military intervention in Angola:

Summer (1975) war games in Cuba were the most complex conducted up to that time. By the end of August and the beginning of September, the top Cuban officer corps began to prepare for war.\textsuperscript{16}

By October, 1975, the CIA estimated that Soviet/Cuban aid to the MPLA and American/Chinese/Zairian aid to the FNLA/UNITA coalition was about equal -- roughly $80 million.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, the Angolan Civil War was not merely a conflict among local political factions in Angola. Indeed, the war represented a contest involving the superpowers and an assortment of international actors.

Fighting escalated in September and early October, 1975; The MPLA, backed by Cuban advisors and Soviet military hardware, managed to overcome the FNLA/UNITA coalition in both northern and southern Angola. Thus, with the Portuguese scheduled to grant independence to Angola on November 11, 1975, it looked as if the MPLA would retain control of Luanda, the nation's capital.

Presumably as a result of the MPLA's upper hand in Angola by October, 1975, South Africa responded by directly becoming involved in the Angolan Civil War by sending some 5,000 South African troops into Angola from Namibia.\textsuperscript{18}

At some point in mid-1975, Pretoria did indeed decide that chaos in Angola provided it with a low-risk opportunity to smash both the MPLA and SWAPO and secure the future for 'moderate' alternatives in Angola and Namibia.\textsuperscript{19}

South Africa's assistance to anti-MPLA forces seemed to bolster the image of the MPLA/Cuban forces among many African nations:
One factor working on the behalf of the MPLA was the alliance made by UNITA and FNLA forces with South Africa...African nations now felt compelled to show their support of the MPLA as a way of attacking South African apartheid. South Africa posed a threat to Angolan independence but could also set a most dangerous precedent, for success in Angola would mean the extension of racist policies in other regions of Africa.

The direct intervention of South Africa in Angola apparently prompted the MPLA to request Cuban troops to assist them on November 4, 1975. Cuban troops began arriving in Angola on November 8, 1975. Cuba's swift provision of troops to Angola suggests that the Cubans may have been preparing for a military excursion to Angola.

Portugal granted independence to Angola on November 10, 1975. Immediately thereafter three different governments were formed. The MPLA government was stationed officially in the nation's capital of Luanda. The FNLA held fort at Carmona, with UNITA at Huambo. At this time the MPLA, with the assistance of 1,200 Cuban military personnel, claimed control of only 20% of Angolan territory.

For November, 1975 to March, 1976, an estimated 18,000 to 24,000 Cuban military personnel arrived in Angola. Fidel explained that "Cuba sent the men and weapons necessary to win that struggle." These Cuban troops were decisive for the MPLA's subsequent victory in Angola.

In early 1976, the U.S. halted any further U.S. aid to the FNLA/UNITA forces. As a result, "South Africa withdrew its troops to the border charging that the U.S. had defaulted on its pledge to provide whatever military assistance was required to defeat the MPLA." Consequently, UNITA disintegrated. By February, 1976, the MPLA forces concentrated their efforts on northern Angola. Shortly afterwards, FNLA forces were defeated and sought refuge in Zaire.
Cuban military intervention in Angola, then, seemed to occur in three major stages. The first stage occurred in late August and early September of 1975, with Cuba responding to MPLA requests for military assistance by providing about 1,000 Cuban troops by mid-September. The second stage was characterized by a considerably greater Cuban military intervention on the behalf of the MPLA, in the wake of South Africa's massive intervention in Angola in late October, 1975. The third and largest stage of Cuban intervention occurred just after Portugal granted independence to Angola in November, 1975, when it looked as if anti-MPLA forces had the upper hand in Angola.

Although some Cuban troops departed from Angola in 1976, a reinforcement of Cuban troops occurred in 1977 primarily as a result of two major events. First, Angola's Kantangan people invaded Zaire's Shaba province in March, 1977. Shaba had formerly been known as Katanga, and the Katangans had been fighting for an independent Katanga since the 1960s. During the Angolan Civil War, the Katangans fought along with the MPLA/Cuban forces. Thus, the Katangans were the recipients of Cuban arms and military training. As a result, Zaire charged that Angola and Cuba had designed the Shaba invasion, and further, that the Cubans were militarily advising the Katangans -- a charge Cuba adamantly denied. The Carter administration, incidentally, indicated that there was no evidence linking the Cubans with the Shaba invasion. Although Cuba apparently was not directly involved in the Shaba invasion, it has been suggested that the Neto regime of the People's Republic of Angola was aware of, and even advocated, the Shaba invasion. Thus, the
subsequent possibility of war between Angola and Zaire presumably contributed to the reinforcement of Cuban troops in Angola.

A second event in 1977 which may help to explain the reinforcement of Cuban troops in Angola was an attempted coup launched against Neto by a faction of the MPLA. Cuban troops joined MPLA forces loyal to Neto to quell the coup attempt. Thus, domestic turmoil in Angola also may have prompted Cuba to reinforce its troops there.25

There is another salient aspect of the coup attempt:

The attempted coup had at least the tacit support of the USSR, which knew of it in advance and did nothing to warn Neto of its imminence. The coup-makers did not inform the Cubans, however, rightly suspecting that Cuba would be unsympathetic.26

Historically, the Soviets did not seem to care for Neto, which may explain why they possibly failed to inform him of the coup. Further, some sources suggest that not only did the coup attempt have the tacit support of the Soviets, but that the coup may have been Soviet-inspired. The New York Times, for example, indicates that the Cubans:

are generally credited with having saved Dr. Neto's regime after an attempted coup last year that was reportedly Soviet-inspired ...Dr. Neto said that there had been a danger of the leadership not following our (i.e., Angolan) orientation, but of being affected by influence from elsewhere (i.e., perhaps the Soviet Union).27

The Soviet's role in the coup remains unclear, since neither the Soviets nor the Angolans have offered direct comment on the coup attempt. Dr. Neto's comments above, however, appear to be aimed at the Soviet Union.

The Katangans staged another invasion of the Shaba province in 1978, this one almost identical to the invasion of 1977. This contributed to the tension between Zaire and Angola, and effectively emphasized the necessity
for the lingering of Cuban troops in Angola. Yet another explanation for the protracted presence of Cuban troops in Angola was suggested by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere in a 1978 interview with the *New York Times*:

Mr. Nyerere defended the presence of 20,000 Cuban troops in that country [Angola]. . . . President Nyerere said he was certain that Cuban forces would be withdrawn from Angola if neighbouring South-West Africa became independent, if South Africa 'were no longer a threat' to Angolan security, and if Western nations ceased using Zaire against Angola. . . . The Cubans remained, he said, because South Africa, 'and, I believe, the CIA,' were still financing organizations 'opposed and committed to the overthrown' of the government of Angola.28

Cuban intervention in the Angolan War was particularly significant, since "never before Angola had the Cuban Armed Forces been formally committed to front-line overseas combat as a formal part of their military mission."29 The Angolan affair, then, marked the initial test of Cuba's new military capabilities overseas. In addition to Cuba's extensive military support to the MPLA, Cuba has also provided considerable socio-economic support to Angola. Cuban socio-economic assistance was particularly significant immediately following the Angolan Civil War, since the intense fighting had left the country in a shambles. Cuban support to Angola included teachers, medical personnel, engineers, construction workers, media advisors, as well as economic and political advisors.30 "Angola insists that Cuban developmental aid played a more important role in its bilateral relations [with Cuba] than did Cuban military aid either before or after liberation."31

It remains doubtful that the Cuban/MPLA forces in Angola would have been victorious had it not been for Soviet assistance. Not only did Soviet assistance come in the form of military hardware, but the Soviets were also
responsible for coordinating the assistance from the Warsaw Pact and other countries on the MPLA's behalf. A considerable degree of Soviet coordination seemed to be involved, as indicated by the following discussion of transport of military hardware to Angola in November, 1975:

Heavy weapons were flown or transported by sea from Eastern Europe via East Germany, Cape Verde, and Conarky. Russian, Bulgarian, and Yugoslav ships unloaded hundreds of tons of equipment including T-34 and T-54 tanks; PT-76 amphibious tanks, MiG-21J fighter bombers, helicopters, and numerous armed vehicles. A source close to the CIA reported that the Cuban-MPLA forces had at their disposal 120 T-54 and T-34 tanks, 70 Soviet-made BRDM vehicles, numerous multi-barreled rocket launchers, 23 MiG-21s and 10 MiG-17s.\(^{32}\)

Regarding the transport of Cuban troops and military hardware to Angola, both the Soviets and the Cubans were involved. Throughout 1975, Cuban ships carried military hardware and soldiers to Angola via the Congo, and to a lesser extent, via Angolan ports.\(^{33}\)

Not until January, 1976 did the U.S.S.R. provide transport aircraft for the Cubans, and even then it did so only when U.S. pressure had successfully denied the Cubans landing rights in several countries, making the continued use of Cuban commercial air transport impossible.\(^{34}\)

Although the Soviets did not assume the responsibility for transporting Cuban troops to Angola until 1976, the Soviets had been responsible for transporting all sorts of military hardware to Angola throughout the Angolan Civil War. For example:

In March, 1975, Soviet arms deliveries began to increase. They went by air to Brazzaville, by truck to Cabina, by rail to Pointe Noire, and by small craft down the Angolan coast. In April, chartered aircraft flew perhaps a hundred tons of heavy arms into southern Angola, and large shipments, including heavy motors and armoured vehicles, began to come in on Yugoslav, Greek, and, finally, Soviet ships.\(^{35}\)

The Cuban forces that arrived in Angola in November, 1975, were accompanied by the elite forces from Mozambique, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Congo-
Republic, and possibly advisors from Algeria, Yugoslavia and Nigeria. Further, the MPLA had the political and logistical support of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), North Vietnam, Cape Verde, and Tanzania. Specifically, the GDR, Algeria and Cuba demonstrated the use of military jets to the MPLA; the use of weaponry was demonstrated by Cuba, North Vietnam, the U.S.S.R. and Algeria; and training insurgency was demonstrated to the MPLA by the Soviets.

Although the question of whether or not the Soviets seemed to have influenced Cuba's decision to send troops to Angola will be dealt with later, it is useful to consider Cuba's explanation for its military intervention in Angola. On April 19, 1976, Fidel Castro stated that:

Cuba made its own decision [to send troops to Angola] completely on its own responsibility. The U.S.S.R. ... never requested that a single Cuban be sent to that country [Angola]. The U.S.S.R. is extraordinarily respectful and careful in its relations with Cuba. A decision of that nature could only be made by our party.

Further, Gabriel Garcia Marquez goes so far as to suggest that "Contrary to numerous assertions, it was a sovereign and independent act [Cuba's decision to send troops to Angola] by Cuba; the Soviet Union was informed not before but after the decision had been made." Another significant aspect of Cuba's decision to send troops to Angola on the behalf of the MPLA is the issue of the legitimacy of the MPLA government. The presence of Cuban troops in Angola was preceded by a request for assistance by the MPLA, "which received international recognition as the
legitimate government of Angola... In responding to the appeal [by the
MPLA], the Cubans acted in accordance with international law.\textsuperscript{40} The
issue of legitimacy was stressed by the Cubans on a number of occasions, an
example being a speech delivered by Raul Rao, Cuban Minister of Foreign
Affairs:

\begin{quote}
The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola was the vanguard
for the struggle for independence and is now [1975] its legitimate
custodian.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

Although Cuba did not commit troops to Angola extensively until 1975
when the MPLA was recognized internationally as Angola's legitimate govern-
ment, it is important to consider that Cuba had given the MPLA political
and nominal military support since 1966 when the MPLA was not regarded in-
ternationally as the legitimate government of Angola. Therefore, it
remains unclear as to whether or not the legitimacy of the MPLA government
had any significant effect on the Cuban decision to commit troops to Angola.

CUBA: PARTNER OR PAWN?

The historical Cuban-Angolan relationship and the internal situation
of Angola can aid in explaining Cuba's involvement there. The body of
evidence suggests that the MPLA, recognized as the legitimate government
of Angola and which enjoyed Cuban support since 1966, requested Cuban
military assistance in 1975. It remains possible that the great majority
of Cuban troops would have arrived in Angola had it not been for the prior
massive military intervention of South Africa.\textsuperscript{42} However, Cuba's suspiciously
quick reply to MPLA requests for Cuban troops suggests that Cuba may have been
planning a military excursion to Angola regardless of whether or not the South
Africans intervened militarily in Angola.

Briefly, regarding Cuban domestic politics, it is useful to consider that the Angolan episode seems to have advanced the interests of the military and revolutionary factions of the Cuban regime. The military and revolutionary factions are dominated by Raul Castro and Fidel Castro, respectively. "Despite a more institutionalized order, [and] heightened Soviets influence....Fidel and Raul remain very much in control of Cuban affairs." Since Fidel and Raul presumably dominate domestic politics, their potential interests with respect to Angola shall be considered.

The central figures of Cuba's military faction include Raul Castro and the officers of the Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces. Gonzalez builds a rather convincing case which suggests that Cuba's military faction was largely responsible for Cuba's Angolan involvement:

The strengthening of the civilian sector, combined with the lowered perceptions of external threat from the U.S., meant that the Cuban army could be pared down to a highly professional standing force of about one-hundred-and-twenty-thousand and devote itself primarily to military tasks beginning in the early 1970s... The high levels of professionalization and institutionalization attained by the army may have impelled it to search out and identify new organizational missions abroad... The end result of the army's expanded military mission and capabilities was the embarkation of an estimated 1,000 Cuban soldiers to Angola by mid-September, 1975. Later, with the rapid buildup of the Cuban military presence to over 14,000 combat troops, the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) became the decisive factor in the victory of the MPLA.

Thus, the Angolan episode appears to have been in the interests of Cuba's military faction, and it remains a distinct possibility that Cuba's military faction encouraged the decision to send Cuban troops to Angola.
Fidel Castro is at the center of the ideological appeal of the revolutionary faction of the Cuban regime. This faction embodies the ideological revolutionary-internationalist interests, both domestic and foreign, of Cuba.  

Cuban military intervention in Angola effectively helped a revolutionary government come to power there. In this sense, then, Cuba's Angolan involvement coincided with the interests of Cuba's revolutionary faction. It is no surprise that Fidel Castro, as leader of the revolutionary faction of the Cuban regime, explains Cuba's Angolan involvement chiefly in terms of Cuba's revolutionary-internationalist ideology:

But this same history of our homeland at the end of the last century is also the present history of Angola, a country colonized for more than 400 years, a country which the colonists exploited, developed and exacerbated all manners of divisions; a country in which, as Neto has explained, the colonists have used racism, tribalism, and regionalism and resorted to all kinds of weapons to keep an Angolan nation from being forged, so as to maintain colonial rule indefinitely... We have fulfilled our elementary internationalist duty with Angola. By fulfilling a duty we are not doing a favour but simply fulfilling a duty... We are proud of our revolutionary people, who are willing and ready to enlist hundreds of thousands of their fighters if necessary. We are proud of our revolutionary reservists and soldiers who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Angolans with the same heroism and the same courage that would characterize their action in our country.

In a Radio Havana speech delivered in Spring, 1976, Castro linked an ethnic factor to Cuba's revolutionary internationalism to help explain the Cuban involvement in Angola:

We have helped our Angolan brothers, first because it is a revolutionary principle, because we are internationalists. Second, because our people are an Afro-American people... and today our people are revolutionary, free, internationalist, capable of fulfilling their international duties!
Cuba's Angolan involvement appears to have expanded Cuban prestige on the international stage. This is largely because "Angola was the first country where the Cubans were successful in helping a revolutionary movement come to power. Castro's Angolan operation was a great political success."48

Cuban prestige was bolstered particularly among African countries. This can be explained, in part, by considering that Cuba was fighting on the behalf of the MPLA to suppress South African forces siding with the FNLA/UNITA coalition. South Africa's apartheid politics generated a stigma of unpopularity among many African nations, if not the world, in the late 1970s. Thus, the image of Cuba combatting the South African intervention in Angola may have lifted significantly Cuba's image among African countries.

Cuba's performance in Angola seems also to have effectively heightened Cuban prestige among many non-aligned nations.

By greatly extending Cuban influence and prestige in Africa, Angola made Cuba a more valuable spokesman for socialism among the non-aligned.49

Cuba has demonstrated an interest in becoming a leader among the non-aligned nations. Cuba, then, presumably would avoid a foreign policy that might jeopardize its status among the non-aligned. The Angolan episode was consistent with Cuba's goal of improving its status on the international stage, particularly among the non-aligned. Since Cuba's involvement in Angola was incremental, it is possible that Cuba read the signs along the way that the non-aligned nations generally were supportive of Cuba's Angolan involvement. Therefore, this may be a factor contributing to Cuba's military intervention in Angola.
Presumably among the chief factors affecting Cuban foreign policy is a desire to steer clear of actions which would be likely to yield a direct U.S. retaliation toward Cuba. Throughout Cuba's incremental military escalation in Angola, the U.S. displayed no signals that it would take direct military action against Cuba, either in Angola or in Cuba, in retaliation for Cuba's involvement in Angola. The Americans, however, did express disapproval of Cuba's involvement in Angola, and signaled that Cuban-American economic relations would remain at a stalemate. Therefore, it seems likely that the apparent absence of a U.S. threat to retaliate militarily against Cuba may have been among the factors aiding to encourage, or at least did not discourage, Cuban involvement in Angola.

There is evidence to indicate that the Soviet Union coordinated the various countries working on behalf of the MPLA. Thus, the Angolan affair seemed to provide the Soviets with a rehearsal of sorts for coordinating military expeditions to Africa, a technique the Soviets would employ again during their intervention in Ethiopia. "The U.S.S.R. had demonstrated its capacity to employ a global network of influence to support a military intervention in an obscure area of the globe far from its periphery -- a historical first."

Clearly, the MPLA's victory in the Angolan war was advantageous for the Soviets. The victory of the Soviet-backed MPLA, for example, dealt a loss to the interests of the West and the Chinese, while Soviet interests in Africa were advanced.

Other Soviet advantages derived from the Angolan episode include
Soviet access to Angola's natural resources, and improving the Soviet's image in Africa and among developing countries in general.\(^{52}\) However, Angola presumably was of little geopolitical importance to the Soviets as a result of the "relatively low strategic priority the Soviets attribute to sub-Saharan Africa."\(^{53}\) We shall see later that Ethiopia is of much greater geopolitical significance to the Soviets.

The Angolan War's favourable results for the Soviets was heightened by the fact that the Soviets performed very little or no direct fighting in Angola. It was the Cubans who supplied the soldiers. The Soviet role consisted chiefly of supplying military hardware and of conducting military coordination. The absence of Soviet troops in Angola, then, vastly reduced the costs to the Soviets for the advantages they ultimately reaped.

Regarding the Cuban-Soviet relationship in the Angolan affairs, Cuban and Soviet policy seems to have converged historically, in the sense that both the Soviets and the Cubans supported the MPLA since the 1960s.

The notion of some degree of independence between the Soviet and Cuban policy toward Angola can be supported by some points made earlier. Despite the general historical convergence of Cuban and Soviet policy toward Angola, there were instances where Cuban and Soviet policy differed. The Cubans supported the MPLA consistently since 1966. The Soviets halted aid to Angola on two notable occasions. The Soviets, in contrast to the Cubans, initially appeared reluctant to provide military advisors to Angola at the outset of the civil war there. Most recently, there is some evidence to suggest that the Soviets may have known about, and may even have inspired,
a coup aimed at Neto in the late 1970s, a coup which the Cubans apparently had no prior knowledge of and which the Cubans helped prevent militarily. Therefore, while there does seem to be a general convergence between Soviet and Cuban policy toward Angola, there exists evidence which seems to suggest an element of independence between Soviet and Cuban policies toward Angola.

Cuba may have gained some prestige with the Soviets as a result of Cuba's performance in Angola. That is, the Angolan episode illustrated Cuba's new-found strategic value to the Soviets. The Angolan affair demonstrated to the Soviets that "...Cuba could get results in Africa, thus making the U.S.S.R. more beholden to Cuba."54

Another rather salient implication of the Angolan incident with respect to the Cuban-Soviet relationship is that Cuba's military manpower in Angola may have served to repay some of Cuba's enormous debt to the Soviets. "The Cuban efforts in Angola...allowed repayment, in political and military currency, for past Soviet assistance to Cuba."55 So while the repayment of Cuba's debt to the Soviets probably was not the only factor affecting Cuba's decision to intervene militarily in Angola, this factor among others presumably encouraged Cuba's Angolan involvement.

Not only is it possible that Cuba's military involvement in Angola erased some past Soviet debts, it also remains a distinct possibility that the Soviets rewarded the Cuban involvement by providing increased military and economic aid to Cuba. Soviet economic and military assistance to Cuba has increased since 1975.
Influence, as defined here, necessarily involves the behaviour modification of the target state to conform to the preferences of the donor state. Applying this to Soviet-Cuban involvement in Angola, the major question here is whether the Angolan episode appears consistent with Cuba's interests and motivations aside from the presumed Cuban interest of maintaining a warm Soviet-Cuban relationship; or, conversely, whether Cuba's independent foreign policy was modified chiefly to fit the preferences of the Soviets with regard to the Angolan episode. Again, this is a highly subjective and ultimately untestable task.

Although I do not support the latter position, for reasons to be discussed shortly, it is possible to construct an argument to the effect that Cuba was influenced by the Soviets to become involved militarily in Angola; and further, that the Cubans acted as Soviet proxies in Angola. There are three major components for this argument.

First, since the Cuban military buildup of the early 1970s was supported materially by the Soviets, and perhaps even designed by them, then the Soviets ultimately are responsible for modifying Cuba's behaviour by providing Cuba with significant military capabilities. These capabilities were demonstrated in the Angolan episode.

Second, it can be suggested that Cuba only committed troops to Angola to repay past debts to the Soviets. Thus, Soviet influence tactics such as largesse or persuasion are consistent with this possible explanation of Cuba's Angolan involvement.

Finally, since Cuba provided the troops while Moscow provided the military hardware in Angola, it can be argued that Cuba was performing the
'dirty-work' of the Soviets by offering Cuban bloodshed to promote Soviet expansionist interests.

This argument is unconvincing for a number of reasons. To begin with, the three components in support of the above argument are subject to dispute.

First, related to Cuban domestic politics, it has been shown above that Raul Castro and the Cuban regime's military faction presumably were in favour of, and shared responsibility for, the Cuban military buildup of the 1970s. Thus, Cuba's 'independent' behaviour was not modified as such since elements within the Cuban regime appear to have contributed significantly to the military buildup.

Second, although it is undisputable that the Cubans compiled an enormous debt to the Soviets in the 1970s, it seems fallacious to argue that this was the only factor, or even the major factor, responsible for Cuba's Angolan involvement. As a leader of the non-aligned nations and as a country located some 90 miles from the U.S., Cuba presumably holds some political value to the Soviets. As a result of Cuba's political value to Moscow, it is doubtful that the Soviets would have stopped or reduced aid to Cuba if, hypothetically, Cuba refused to commit troops to Angola at Moscow's request. Surely the Cubans realize they possess some potential bargaining power with the Soviets, although this bargaining power probably has its limits. So it appears that the Soviets probably would have provided Cuba with economic and military aid, as it did throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, even if Cuba had not become involved militarily in Angola. Therefore, the argument that Cuba committed troops to Angola only, or chiefly, to repay Moscow is unconvincing.
Third, the fact that Cuban troops were present in Angola while Soviet troops were absent there can be explained by reasons other than that Cuba was influenced by the Soviets to perform Soviet 'dirty-work' in Angola. From the beginning, the Soviets seemed to have been more hesitant than the Cubans to become involved militarily in the Angolan war on behalf of the MPLA. If the Soviets provided troops to Angola, they might have risked a direct confrontation with the Americans -- a direct superpower confrontation both the Soviets and the Cubans wished to avoid. In addition, ethnicity may have played a role here, if only a limited one. Castro stressed Cuba's Afro-hispanic ethnicity and colonial legacy as a means to emphasize Cuba's identification with the MPLA. Therefore, there are a number of possible explanations for the presence of Cuban troops, but the absence of Soviet troops, in Angola.

After considering available evidence, it seems that Cuba's involvement in Angola cannot be best explained simply as an episode of Soviet influence on Cuba. Instead, Cuban and Soviet interests in Angola seem to have converged. This assertion can be supported by considering that: (1) Cuban policy toward Angola and the MPLA has been consistent since the 1960s; (2) there seems to have existed some notable differences in the Soviet and Cuban policies toward Angola, thus implying a degree of independence between Cuban and Soviet policies toward Angola; (3) the Angolan episode seems to have been consistent with some Cuban foreign policy interests; and (4) the Angolan affair appears to have been consistent with Cuba's ideological revolutionary-internationalism.
In sum, it is impossible to assert with absolute certainty whether or not Cuba was influenced by the Soviets in the Angolan episode. All one can do is to examine available evidence and attempt to construct the most convincing argument. It seems that Soviet and Cuban policy converged with respect to the Angolan affair.

Influence, by definition, is time-specific and issue-specific. Thus, although influence as such did not seem to be present in the Angolan affair, it certainly may be involved in other facets of the Cuban-Soviet relationship. Further, although Cuban and Soviet interests appear to have converged with respect to the Angolan incident, this does not necessarily imply that Cuba has a foreign policy totally independent from Moscow. In the Cuban-Soviet case, it probably is more appropriate to discuss the 'degree' of independence Cuba has from Moscow in the foreign policy arena. For example, since Cuba appears to be dependent on Moscow militarily and economically, it remains doubtful that the Cubans would pursue a foreign policy blatantly in opposition to that of the Soviets, such as advocating Chinese communism. Next the two Ethiopian incidents will be considered. Cuba's role in Ethiopia provides a considerably more substantial argument for Soviet influence on Cuba than does the Angolan episode.
Chapter III  

CUBA'S ROLE IN ETHIOPIA

It seems appropriate to discuss separately the Ethiopian-Somali War and the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, since influence is issue-specific by definition. Nevertheless, these two incidents are related, and so some attention will be devoted to a comparison of the two.

THE ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI WAR

Ethiopia and Somalia are fighting for control of Ethiopia's Ogaden province, a region comprised of an ethnic Somali population. Somalia has launched a series of invasions of the Ogaden region since 1977 in its effort to reunite ethnic Somalis in one Somalia nation state.

Regarding the historical context of this conflict:

In 1960 the British and Italian regions of what we call Somalia became independent, and the following year both areas were united to form the nation state of Somalia. Even before this unification, however, they already constituted a nation since they shared a common language, religion, culture, historical background and similar political experience. In this respect Somalia was unique from the rest of Africa.¹

Thus, Somali nationalism may be considered a factor which contributed to Somalia's decision to invade the Ogaden.

Not only was Somalia committed to reuniting Ethiopia's Ogaden province with the Somalia nation state, Somalia laid territorial claims against the northeast of Kenya and Djibouti which are also populated by ethnic Somalis.

Somalia's justification for its campaign to reunite ethnic Somalis is capsulized rather aptly by Said Yusuf Abdi, an ethnic Somali and political scholar now residing in the U.S. Basically, Said argues that the existing
Somalia-Ethiopia border is unfair as a result of Somalia's colonial legacy, whereby Ethiopia, Britain and Italy were the colonizers:

The present border is a provisional and administrative line which the British established with transfer of territory to Italy as the U.N.-designated trustee in 1950. This provisionality was underlined in Article 2 of the trusteeship agreement; and from 1950 until the termination of the trust at Somalia's accession to independence in 1960, the General Assembly of the United Nations persistently and unsuccessfully pressed Ethiopia, Italy and Somalia to establish an agreed boundary. The principle of the sacredness of boundaries accepted at the time of independence cannot be applied in this case, both because of this provisionality and because of Ethiopia's colonial role in the acquisition of the territory. A colonial power cannot claim sacrosanct boundaries.²

Somalia and Cuba established full diplomatic relations on July 19, 1972, after which Cuba provided limited socio-economic support to Somalia.³ On August 17, 1972, Somalia and Cuba signed a joint communique illustrating the framework of relations between the two countries. An important segment of this communique addressed the topic of Somalia's quest to reunite ethnic Somalis under one Somalia nation state:

The Minister of Foreign Relations of Cuba expressed the support of his government to the Somali peoples in their desire for reunification and the backing of the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Somalia's policy of resolving the territorial disputes with its neighbours through peaceful negotiations and within an African framework.⁴

A rather significant point here is that Cuba recognized Somalia's right to reunification of ethnic Somalis, but Cuba stipulated that this should only be accomplished through peaceful, non-military means.

The Ethiopian Revolution began in February, 1974, when Haile Selassie's regime was overthrown by military officers. At this time the armed forces formed the Provisional Military Government, known as the Dergue. The Dergue
was headed by a Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC). A Marxist faction led by Mengistu Haile-Marian rose to power in Ethiopia in February, 1977, when Mengistu's more radical faction was the victor at a shoot-out with the forces of Bante, the Ethiopian head of state, during a PMAC meeting.

On July 23, 1975, when Bante was still head of state of Ethiopia, Cuba and Ethiopia established diplomatic ties. At this point, then, Cuba began conducting diplomatic relations with both Somalia and Ethiopia. Between July, 1975, and February, 1977, when Bante was still Ethiopian head of state, Cuba made no public mention of Somalia's hope to reunify ethnic Somalis.

Immediately following Mengistu's successful coup in February, 1977, Fidel Castro congratulated the Mengistu government. Possibly as a result of Castro's appreciation of Mengistu's radical tendencies, the Cuban-Ethiopian relationship grew warmer than it had been previously. The warming of Cuban-Ethiopian relations had a negative impact on the Cuban-Somali relationship, as we shall see.

Early in 1977 Somalia resorted to military force and launched an invasion of Ethiopia to regain the Ogaden region. Ethiopia charged that Somalia first invaded the Ogaden on February 22, 1977, with approximately 1,500 soldiers. It has been documented that on May 25, 1977, 3,000-6,000 Somali guerrillas invaded the Ogaden from Somalia.

Since the Soviets and the Cubans conducted diplomatic relations with both Somalia and Ethiopia in early 1977, it was in the interests of the
Soviets and Cubans to prevent war between Somalia and Ethiopia and thus retain them both as allies. In March, 1977, just after Ethiopia first charged that Somalia had invaded the Ogaden region, Fidel Castro went to Aden, the capital of South Yemen, to meet with the leaders of Ethiopia, Somalia and South Yemen. The purpose of Castro's mission was apparently to prevent war between Ethiopia and Somalia. In his effort to resolve the potential crisis, Castro proposed a solution involving a federation composed of South Yemen, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and an autonomous Ogaden and an autonomous Eritrea. Siad Barre, Somalia head of state, rejected the idea and asserted that Castro's federation solution only could be considered by Somalia after the Ogaden region was granted independence from Ethiopia. Thus, Castro's mission to retain good Cuban and Soviet relations with both Ethiopia and Somalia ultimately proved to be a failure.

Castro later reflected on his ill-fated peace-making mission in South Yemen:

"Today we realize that when we met with Somalia's leaders in March of last year in Aden they [Somalia] had already worked out a plan, which they later put into practice, to invade Ethiopia... At the Aden meeting leaders of Somalia solemnly pledged, solemnly committed themselves not to invade Ethiopia ever, not to attack Ethiopia militarily."

This is one of a series of remarks where Castro now blamed Somalia for the Ethiopian-Somali War.

It is interesting to note that in May, 1977 and again in August, 1977, the Soviets proposed a solution involving a federation which was identical to the proposal Castro offered earlier that year. The Soviet proposal, too, was rejected by the Somalis. Further, it seems possible, or even likely, that the Soviets and Cubans may have collaborated on the federation proposal.
before it was offered the first time by Castro in March, 1977. As we shall see, Moscow and Havana apparently coordinated their efforts in Ethiopia to a much greater extent than they did in Angola.

Shortly after Somalia's May, 1977, invasion of the Ogaden region, the Soviets offered Somalia increased economic and military assistance if Somalia would agree to discontinue its series of invasions of the Ogaden. Just after the Soviets offered increased aid to Somalia, Saudi Arabia offered Somali $350 million if Somalia would break relations with Moscow. It is not known if Somalia accepted the Saudi aid at this time. The issue involving the Saudi offer of aid to Somalia led to a series of charges leveled by the Soviets, Cubans and Ethiopians that the Saudis, in conjunction with Western powers, were responsible for instigating Somalia's military quest to control the Ogaden.

Perhaps one of the reasons that Somalia rejected the Soviet offer of increased aid in May, 1977, was that the Soviets, at this point, were still stepping up their military aid to Ethiopia. On May 4, 1977, for instance, Mengistu visited Moscow to request military equipment, including thousands of AK-47 rifles, which the Soviets delivered promptly to Ethiopia. Somalia President Barre publicly voiced discontent regarding the increased Soviet military aid to Ethiopia. Therefore, it appears inappropriate to blame Somalia's rejection of increased Soviet aid merely on the Saudi counteroffer of aid to Somalia.

Based on the details of the Somali-Ethiopian War presented above, it is possible to infer that it was the Somalis who were the aggressors in the war. The Somalis, after all, seemed to have started the war by invading
Ethiopia's Ogaden province. In this light, then, the Ethiopians were defending themselves against a foreign invasion. Further, it has been shown that Somalia opted for military action and rejected repeatedly the political solutions offered by the Soviets and the Cubans regarding a federation. Said Yusuf Abdi counters this argument and suggests that Somalia was not the aggressor at all:

The argument that Somalia was the aggressor in sending troops to western Somalia (i.e., Ogaden region) is fallacious. Western Somalia...has always been part of Somalia and was occupied by Ethiopia relatively recently, though it has never come under its total control. The conflict has more to do with Ethiopian colonial ambitions than with any Somali aggression. The real issue is about the concerns of the Somali's in the region that has never been given the right to decide its own destiny. Somali troop involvement cannot obliterate western Somali demands for self-determination. The Soviet betrayal of the position on the nationality question, enunciating that state borders will be in conformity with the will of the people, was made in a bid to gain strategic location in Ethiopia to influence both Arab and African contiguous states and was an opportunistic exploitation of African sentiment opposing territorial claims.15

In sum, Said asserts that since Ethiopia is occupying Somali land (i.e., the Ogaden region), it is the Ethiopians who are the aggressors. Further, Said charges that the Soviets are opportunists with geopolitical interests in Ethiopia. However, the Somali decision to invade the Ogaden region at the height of the Ethiopian Revolution also may be viewed as opportunistic.

As Said mentioned in his argument above, the Soviets and Cubans attribute the role of aggressor to Somalia, since the Cubans and Soviets defend their intervention in Ethiopia on the assertion that they are defending established borders. A related element of the Cuban/Soviet argument is that since there exists a multitude of ethnic groups in many African states, and particularly in Ethiopia, peace in Africa will be jeopardized seriously
if ethnic separatist movements persist in resorting to military, as opposed to political, solutions to revise existing state borders. Based on this logic, then, the Soviets and Cubans claim they have peaceful intentions in Africa.

It is important to consider, however, that the Soviets and Cubans supported the Somali policy of reunifying all Somalis under one Somalia nation state when Ethiopia was an ally of the United States. Only when Ethiopia began establishing relations with Moscow and Havana did the Cubans and Soviets suddenly propose the argument regarding the attributes of retaining established borders.  

Throughout the summer and early fall of 1977, Somalia appeared to have the upper hand against Ethiopia in the struggle for control of the Ogaden. Beginning in September, 1977, Cuba commenced military aid to Ethiopia in the form of approximately 200 Cuban military advisors. Cuban military advisors were particularly important to Ethiopia, since Ethiopian forces lacked organization and training -- although apparently there was no shortage of Soviet military hardware. Throughout the fall of 1977, Somalia charged that Cuban troops were assisting Ethiopia, a charge which the Cubans and Ethiopians adamantly denied.

On November 23, 1977, Somalia abrogated the Soviet-Somalia friendship treaty and expelled all Soviet military personnel from Somalia. Moreover, Somalia repossessed all land and naval facilities granted to the Soviets. Also at this time, Somalia severed its diplomatic relations with Cuba and expelled all Cubans from Somalia. Somalia's severence of relations with Havana and Moscow prompted the Cubans and Soviets to assert that Somalia
wished to ally itself with Western powers.\textsuperscript{19}

Cuba began heavy, direct military intervention in Ethiopia beginning in January, 1978, when Raul Castro visited Moscow in an effort to coordinate Soviet-Cuban military assistance.\textsuperscript{20} Despite Cuba's direct military participation in the Ethiopian-Somali War at this time, both the Cubans and the Soviets persisted in denying the presence of any Cuban or Soviet troops in active combat. On January 28, 1978, however, the Somalis took the opportunity at a press conference to display a Cuban soldier captured in the Ogaden region, thus damaging severely the credibility of the aforementioned Soviet/Cuban claims of no direct military involvement in the war.\textsuperscript{21} Ethiopia acknowledged the presence of Cuban troops in Ethiopia on March 2, 1978.\textsuperscript{22} Western sources estimated the presence of 10,000 Cuban troops in Ethiopia at this time.

There is evidence to indicate that the Soviets and Cubans have coordinated their assistance in Ethiopia to a degree much greater than in the Angolan episode. The following excerpt from an article in the \textit{New York Times} indicates just one aspect of the Soviet-Cuban military collaboration in the Ethiopian-Somali War:

U.S. intelligence official said today (February 14, 1978) that Soviet Air Force units had begun to assist in the air defense of Cuba, apparently to free Cuban pilots for combat in the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict in the Horn of Africa.... A major question confronting officials is why Moscow has chosen to facilitate the use of Cuban pilots in the Horn rather than relying on Soviet personnel. Some believe that Cuba's image as
a Third World country makes it politically more acceptable for Cuban pilots to participate in the Horn.\textsuperscript{23}

During the winter of 1978, it became apparent that there was an assortment of international actors involved in the Ethiopian-Somali War besides the Cubans and Soviets. Articles in the Granma Weekly Review, for example, have charged that Egypt and the U.S. have supported politically and materially Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden.\textsuperscript{24}

In addition, the Ethiopians have claimed that the Americans have been supporting the Somali invasion of the Ogaden region:

Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, The Ethiopian leader, accused the U.S. today [February 15, 1978] of giving political and material support to Somalia and hinted that Ethiopia might break relations with the U.S., Britain, and West Germany.... The criticisms of the U.S., in which the Ethiopian leader said Washington was supplying Somalia with weapons through other nations [e.g., Egypt] was among the strongest he has ever made.\textsuperscript{25}

Mengistu's claim, however, is countered by the State Department's assertion that the U.S. rejected Somalia's plea for military aid in January, 1978.\textsuperscript{26}

There exists evidence, however, which indicates that the Americans recently have offered military support to Somalia in exchange for American access to a former Soviet military base in Somalia:

And within the last few days [September, 1980], Somalia signed an agreement with the U.S. giving the Americans access to the port of Berbera, a former Soviet base. This means that the Americans on the north coast of Somalia will soon be looking across the Gulf of Aden at Soviet bases in Yemen.\textsuperscript{27}

The Economist has reported that:

What began as one element in the U.S. effort to find bases in the Gulf-Indian Ocean area looks to some people as the potential starting-point for American involvement in an age-old conflict in the Horn.... Through several years of negotiations, Barre attempted to persuade the Americans that their military equipment -- and
possibly their physical presence -- was necessary as a counter-weight to the Russians and Cubans next door in Ethiopia.... Stephen Solarz, chairman of the African affairs subcommittee of the House of Representatives, was particularly worried that the military equipment that Washington had offered in exchange for the use of Somali bases would soon find its way into the Ogaden in the company of regular Somali forces.28

Cuba's revolutionary-internationalist ideological zeal is a salient component to examine when attempting to explain Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War. This is because the Cubans themselves tend to explain their international military involvements in terms of revolutionary-internationalist ideology. Indeed, it has been shown that Fidel explained Cuba's military involvement in Angola chiefly in ideological terms. In the Angolan case we saw that Cuba's revolutionary-internationalist ideology was a coherent explanation, or partial explanation, of Cuba's involvement in Angola. In the Ethiopian-Somali War, however, Cuba's revolutionary-internationalist ideology is a much less satisfactory explanation for Cuba's role in the war.

On several occasions, Fidel Castro has attempted to explain Cuba's involvement in the Ethiopian-Somali War solely in ideological terms. Here are two examples excerpted from speeches by Castro printed in Granma Weekly Review:

Somalia was viewed as a progressive country, and it even claimed to be working for socialism. Actually, it has been made clear that the dominant ideology among its leaders is chauvinism. When Cuban fighters left for Ethiopia to support that country's people in their struggle against foreign aggression, the governments of the U.S. and the NATO countries, that had not said a word during the long months of the Somali aggression, were enraged by Cuba's noble gesture of solidarity to support a people who are among the most long-suffering and poorest in the world.29

In reaffirming the Cuban people's solidarity with the people of
Ethiopia, the Cuban side expressed its admiration of the Ethiopian people's anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, socialist revolutionary process.30

Before Ethiopia aligned itself with Moscow and Havana, Cuba expressed publicly its view that Somalia was a colonized nation, and further, acknowledged and accepted Somalia's quest for a Greater Somalia. Thus, Cuba previously had shared an ideological bond with Somalia, a bond Cuba apparently pretended did not exist after Cuba took sides with the Ethiopian government in the conflict for control of the Ogaden.

Said Yusuf Abdi attacks the credibility of Cuban ideology as an explanation for Cuban assistance to Ethiopia.

A Cuban belief that the Mengistu government is committed to socialism and revolutionary change and cannot have a colonial policy (with respect to the Ogaden region) is flawed on three counts. First, the Somali's claim to be engaged in a socialist revolutionary transformation. Secondly, the use of socialist rhetoric by Mengistu is not synonymous with revolutionary change, the switch to Asmara military dictatorship has not changed oppression of other nationalities. Finally, the junta's limitation of self-determination to regional autonomy falls short of Leninist conceptions of self-determination up to and including secession.31

Importantly, Said argues that Ethiopia's interpretation of Marxist ideology is severely flawed, thus casting serious doubt on Castro's ideological explanation for Cuba's support to Ethiopia.

The Soviets had voiced opposition to Somalia's militaristic quest to gain control of the Ogaden. The Soviets, instead, proposed a political solution to the war involving the federation of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, Djibouti, an autonomous Ogaden and an autonomous Eritrea. If Somalia had accepted this solution, which it did not, the Soviets would have been able to maintain friendly relations with and perhaps exert influence upon
all members of the federation of the Horn.

The Soviets have blamed the Americans for instigating the Somali-Ethiopian War. According to an article in a January, 1978 edition of the New York Times:

A senior Soviet commentator, in one of the most bitter attacks on American foreign policy in years, accused the United States tonight of instigating both the Somali-Ethiopia and Cambodia-Vietnam conflicts... The U.S., Mr. Vladimar Kudryavtsev said, wanted to weaken the revolution in Ethiopia and dismember it by encouraging 'reactionaries' and 'all sorts of separatists' as well as 'inciting the Somali chauvinists who have decided to take advantage of Ethiopia's difficult position to realize their (U.S.) great power plans.'

Thus, the Soviets and Americans seem to have switched positions on this issue since the time of the Ethiopian Revolution. The Soviets, it will be recalled, advocated Somalia's 'Greater Somalia' plan and encouraged other separatist movements in Ethiopia (e.g., Eritrea) when Ethiopia was an American ally. But now the Soviets have criticized the Americans for doing exactly the same thing the Soviets were guilty of.

Both superpowers are strategically interested in the Horn of Africa as a result of the geopolitical importance of that region:

The Horn of Africa's strategic location is such that it is of inherent importance to the USSR. When Soviet interest in sub-Saharan Africa declined in the late 1960s, interest in the Horn remained high. Thus, while Angola was in a low priority area as far as the USSR was concerned, Ethiopia was in a high priority area.

The Kremlin's readiness to engage in a shooting war in these remote deserts is easily understood. Whoever holds military control of the Horn of Africa can pose a direct threat to oil shipments from the Middle East to the West.

In sum, Soviet participation in the Somali-Ethiopian War chiefly appears to be a result of Soviet strategic geopolitical interest in the Horn.
Soviet-Cuban policies in the Ethiopian-Somali War were coordinated to a degree not present in the Angolan episode. A stark example of the Soviet-Cuban military coordination concerned Soviet pilots performing Cuba's own defense maneuvers while Cuban pilots fought in the Ogaden. Regarding political coordination, both the Soviets and the Cubans proposed an identical solution to the war, albeit at different times, namely the federation solution. Further, both the Soviets and Cubans justified their recent positions by declaring the sacredness of established borders in Africa. Presumably as a result of the high degree of coordination of Soviet and Cuban policies with respect to the conflict, Somalia severed its relations with the Soviets and the Cubans simultaneously.

The high degree of Soviet-Cuban military and political coordination in the Ethiopian-Somali War, together with the notion of the geopolitical importance of the Horn to the Soviets, suggests the possibility that the Soviets may have encouraged or influenced the Cubans to become involved extensively in the war. This possibility will be considered in detail later.

While Cuba's status on the international stage, and among the non-aligned nations in particular, may have been bolstered by Cuba's involvement in the Angolan episode, this did not seem to be the case with respect to Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War. There are a number of possible explanations for this.

In Angola, Cuba fought on the behalf of the Marxist MPLA against right-wing forces which were aligned with the South Africans. The South Africans were unpopular among many African nations as a result of their
apartheid politics. This helped Cuba's status among the left-leaning non-aligned and with African nations in particular.

The Ethiopian-Somali episode was much different. The Dergue, which Cuba sided with in the war, was unpopular internationally, chiefly as a result of the Dergue's alleged human rights violations, such as the frequent executions of dissidents in Ethiopia. Moreover, Cuba had enjoyed historical relations with Marxist Somalia. These diplomatic relations were jeopardized when Cuba later became friendly with Ethiopia at the same time the Soviets established ties with Ethiopia, presumably chiefly for geopolitical reasons. Thus, when Cuba sided with Ethiopia in the Ethiopian-Somali War, Cuba was fighting against a former Marxist ally. As a result, some members of the non-aligned began to question Cuba's role in the war:

The changed perception of Cuban motives did surface at the 1978 Belgrade meeting of the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations. Whereas Angola had caused Cuba no diplomatic difficulties in the non-aligned movement, Ethiopia occasioned heated debate.

Regarding the issue of Cuban military involvement in Africa which surfaced during the 1978 Belgrade meeting of the non-aligned, the New York Times reported during June and July of 1978 that:

Ghana, Morocco, Somalia, Senegal and Middle Eastern countries, except Libya and Algeria, accused Cuba of aggression in Africa and demanded the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola and Ethiopia and its military aid missions from other countries. The Cuban position was supported by Tanzania, Afghanistan, Congo, Benin, and Vietnam.

Egypt said yesterday that in view of Cuba's military actions in Africa, the non-aligned movement should consider postponing or moving from Havana its meeting to be scheduled there next year.

President Tito warned countries professing non-alignment today against letting their disputes, especially in Africa, develop into East-West power struggles through the involvement of outside sources. While he named no countries, ... (it) was clearly aimed at Soviet-backed Cuban involvement in Africa.
Recently, Miljan Komatina, assistant Foreign Secretary of Yugoslavia, said in Belgrade that any engagement of Cuban forces in Ethiopia's struggle to suppress the Eritrean secessionist movement would be unacceptable to the non-aligned nations.41

The Zairian Foreign Minister said...it would be against the principle of non-alignment for us to say who can be in Angola. 42

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Feleke Gedle Giorgis, speaking today at the non-aligned conference here [Belgrade], defended Cuba for its military help to Ethiopia in Ethiopia's conflict with Somalia....The military intervention of Cuba in African conflicts has emerged as the most controversial issue at the conference, with several nations sharply attacking Havana and others strongly supporting it.43

Thus, it seems that Cuba's military involvement in the Ethiopian-Somali War triggered some members of the non-aligned to reconsider Cuba's earlier involvement in Angola. That is, although Cuba's involvement in Angola, previously seemed to have been a non-issue among the non-aligned, Cuba's later involvement in Ethiopia caused certain elements of the non-aligned to take a hard look at Cuban intervention in Africa in general.

Egypt, Somalia and Yugoslavia were the most outspoken critics of Cuba's involvement in Africa. The Egyptian and Somali reactions were predictable. The Egyptian reaction should be considered in the context of numerous accusations leveled by Cuba earlier in 1978.that Egypt had been leading the forces of "imperialism and Arab reaction" by instigating and supporting Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Therefore, since Cuba and Egypt had already been engaged in a rally of mutual criticism for some time, it would be inappropriate to assert that Cuba's involvement in Ethiopia caused Cuba to lose face with Egypt.

Since Somalia is at war with the Ethiopian/Cuban forces in the dispute to control the Ogaden region, Somalia's criticism of Cuba's role in
the Ethiopian-Somali War is not surprising.

The most serious and intriguing criticism of Cuba's role in Ethiopia was leveled by Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia expressed no qualms about Cuba's intervention in Angola. Indeed, Yugoslavia assisted in the delivery of military hardware to the MPLA/Cuban forces, and members of the Yugoslav military apparently assisted in the military training of the MPLA. Thus, Yugoslavia apparently viewed Cuba's role in Ethiopia to be very different in kind than Cuba's involvement in Angola. Yugoslavia's chief objection to the Cuban role in Ethiopia seems to be that it exemplifies Cuba's rather strong alignment with the Soviet Union. Since Cuba may be considered to be a leader among the non-aligned nations, it is possible that Yugoslavia considered Cuba to be setting a bad example among the non-aligned.

Although Cuba continued its involvement in Angola and in Ethiopia throughout 1978 and 1979, Cuba's African involvement was not nearly as much of a topic of heated debate at the 1979 Conference of Non-Aligned nations in Havana as it was at the 1978 Belgrade meeting. Nevertheless, the issue of Cuba's involvement in Africa was still alive at the time of the Havana meeting. The Soviets, for example, detected at least some elements of resentment among the non-aligned to Cuba's role in Africa:

A commentary carried by the official TASS news agency said there had been efforts to cast doubt on Cuba's competence to play host to the conference because of its role in Africa.

Further, Castro drew attention to the issue immediately before the Havana meeting by defending Cuba's role in Africa:

Apparently referring to suspicions voiced privately by some members [of the non-aligned] that Cuba was acting as a proxy for the Russians, he [Castro] said passionately that his country was 'absolutely independent.' "We have our own standards' he declared. 'Nobody ever dared tell us what to do, what role to play.'
Of course, the negative implications for Cuba in relation to the criticisms leveled by the non-aligned should not be overestimated. Cuban intervention in Africa has continued through 1980 despite the fact that certain members of the non-aligned demanded the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Africa in 1978. Moreover, certain elements of the non-aligned defended Cuba's role in Africa. Further, the 1979 Havana meeting was not boycotted or cancelled, contrary to the threats issued by some members of the non-aligned in 1978. However, the most significant price Cuba paid to the non-aligned for Cuba's role in Ethiopia seems to be the very existence of the debate among the non-aligned nations on this issue. "Cuba prevailed in the debate, but its very occurrence demonstrated that Cuba's diplomatic position had been eroded." This seems to be an important price paid by the Cubans, considering the significance Cuba seems to attach on the opinion of the non-aligned.

If one accepts the premise that one of the prices Cuba paid for its involvement in the Ethiopian-Somali War was an erosion of Cuba's diplomatic position, a question arises regarding whether Cuba anticipated that price or whether Cuba miscalculated.

Since Somalia was a member of the non-aligned nations, the Cubans may have realized the possibility that Somalia would voice its discontent at the 1978 meeting of the non-aligned nations regarding Cuban intervention in the Ethiopian-Somali War. Further, if the Cubans were aware of the possibility that Somalia would bring up the issue of Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War at the Belgrade meeting, the Cubans presumably realized the potential volatility of the issue, considering the contradiction of Cuban
policy toward Ethiopia and Somalia since 1975 in conjunction with Soviet geopolitical interests in the area. Moreover, the Cubans also may have realized that since Cuba was scheduled to host the 1979 meeting of the non-aligned nations, Cuba would be in a vulnerable position if Somalia raised the issue of Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War. Thus, it remains a distinct possibility that Cuba was aware that its involvement in the Ethiopian-Somali War would be made an issue among the non-aligned nations. However, even if Cuba did in fact believe that its role in Ethiopia would be made an issue among the non-aligned nations, it remains possible that Cuba miscalculated the degree of discontent expressed by members of the non-aligned in 1978.

On the other hand, it remains possible that Cuba anticipated the negative response of some members of the non-aligned with regard to Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War, but that Cuba accepted this as a price to pay for other advantages reaped from the Ethiopian venture. For example, Cuba may have calculated that its new friendship with the Ethiopians together with an opportunity to repay the Soviets weighed any scandal that might be raised among the non-aligned with regard to Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War. This argument is rendered less likely, however, if one accepts the view that Cuba places a great deal of importance on its reputation and prestige among the non-aligned, a view held by scholars familiar with Cuban politics.50

It now seems appropriate to probe whether or not Cuba's involvement in the Ethiopian-Somali War was consistent with Cuba's independent interests, other than merely fitting Soviet preferences to maintain a good Cuban-Soviet
relationship. An argument, although only a brief one, can be presented to support the assertion that Cuba was acting in accordance with its own interests with regard to the Somali-Ethiopian War.

Cuba, after all, vehemently attempted to prevent war between Ethiopia and Somalia. In doing this, Cuba was acting consistently with its independent foreign policy interests since, if the Cuban effort had succeeded:

1. Cuba would have retained friendly relations with both countries in the Horn; and
2. Cuba would have earned the image of a peacemaker in Africa, thus improving Cuba's image among the non-aligned and African nations in particular, and on the international stage in general.

Further, Somalia had resorted to military force in its efforts to abrogate existing borders to gain control of the Ogaden. Cuba had opposed any military solutions to the problem of the Ogaden region, even when Ethiopia was allied with the West. Moreover, Somalia eventually resorted to assistance from right-wing Arab countries and perhaps even the U.S. Thus, Cuba posed the argument that it was assisting a revolutionary country against a foreign invasion instigated by right-wing forces.

The above argument, however, can be considered unconvincing on a number of grounds. First, the solution Castro proposed on his ill-fated peace-making mission between Somalia and Ethiopia, namely the federation solution, was the identical solution later offered by the Soviets. This is indicative of the presumably high degree of coordination of Soviet-Cuban political policy throughout the war. This stands in contrast to the Angolan episode, where notable differences in Cuban and Soviet policy were apparent. The high degree of political and military coordination between Moscow and
Havana with respect to the Ethiopian-Somali War, coupled with the Soviet's geopolitical interests in the Horn, has prompted many scholars to speculate that Cuban policy in this episode was decided in Moscow.  

Cuba's assertion that its role in the Ethiopian-Somali conflict can be explained in terms of Cuba's revolutionary-internationalist ideology is fallacious. First, Somalia had been a historical Marxist ally of Cuba. Second, as a result of Ethiopia's military dictatorship and abominable violation of human rights, a case can be made that the Somalia's government is more respected internationally than the Ethiopian government, an argument elegantly delivered by Said Yusuf Abdi.  

Third, until the time when Ethiopia switched its alliance from the Americans to the Soviets, Cuba publicly approved of the notion of a 'Greater Somalia' on the grounds that it was consistent with Cuban ideology since Somalia was a victim of colonization. In sum, Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War appears to be in blatant contradiction to Cuba's revolutionary-internationalist ideology.  

Finally, Soviet geopolitical interests in the Horn. and the apparently high degree of Soviet-Cuban coordination, together with the contradiction of Cuban policy and ideology with respect to Ethiopia and Somalia since 1975, suggest the distinct possibility that Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Somali War was influenced by the Soviets. Although an argument can be constructed to the effect that Cuba was not influenced by the Soviets to participate in the Ethiopian-Somali War, a seemingly more convincing argument can be made to the contrary. Taking the premise of Soviet influence on Cuba a step further, one can speculate as to the possible influence tactic(s) employed by the Soviets. Since the Cubans appears to be economically and
militarily dependent upon the Soviets, and since Soviet aid to Cuba increased steadily in the late 1970s, largesse may be considered a possible influence tactic. Persuasion is another likely influence tactic that may have been employed by the Soviets. The Cubans, after all, had accumulated an enormous debt to the Soviets over the years, and this may have placed the Cubans in a position of being vulnerable to Soviet persuasion.

THE ETHIOPIA-ERITREA CONFLICT

Between 1886 and 1950 the region now known as Eritrea had been colonized by the Egyptians, the Italians and the British in three separate episodes. In 1953, Eritrea became an autonomous region federated to Ethiopia. While the Americans supported this, the Soviets favoured independence for Eritrea. Eritrea became a province of Ethiopia in 1962.

Since Eritrea constitutes a separate cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious entity, it may be considered a nation in this respect. Nationalism is a central factor of the Eritrean rebellion, which began in 1961. Thus, a nationalistic uprising was the root cause in both the Ethiopian-Somali War as well as the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict.

Both the Soviets and the Cubans supported, politically and materially, the Eritrean rebellion since its conception in 1961. Cuba trained Eritrean Liberation Front guerrillas beginning in 1967. Importantly, in 1969 the Cubans asserted that "the Eritrean Revolution is a struggle for national independence and for their liberation from Ethiopian colonialism."

Cuba and Ethiopia established relations in July, 1975. Up until that
time, Cuba supported the Eritrean rebellion on the grounds that Eritrea had suffered a colonial legacy and therefore was entitled to national liberation. Between July, 1975, and February, 1977, Cuba shifted its position on the Eritrean issue to that of a neutral position, in that Cuba no longer issued public pronouncements concerning this issue. Immediately after Mengistu seized power in Ethiopia in February, 1977, the Cubans once again changed their position on the Eritrean issue, this time deeming the Eritreans as secessionists. Therefore, this situation bears a striking resemblance to the Ethiopian-Somali conflict, whereby Cuba discounted the Ogaden region's colonial past immediately after Mengistu seized power in 1977.

Yet another similarity between the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict and the Ethiopian-Somali War is that both the Soviets and the Cubans posed the same solution to these conflicts, namely a federation solution involving the federation of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, an autonomous Ogaden and autonomous Eritrea. This solution was ultimately a failure in both cases, primarily because it did not appreciate the strong ethnic and nationalistic rifts in Ethiopia.

Mengistu and other members of the Dergue repeatedly refused to negotiate with the Eritrean guerrillas, despite pleas from Eritrea to do so. Mengistu and the Dergue strongly advocated military action to crush what they regarded as the Eritrean secessionist movement. There is some evidence to indicate that Castro unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the Dergue to opt for a political, rather than a military, solution.

Related to this, the Cubans unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the Ethiopians to switch to a civilian government led by a Marxist party,
rather than to remain with the Dergue's military rule of Ethiopia. Cuba presumably enacted this measure in an effort to save face among the non-aligned and African countries, many of which were appalled by the harsh military government of Mengistu.

By the end of 1977 the Eritreans managed to control most of Eritrea. The Cubans and Soviets claimed not to have participated directly in the Dergue's military quest to crush the Eritrean rebellion. Cuban troops fought directly and extensively in the Ogaden region so that native Ethiopian forces would be free to concentrate their efforts on the Eritrean rebellion. The Ethiopian army, of course, had been trained militarily and advised by the Cubans, and possessed military equipment provided by the Soviets. Therefore, the Soviets and Cubans were at least indirectly involved militarily in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict.

In contrast to Cuban and Soviet claims that they did not directly participate militarily in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, Tekie Fessehatzion, a scholar and an Eritrean nationalist, argues that Cuban troops were indeed directly involved militarily in the Dergue's attempt to quell the Eritrean rebellion:

During the latter part of 1978 when Fidel Castro and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez were assuring the world that Cuba had no military role in Eritrea, Cuban troops were engaged in the battles for the control of Massawa, Ghinda, Dongollo, and the areas around Asmara (based on reports in Le Monde, 7 June 1978). At about the same time Cuban pilots were flying countless sorties against positions held by Eritrean freedom fighters. Also, while some Cubans were driving tanks and manning heavy artillery, others were training thousands of Ethiopian militia; and still other Cuban troops relieved Ethiopian militia; and still other Cuban troops relieved Ethiopian soldiers in the Ogaden area who were then transferred for deployment in Eritrea. Even if it were assumed that Cuban combat role has been limited to the summer
and winter of 1978, the evidence of Cuban involvement in training and advising of Ethiopian militia deployed in Eritrea is overwhelming.

Further, there is some evidence to suggest that the Soviets were directly involved militarily in the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict. On November 29, 1977, the Eritreans charged:

the Soviet Union with planning, conducting and supervising the offensive (against Eritrea), including 200 Soviet military experts and 13 high ranking officers, all based on Asmara. The communique also said that there were 1,000 Soviet troops operating the 'hundred of Soviet-supplied tanks, fighter planes, helicopters, and sophisticated heavy weapons.'

It now seems appropriate to address the question whether or not Cuba's role in the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict was consistent with the presumed ideological and foreign policy interests of Cuba, aside from Cuba's presumed interest in a good Cuban-Soviet relationship.

Since Cuba claimed not to be involved directly in the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict, Cuba did not offer an ideological explanation for its role in it. It has been shown, however, that there exists some evidence to counter Cuba's claim by indicating the direct involvement of the Cuban military in the conflict. There is no debate that the Cuban were at least indirectly involved militarily in the conflict, since: (1) Cubans trained and advised the Ethiopian military in their attempt to suppress the Eritrean rebellion; and (2) the Cuban troops fought extensively in the Ogaden to free Ethiopian troops to participate in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. Possibly directly but definitely indirectly, then, Cuba contributed militarily to the suppression of the Eritrean rebellion.

Although Cuba offered no ideological justification of its involvement in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, Cuba has nonetheless offered starkly
different ideological interpretations of the Eritrean rebellion over the years. Both Cuba and the Soviet Union, it will be recalled, originally had interpreted Eritrea as a colony justly struggling for its nationhood and independence. As soon as Cuba and the Soviets established relations with Ethiopia in 1975, Cuba displayed a sudden change of heart with respect to its interpretation of the Eritrean rebellion, now Cuba appeared neutral on the matter. Cuba's ideological interpretation of the matter changed again immediately after Mengistu seized power of Ethiopia in 1977, this time Cuba abandoned altogether its explanation of Eritrea as a colony and now deemed the Eritreans as secessionists which were causing Ethiopia internal problems. Moreover, Cuba asserted that ring-wing forces were responsible for the Eritrean rebellion, despite the fact that Cuba previously had supported militarily and politically the Eritrean rebellion for 16 years. Thus, Cuba's ideological interpretations of the Eritrean rebellion over the years are extremely contradictory. This seems to raise suspicions that Cuba changed its ideological interpretations to fit the geopolitical interests of the Soviets.

Cuba's popularity among the non-aligned and African nations presumably wilted as a result of Cuba's role in the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict. There are at least four probable reasons for this. First, this marked the second time Cuba offered contradictory and suspicious ideological interpretations of a military affair in Africa which Cuba was involved in. The first time involved Cuba's interpretation of the Ethiopian-Somali War. Therefore, the credibility of Cuba's revolutionary internationalist ideology as an explanation of Cuban foreign policy has been damaged severely.
Second, Cuba's refusal to admit being either directly or indirectly involved militarily in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict seems to imply that Cuba was embarrassed about its role in the conflict.

Third, the Cubans, of course, supported the Dergue in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. Since the Dergue refused to negotiate with the Eritreans, this may have effectively linked Castro even closer with an already internationally unpopular military regime in the eyes of the non-aligned and African nations.

Finally, for those reasons and others to be discussed shortly, suspicions were aroused among the non-aligned and African nations (and on the international stage in general) that the Cubans were participating in the Ethiopian conflicts simply to meet Soviet preferences. Thus, this raised the question of Cuba's motives in Africa in general.

The Soviets have geopolitical interests in a territorially intact Ethiopia. The Eritrean rebellion has particular strategic-geopolitical implications for the Soviets, since if Eritrea seceded Ethiopia would be landlocked with no direct access to the strategic Red Sea Coast. Especially since Ethiopia's next door neighbour, Somalia, has granted a military base to the Americans on the Red Sea Coast, the Soviet geopolitical interest in Eritrea's Red Sea Coast is intensified. Therefore, the Soviet geopolitical interest in suppressing the Eritrean rebellion is as great or even greater than the Soviet interest in quelling the Somali's bid for control of the Ogaden.

Regarding the Soviet-Cuban relationship during the Ethiopian-Eritrean
conflict, Soviet and Cuban policy toward the conflict have been virtually identical, since: (1) both supported the Eritrean rebellion until Ethiopia became a Soviet and Cuban ally in 1975; (2) both proposed an identical solution to the conflict, the federation solution; (3) both offered identical and extremely contradictory ideological explanations of the Eritrean rebellion over the years. Thus, it appears that Soviet and Cuban policy has been highly coordinated, and highly contradictory, with respect to the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict.

In sum, there appears to be no convincing evidence to indicate that Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict was consistent with the independent interests and motivations of the Cubans, aside from the presumed Cuban interest in a good Soviet-Cuban relationship. In this sense, then, it seems possible, or even likely, that the Soviets influenced Cuba's role in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict to meet Soviet preferences or Soviet geopolitical interests. If one accepts the premise of Soviet influence of Cuba in this case, largesse and persuasion are likely influence tactics, as in the Ethiopian-Somali case.
CONCLUSION

On paper, Cuba appears as a likely candidate for influence by the Soviet Union. There exists an obvious disparity of resources between the Cubans and the Soviets, thus rendering Cuba vulnerable to an influence tactic such as largesse or the promise of it. Cuba appears to be economically and militarily dependent upon the Soviets. Further, since Cuban alternatives to Soviet economic aid appear severely limited, Cuba's theoretical level of responsiveness to Soviet influence tactics such as largesse is thereby intensified. However, it appears to be virtually impossible to document largesse as an influence tactic employed by the Soviets.

The ideological affinity between the Soviets and the Cubans, coupled with Moscow's historical economic and military generosity toward Havana and the enormous Cuban debt to the Soviets which resulted, suggest that simple diplomatic persuasion may be the most likely influence tactic employed by Moscow. It appears doubtful that Moscow would risk jeopardizing its warm relations with Havana by employing force or punishment as a tactic to influence Cuba.

One can only speculate with regard to Soviet motives for influencing Cuba. The motive behind Soviet influence of Cuba is presumably strategic and political in nature. The Angolan and Ethiopian episodes, for example, seem to illustrate the significance of the Cuban military to advance the interests of the Soviets in Africa and perhaps elsewhere.
Influence relationships are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to document. An analysis of the 'independent' behaviour of the target state can be obscured by misreading or overlooking certain interests of the target state. The interests of the donor state may also be misinterpreted. As a result of the subjective nature of influence analyses, one can only construct what appears to be the most coherent argument regarding a potential Cuban-Soviet influence relationship.

Reflecting on the three case studies presented previously, the body of evidence suggests that Cuba probably was influenced by the Soviets with respect to the Cuban role in both the Ethiopian-Somali War and the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. This is because Cuba appeared not to be acting consistently with its presumed independent interests, but instead seemed to be acting chiefly to promote Soviet interests. It seems probable that the Soviets employed diplomatic persuasion to influence the Cubans, considering the enormous debt Cuba has compiled to the Soviets for economic and military assistance throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, Moscow may have persuaded Havana that the Ethiopian episodes provided the Cubans with an opportunity to repay the Soviets for past Soviet favours to Cuba.

The credibility of Cuba's ideological explanations for its foreign policy behaviour was damaged severely by Cuba's role in the two Ethiopian conflicts. Even if Cuba's ideological explanation for its role in Angola is discounted, a convincing argument can still be constructed to suggest that Cuba was behaving consistently with its presumed independent interests in the Angolan case. This argument consists of four major components. First,
although Soviet and Cuban policy generally converged with respect to the Angolan episode, there existed notable differences between Cuban and Soviet policy toward Angola. Thus, there is some evidence of an independent Cuban policy toward Angola. This stands in contrast to the two Ethiopian incidents, which were characterized by identical Soviet and Cuban policies.

Second, Cuba's policy toward Angola was consistent historically. On the other hand, Cuban policy toward Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea was extremely inconsistent and contradictory over the years. Moreover, Cuba's contradictory policies toward these countries seemed to follow the Soviet lead.

Third, the benefits of Cuba's involvement in Angola seem to have clearly outweighed the costs. This did not seem to be the case in the two Ethiopian episodes. It should be noted, however, that it is possible that Cuba miscalculated the costs and benefits in either or both of these cases.

Finally, Angola probably was of little geopolitical value to the Soviets. Indeed, Cuba initially appeared more willing to assist the MPLA in the Angolan Civil War than did the Soviets. In contrast, the two Ethiopian incidents held tremendous geopolitical interest for the Soviets, thus intensifying the possibility of Soviet influence of Cuba in the two Ethiopian cases.

Therefore, even if Cuba's ideological explanation for its role in Angola is discounted, a substantial argument can still be presented to suggest that this situation did not exemplify Soviet influence on Cuba. This stands in contrast to the two Ethiopian episodes.
There seems to be a tendency among scholars of Cuban foreign policy to offer a homogenous view of Cuba's African involvement, and to assert either that Cuba's African policy is absolutely independent from Soviet policy or that the Cubans are merely Soviet puppets in Africa. That approach, it seems, can prove to be both narrow and simplistic. The central conclusion here is that Cuba's African policy, and Cuba's military involvements in Africa, ought to be considered in terms of each specific situation. Indeed, this study indicates that starkly different conclusions can be drawn from Cuba's role in the Angolan and the two Ethiopian episodes.
CHAPTER ONE


3. Ibid., p. 234.


13. Ibid., p. 10.


17. John Marcum, p. 263.

18. Ibid., p. 269.

19. Ibid., p. 268.

21. Ibid., p. 106.


23. William LeoGrande, pp. 11-12.


26. Ibid., p. 17.


36. Ibid., p. 273.


38. Ibid., p. 111.


42. For additional discussion of Cuban troops in Angola as a reaction to the South African intervention in Angola, consult Nelson Valdes, "Revolutionary Solidarity in Angola," p. 106; William LeoGrande, p. 11; and John Marcum, pp. 272-273.


50. For further discussion of Cuban hopes of improving economic relations with the U.S., consult Jorge Dominguez, "The Armed Forces and Foreign Relations," p. 73.


52. Of course, this presumed boost of the Soviet image among developing countries preceded the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.


57. For a discussion of Cuba as a 'superclient' which possesses leverage with Moscow, consult David Ronfeldt, "Superpowers and Superclients," Rand Paper, (April, 1978), p. 5945; Further, see William Grabendorff's discussion of Cuba's dual trump card, whereby he suggests that Cuba's successful performance in Angola gave Cuba prestige and leverage with Moscow, while Cuba's role in Angola increased Cuba's bargaining power with the U.S.: Grabendorff, p. 26.

58. For further discussion of Soviet and Cuban worries of a direct confrontation with the U.S., consult Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, pp. 125-128.
CHAPTER THREE

FOOTNOTES


4. Ibid., p. 51.


7. Ibid., pp. 52-53.


10. Ibid., p. 25.


17. Ibid., p. 56.

18. Ibid., p. 56.

19. Ibid., p. 56.

20. Ibid., p. 60.


33. William LeoGrande, p. 27.


36. Ibid., p. 29.

37. Ibid., p. 37.


44. See discussion by Marcum, pp. 259, 273.


51. William LeoGrande, p. 29.

52. Said Yusuf Abdi, p. 87.


55. Ibid., p. 64.

56. Ibid., p. 68.

57. Ibid., p. 75.

58. Ibid., p. 74.

59. William LeoGrande, p. 28.


-------------- "Cuban Foreign Policy." Foreign Affairs, Vol. 57 (Fall 1978); pp. 83-108.


----------. "Political Succession in Cuba." Comparative Communism, Vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1976); pp. 80-107.


"Meeting of Non-Aligned States' Foreign Ministers in Belgrade." The Economist, Vol. 268 (5 August 1978); pp. 41-42.


-----------------.


Vanneman, P. and James, M. "Soviet Intervention in Angola: Intentions and Implications." Strategic Review, Vol. 4, no. 3 (Summer 1976); pp. 92-103.

