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CUBA'S INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA
An Interpretation of Objectives, Reactions, and Limitations

Any examination of the Cuban involvement in Africa should take into consideration the political conditions surrounding such involvement. Only by analyzing the objectives and motivations of those involved, while disregarding any arguments in justification, can one adequately demonstrate the complexity of the relations between Cuba and its African allies. An analysis of Cuba's assessment of its own political and ideological function in Africa or of the objectives of the Soviet Union in Africa is not as important as an examination of the African expectations arising from Cuban military and development aid.

Expectations in Africa

In spite of the fact that each African state has developed independently, one can identify certain universal interests common to all African states except those with white minority governments. These universal interests certainly include a sustained alienation from the former colonial powers. They also include the desire for an end to European influence even in areas where a certain interdependence with Europe would not necessarily have negative implications for further development. In addition,

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continuing structural distortions which are either a direct consequence of colonialism or of undesirable trends since Africa's independence have led many African states to take a generally negative stance towards the West. Since African nations have had their say in international issues, this anti-Western attitude has grown noticeably.

Despite their structural differences and divergent interests, the desire for early independence demonstrated by those states still under white minority rule is strong evidence of a common denominator in African politics. Indeed, these liberation movements, which the West all too easily tends to equate with terrorism, play an important role in the self-perception of most African states. Any nation supporting such liberation movements is considered to demonstrate a generally pro-African attitude. Moreover, the Africans, with their strong emotional, political, and ideological antiracist attitudes, consider support for an end to white government in Africa an essential condition for any further relations with a foreign country.

As in all countries of the Third World, the achievement of formal independence in Africa by no means puts an end to actual dependence. On the contrary, this dependence continues to exist, due in part to the processes inherent in economic development and in part to the severe economic exploitation by indigenous elites. Therefore, the African nations express a common concern in demanding stricter control over African resources and the greatest possible latitude in forming their own foreign policy. Since the West appears to identify with white minority regimes and to display strong economic interest in those regions, many African states have turned to the nonaligned movement as an instrument of their foreign policy objectives.

These are, in brief, the political preconditons upon which Cuba bases its African activities. It is easy to see that in many respects Cuba's policy blends conveniently with Africa's aspirations. Yet one should not underrate the criticism voiced by some African states at the presence of this foreign power. Because of their continuing dependence and the resulting trauma about colonial interference, the majority of African states want to pre-

vent any foreign nation or group of nations from gaining dominating influence. Undoubtedly, most African states view Cuban intervention in Africa as help in achieving independence through self-help rather than as a step toward the type of dependence which would result from a similar commitment by the superpowers.

The specific African expectations vis-à-vis Cuba and the justifications given by certain African states for their positive reaction to Cuba's involvement can best be illustrated by three different, though typical, case studies.

ALGERIA AS THE TEST CASE

When Algeria became involved in a border conflict with Morocco in 1963, shortly after its independence, it sought help everywhere, particularly since it feared that the former colonial power, France, might support Morocco's demands that Algeria cede part of its territory. Since the Front de libération nationale (FLN), as a liberation movement, had enjoyed Cuban support since 1960, Algeria also turned to the Cubans for help. These appear to have been the first military South-South contacts based on the foresight of two revolutionary governments fearing destabilization of their countries by external influence. Despite these contacts, relations between the two states were later often tense. This early revolutionary support for a state facing external attack is, however, a good example of the type of South-South cooperation which Africa has come to expect from Cuba.

ANGOLA AS THE IDEAL CASE

Military support and training for a country involved in a struggle for liberation was considered an ideal example of relations among revolutionary countries and provided a perfect model for Cuban demonstrations of solidarity with African nations. The Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) received massive assistance from Cuba beginning in the early 1960s. Its cadres were partly trained in Cuba, training camps were set up in

Africa, and arms and funds were made available. After Angola achieved independence, the external invasions and the continuing conflict between externally supported guerilla factions—the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) and the União Nacional de Independência Total de Angola (UNITA)—resulted in unexpected intensification of Cuban military activity. However, Angola insists that Cuban development aid played a more important role in its bilateral relations than did Cuban military aid either before or after liberation. The development aid is considered by most African states to be the most positive indication of Cuban support. It includes not only improvements to the educational system and medical welfare, but also the establishment of a national infrastructure to implement development objectives. Thus, Cuban cooperation with Third World countries ideally comprises three elements:

(1) assistance in gaining liberation or independence,
(2) assistance in the defense against external aggressors seeking to destabilize revolutionary regimes,
(3) assistance for self-help toward internal stabilization.

The long-standing cooperation with the MPLA leadership and probably the good personal relationship between Castro and Neto had created a special atmosphere of mutual confidence between Angola and Cuba. Furthermore, the MPLA maintains that Cuba, lacking a sufficient power base and in spite of any friction which is bound to arise from such close cooperation, would never claim or pursue imperialistic interests. Moreover, the Cubans, critical of their own experience with the Soviet Union, understand the fears of the Angolans. The fears in this case are surely typical of all of Africa, and Cuba accepts Angola's insistence on its own sovereignty. From an African viewpoint, this special relationship with Cuba could not be duplicated by any type of cooperation offered by European powers, China, the Soviet Union, or the United States.

THE HORN OF AFRICA AS THE PROBLEM CASE

The exceedingly difficult ethnic and geopolitical situation at the Horn of Africa, though giving Cuba the opportunity to demonstrate its honest intentions, has considerably restricted its freedom to act. Originally, Cuba had supported only part of the Eritrean independence movement and Somalia. The rapid shift toward Ethiopia, with which there had hardly been any relationship, was probably more in the Soviet than in the Cuban interest. On the other hand, the Cubans were undoubtedly convinced that the Ethiopian revolution was a revolution sui generis. At first the Marxist-oriented liberation movement Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) had placed high hopes on Cuba, only to be disappointed. Somalia, too, had expected major support from Cuba, particularly in the field of development. Cuba's rapid reversal caused confusion in Africa despite the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) condemnation of Somalian aggression in the Ogaden conflict. Due to the unbridgeable antagonism between Ethiopia and Somalia, Castro's efforts to bring about a socialist federation at the Horn of Africa have so far failed. But since the internal stability of both states seems highly fragile, Cuban mediation efforts, which have Soviet support, may yet prove successful. Cuba's past activities, however, have been restricted to resisting external invasion, which it viewed as an attempt to destabilize a revolutionary regime. On the Eritrea issue, Havana preferred to remain aloof, considering this an internal affair of Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa thus has proved to be a problem case for Cuba, since the expectations of all involved could not be met—a situation contrary to the experience in Angola. Cuba had to drop the liberation movement EPLF from its list of political priorities, and because Havana adheres strictly to the OAU maxim of the inviolability of the postcolonial borders, it was forced to take Ethiopia's side against Somalia's territorial claims. The disappointment in the lack of Cuban solidarity with a liberation movement and an African country will probably have an impact on how Africa assesses Cuba's reliability. After following

Havana's conduct at the Horn of Africa, those African states involved in border conflicts or fighting secessionist movements will in all likelihood harbor some doubts about Cuban support.

Africa expects Cuba to recognize certain limits to its involvement, such as the toleration of national peculiarities and the maintenance of African economic independence. Cuba has successfully stressed the former in its relations with the Soviet Union but has been unable to retain its economic independence. Unlike all other developing countries supplying development aid, Cuba has the advantage of not wanting to promote any economic interests of its own. Yet another Cuban advantage is its policy of providing support without trying to dictate to the recipients. In this context Cuba's insistence that every nation fight for its own independence without external inducement has been of particular importance to the liberation movements.[1] This recognition of the primacy of the liberation movements in national issues has been instrumental in building the confidence which Cuba today enjoys in many parts of Africa.

Cuba's Self-Assessment

Cuba's African relations can be understood only if one takes into consideration its perception of self and its own concept of those relations. One must start with an understanding of Cuba's perception of revolution, a perception determined to a large extent by its experience since 1959 with the United States, which continually attempted to influence the course of its revolution. The period of internal consolidation of the revolution lasted for a decade after Castro's seizure of power, followed by a period of external consolidation beginning early in the 1970s. The Cubans are convinced that the Soviet security guarantees alone cannot insure their survival. Rather, they believe that one way to protect their own revolution is for other Third World states to follow a similar revolutionary path.[2] Hence, Cuba's active role in foreign relations not only stems from Fidel Castro's revolutionary élan; it is above all a continued effort to protect the Cuban

model for the future. In this process, because of Cuba's real interests, the North-South conflict plays a much greater role than the East-West conflict.

An additional element in Cuba's self-perception, one too easily ignored by Western analysts, is the Afro-Cuban tradition. The strong historical retrospective which has developed in Cuba since its revolution is part of its attempt to establish a national identity. This retrospection includes recognition of a cultural tradition arising from Cuba's experiences as a slave society and a victim of colonial exploitation. Particularly in the areas of music and religion but also in literature, the African elements introduced by migrating slaves have survived. Parallel to the decline of American influence, they have grown. The feeling of belonging with the nonwhite have-nots of the world, of having only gained a certain independence during the last twenty years, and not without a painful struggle, has greatly contributed to the Cubans' willingness to help other black and poor nations in their struggle to advance.

The strongest element of Cuba's perception of its role in Africa is the emphasis it places on proletarian internationalism. Here the revolutionary ideology is clearly foremost, with Cuba's own experience again becoming the yardstick for its external conduct. The Cubans are well aware that without the Soviet Union or the socialist camp their revolution would not have had the slightest chance of survival in a generally hostile environment. This is a central argument for Cuba in turn would like to give other Third World countries a similar chance at survival in such an environment. Since such support surely cannot be given in the form of material aid, proletarian internationalism, as Cuba sees it, can best be expressed in the form of development aid and temporary military aid.

Cuba's exemplary method of practicing antiimperialism dates back to Che Guevara's concept of South-South cooperation among oppressed peoples. Guevara had always held that Africa was the weakest link in the imperialistic chain. During the last 15 years, therefore, Cuba has given its support primarily to African liberation movements and to ruling parties emerging

from these movements. Its goal is not so much to support revolutions akin to its own, but to provide proletarian aid to all progressive or revolutionary regimes threatened by external forces.

The typically nationalist character of the Cuban revolution is also evident in the defense of its objectives in Africa. Cuba has time and again warned revolutionary regimes like those in Angola and Ethiopia not to accept territorial losses in order to remain in power. That would deprive every revolution of its patriotic justification. Thus, the proletarian internationalism cannot be interpreted as a supranational system of socialist preferences. Rather, it has to be understood as assistance for national self-help—here as well, the Cuban intentions coincide with the African expectations—and as mutual assistance by proletarian states in the international economic system.

The moral starting point of Cuban foreign policy in Africa is the fight against racism. Cuba feels that the West not only has failed to honor this moral position, but has even criticized it. A second assumption made by Cuba is that it should provide assistance even when material interests would not be affected. This willingness to provide moral and military support for the establishment and stabilization of a just social system was pointed out in Castro's rhetorical question as to how much property and how many investments the Cubans had after all defended in Africa. It is this kind of moral support which the Cubans received from the Soviet Union and which they now wish to pass on to the African states. A third moral assumption which Cuba, more than many other nations, can justify is that it must assist in improving the standard of living of the peoples of the Third World. Castro believes this is a task which capitalism is incapable of performing, one which only socialism can accomplish.[3]

Another major factor in the Cuban's moral stand is the legal base of their cooperation with African liberation movements and states. Indeed, Cuba has responded only to calls for help made by a legitimate government or a liberation movement legally recognized by the OAU. Consequently, massive support for the Katanga rebels and a Shaba invasion as well as a destruc-

tion of the Eritrean liberation movement would have been incompatible with Cuban policy.

Finally, the Cubans argue that they are by no means mercenaries, since they stand to gain nothing by waging war. On the contrary, they have always urged negotiations, especially in conflicts between states of the Third World. Castro's personal attempts at mediation on the Horn of Africa are a good example.

From the point of view of both Cuba and Africa, these arguments are highly convincing; mainly because these countries see the world less in terms of an East-West division than of a division between developed and developing states. Hence, the task of overcoming mass misery must take precedence over questions of political influence or regional stability. The Cubans, therefore, believe that the overwhelmingly positive response to their policy in black Africa will endure, provided Soviet superpower interests do not force it to compromise on its moral ideals.

Soviet Objectives

An analysis of the Soviet Union's objectives in Africa and its motives for cooperating with Cuba is not an explanation of Soviet strategy in black or southern Africa. Rather, it is an attempt to separate its ideological interests, which are probably largely identical with those of Cuba, from its strategic interests, in which Cuba takes no part. In view of the sparse information emanating from the Soviet Union about its goals and strategies, it is difficult to outline actual Soviet interests. The triangle among African partner states, Cuba, and the Soviet Union is extremely complex and in many areas still difficult to comprehend. It can be assumed that the Soviet Union is pursuing long-term goals in accordance with its international position and intentions in Africa, whereas Cuba, which is pursuing its own long-term objectives, may be interested in completely different developments.

Any study of Soviet strategy in Africa cannot ignore the fact that the present harmony between Cuba and the Soviet Union, and their broad agreement on African policies rest on a generally

difficult alliance between two very differently structured actors in the international system. During the 1960s, when the conflict between a small Cuba and a powerful United States was making headlines, the West tended to ignore the numerous disagreements between Cuba and its new superpower ally. Only in the early 1970s, after a number of internal changes had taken place which were by no means prompted solely by Soviet pressure, did the relationship improve sufficiently for the Soviet Union to consider Cuba a useful experiment. Since then, despite occasional ideological differences, both partners in the unequal alliance seem to have balanced their expectations and are able to depend on each other as a relatively stable and reliable factor in the pursuit of their policy objectives (Blasier, 1978).

The generally identifiable course of Cuban foreign policy in Africa from 1975 to 1978, with its apparent division of labor with the Soviet Union, would seem to have been the result of changing political circumstances rather than of a structural understanding which one could use to make straightforward projections into the future. Historically, the relationship between Cuba and the socialist camp, in particular the Soviet Union, has so often been subject to political fluctuations that it seems unlikely that the present division of labor in Africa will become permanent (Fontaine, 1978: 19).

The often-quoted "proxy theory" can hardly be corroborated given the multifaceted nature of Cuban-Soviet relations. It would be very difficult to prove that Cuba actually acts as a proxy for the Soviet Union in Africa. On the contrary, there are several indications that, at least in the case of Angola, it was Cuba which urged the Soviet Union to act instead of vice versa. Conversely, in the Ethiopian conflict it was obviously the Soviet Union which, for strategic reasons, was the driving force. If the Soviet Union wishes to continue to pursue a policy of détente, making Cuba its instrument could hardly serve that purpose. In individual cases, however, the idea of using the Cubans "to pull the chestnuts out of the fire" may be tempting to the Soviets, above all for logistical reasons. Soviet recognition that Third World countries experiencing progressive internal development could be

put under political pressure by the West has evidently led the Soviet Union to consider how it could either neutralize these destabilizing forces or turn them to its own advantage.

Angola has become the model for the socialist camp's support of a Third World nation based on both legalistic justifications and international law. The Soviet Union likes to point out the success of this intervention, but given the specific international situation, this success should not be overrated. The problem of decolonization faced by this former Portuguese colony, the Vietnam trauma which the United States was experiencing, and South Africa's military intervention all created a favorable environment for Cuban-Soviet intervention in Angola.

Of course, should the Soviet Union choose to use Cuba as its agent in Africa or eventually in other parts of the Third World, it must also be in a position to disavow Cuba at least partially should such a course of action fail. This, however, seems unlikely since the Soviet Union would then have to jeopardize its long-term success in giving socialist development aid, notably in Cuba, in favor of a relatively minor foreign policy objective.

Brezhnev's statement that the Third World would not remain passive in the East-West discussion (International Herald Tribune, 1977b) reveals the politically decisive factor of cooperation between the Soviet Union and Cuba in Africa. The Soviet Union evidently wants to utilize the Cuban Third World image in order to make its own system more attractive to Africa. It likes to use Africa's strong fascination with the relatively autonomous socialist state in Cuba as a supplement, but not an alternative, to its own orthodox road to socialism.

The Soviet Union's inability, never admitted but at least suspected, to act as an example for the future development of the Third World should be offset by the fact that Cuba, with the help of its own purely national revolution, has been able to contribute to worldwide recognition of the socialist camp. Therefore, the Soviet Union prefers to refer to its international responsibilities in Africa (International Herald Tribune, 1977b) in connection with the overthrow of white minority governments in southern Africa. The visits of Podgorny and Castro to Africa in 1977,

however, showed that this growing influence of the socialist camp did not necessarily benefit only the Soviet Union. The different receptions enjoyed by Cuban and Soviet personalities and activities in Africa was noticeable in almost all states. It is indeed much easier for the Soviet Union to contain both Western and Chinese influence in Africa with Cuba than without it. Yet it is doubtful whether the Soviet Union rejoices in this fact. It is more likely that Soviet satisfaction over developments in Africa stems from the fact that Soviet and Cuban policies of anticolonialism and antiracism, launched at a very early stage, are now beginning to pay off. Both the Soviets and the Cubans consider the military defeat of the "reactionary forces" as confirmation of their own long-term political strategy, although they each interpret this strategy differently.

Reactions of the United States

The United States and Cuba have a specific bilateral problem resulting not only from the enormous contrast between their differing political capabilities and their close historical ties, but above all from the United States' lack of political restraint in any question concerning Cuba (Bender, 1975). The U.S. reaction to Cuba's involvement in Africa may easily be considered the second "Cuban trauma" of American foreign policy. The first "Cuban trauma," starting in 1959 with the seizure of power by the guerilla leader Castro, whom the United States refused at first to take seriously, and ending in 1962 with a direct threat to the U.S. mainland during the missile crisis, left deep wounds in the political consciousness of both the general public and the foreign policy elite of the country. Accordingly, the reaction of the United States to Cuba's African policy during the last few years could not help but be prejudiced. The almost 20-year-old conflict with the thoroughly despised regime just 90 miles off Florida's coast has had a decisive impact on the United States' assessment of Cuba's leverage in foreign affairs. In almost every respect, the United States refuses to accept the fact that the

Cubans are capable of pursuing an independent foreign policy. This fact cannot be explained solely by Cuba's objective dependence on the Soviet Union. It is also rooted in the assumption of the United States that any state the size of Cuba and within its own political sphere of influence must naturally consider American interests when forming domestic or foreign policy. This refusal to recognize any independence in Cuba's ability to make political decisions makes it difficult for the United States to take a rational view of the background and problems of Cuba's foreign policy in Africa.

The United States sees Cuban African policy from four different aspects:

(1) Domestically, the relationship with Cuba is extremely difficult, particularly for the Carter administration which has declared its intention of pursuing a less arrogant policy toward the Third World. The Panama Canal debate, however, demonstrated to Carter the present lack of domestic support for such an approach. Similar controversies arise in the debate on Cuba's African policy. The host of overlapping political and economic interests, aggravated by the influential minority of Cubans living in exile in the United States, has precluded a coherent, balanced reaction to Cuban policy.

(2) Former UN Ambassador Andrew Young's varying reactions to the Cuban presence in Africa are a clear illustration of the ideological debate being carried on in the United States.[4] On the one hand, one can hardly criticize Cuba's consistent support for self-determination and an end to minority rule in Africa. On the other hand, acceptance necessarily implies support for progressive and essentially anti-Western elites. It therefore seems relatively unimportant to the United States if Cuban activities in support of liberation movements or governing African elites are of a different character from the aid offered by the Soviet Union. Ideologically, the United States sees as the main threat posed to the West the fact that in both cases socialist regimes, not representing Western interests, are being established and stabilized through outside forces.

(3) Since for many years the United States has regarded the socialist regime in Cuba as the gravest regional problem in the Western

Hemisphere, it is particularly displeased that Cubans are actively encouraging the establishment of ideologically similar regimes in other parts of the world. In this sense, Cuba's African policy is an important factor in the U.S. interpretation of Cuba's role in the Western Hemisphere. The United States could not fail to realize that at least in the eyes of some of the states of the region, Cuba's reputation was enhanced by its support for Angola and Ethiopia. In particular, the United States sees developments in the Caribbean as cause for great concern. The political instability and economic underdevelopment of Central America and the Caribbean, for which surely the United States is partly to blame, makes Cuban support for revolutionary governments, as in Nicaragua or Grenada, quite understandable.

(4) Of vital importance to the United States is the security question. On the one hand, the United States is concerned about the possible implications of the Cuban-Soviet influence in Africa for the security of the Western oil routes. On the other hand, the United States is especially concerned about the Cuban's ability to use its military strength in crisis areas of the Third World. The implicit consequences of Cuba's financial, technological, and military dependence on the Soviet Union are turning this ability into a largely incalculable factor. Cuba's revolutionary readiness for action combined with the resources of a superpower such as the Soviet Union constitute a high security risk for the United States as far as its global interests are concerned.

It is not these basic political problems alone, however, which complicate the relationship between the United States and Cuba with regard to Africa. In the course of the last few years, four additional internal barriers have arisen to aggravate further any successful U.S. response to the increasing Cuban presence in Africa.

(1) Above all, the United States lacks any means of exerting political pressure in Africa to promote its own interests in contrast to Cuba's. At first, the United States had hoped to establish a linkage between the withdrawal or reduction of Cuban troops in Africa and the establishment of diplomatic relations with

Cuba. But the Cubans, who had stressed their interest in a resumption of diplomatic relations since about 1974, rejected this linkage decisively.[5] Instead, Cuba tried to demonstrate a policy of strength by demanding the lifting of the U.S. trade embargo as a major precondition for resuming diplomatic relations. At the same time, it emphasized that its policy of proletarian internationalism would take priority over a rapprochement with the United States, which would have been so promising economically.

(2) The second barrier is the U.S. government's apparent lack of resolve in developing a conduct appropriate for dealing with Cuban African policy. This certainly is due not only to the Vietnam experience but also to the obvious change of policy of the Carter Administration. The extent of the differences of opinion within the administration on Cuba's African policy are personified by Zbigniew Brzezinski and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young.

(3) The third barrier is the U.S. government's lack of information about actual Cuban involvement in Africa, which probably results from its lack of experience with the revolutionary self-perception of Cuba and the African liberation movements. This shortcoming has led not only to obvious errors in assessing the Shaba invasion, but also to a virtually neurotic statistical registration of almost every individual Cuban in Africa.[6]

(4) This information gap results in the fourth barrier, namely a lack of differentiation in the assessment of individual Cuban measures or generally of the Cuban strategy in Africa. For contrary to the U.S. reaction to French, Soviet, or even Chinese activities in Africa, a certain hysteria over Cuban involvement, particularly in public opinion, has been unmistakable (Bender, 1978). This is unfortunate, since a differentiation between the various elements and intentions of Cuba's African policy would have permitted a more flexible reaction while at the same time making American criticism internationally more credible and effective. These negative aspects, however, cannot be attributed solely to domestic and foreign policy difficulties of the Carter Administration. They are also rooted in the inability of American foreign policy makers to come to grips with a 20-year-old revolutionary socialist system in their immediate vicinity.

In addition to these problems, Cuba's own position in the international system has further precluded a balanced U.S. reaction to Cuba's African policy. Cuba's simultaneous membership in the community of Latin American nations, in the socialist camp, and in the nonaligned movement made it necessary for the United States to exert pressure simultaneously on friendly governments in the region, on the Soviet Union, and on nonaligned countries. Such a concept obviously put considerable strain on the Carter Administration, which in addition had attempted to convince some African governments to form a more critical attitude toward Cuba. This turned out to be an almost hopeless undertaking. Carter's policy of open diplomacy was bound to cause additional difficulties. Military or secret counteractions would only have further strengthened Cuba's position, at least within the socialist camp and nonaligned movement.[7]

Evidently because of this dilemma, the United States, apart from attempting to influence discussions within the nonaligned movement, has refrained from effectively counteracting. The Carter Admnistration, by adhering to the "proxy theory," deprived itself of any means of influencing Cuba directly. In public debate at least, any critique of Cuba had to be interpreted as being directed at the Soviet Union.

Doubts Within Africa and the Third World

Africa's attitude toward Cuba's policy is determined by the respective interests of various groups. The Western-oriented states mainly fear direct or indirect destabilization of their own positions by neighboring states under Cuban influence. Moreover, many of these states do not rule out the danger that a majority of relatively radical Cuban-oriented regimes seizing power in Africa could eventually have a kind of spillover effect upon their own regimes.

Within the OAU, open criticism of the Cuban presence was in fact voiced only by those countries directly affected by the Cuban policy, in this case mainly Somalia. The reactions of

other OAU members were more reserved. They stressed the right of all African states to decide for themselves which non-African states to ask for assistance in protecting their sovereignty. This phraseology was meant to enable Cuba's African allies, as well as the francophile states, to justify politically the presence of foreign troops in their respective countries.

Those states feeling threatened by a growing Cuban support of counterelites have reacted particularly violently. South Africa has openly accused the West of having brought about a rapid decline of the anti-Communist bloc of Africa because of its lack of readiness to counter Cuban-Soviet influence in Africa. In the case of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe, Castro's offers to help[8] have obviously substantiated this argument.

Because of the chronic political instability of African states, offers of foreign assistance to seize and stabilize power cannot be refused. In fact, only after the states concerned have become so consolidated as to be able to decide for themselves how much and what kind of help to seek from Cuba, will they know whether Cuba's offer of assistance for self-help was in fact the only goal of its "proletarian internationalism." Angola's recent interest in the West could be an indication that a growing domestic stability in revolutionary states is directly proportional to their efforts to diversify their foreign relations. At the same time, the hysteria of some African states over Cuban involvement is also likely to diminish. From the viewpoint of power politics, Cuba's presence offers much less cause for criticism than the presence of other foreign powers, such as France or the Soviet Union, because of its position as a developing country.

All Arab and African doubts about and objections to Cuban activities have a common denominator. They are not against the military presence and ideological influence of an extra-regional power in principle, but will attack this presence if it contravenes their respective national interests.

Within the Third World surprisingly, it is Latin America, where an anti-Cuban mood prevailed years after the Cuban revolution, which has not been overly harsh in its criticism of

the Cuban presence in Africa. This is due primarily to a basically contradictory attitude of military regimes in Latin America: On the one hand, they feel threatened by Cuban socialism and are relieved that present Cuban activity is focusing on another continent. On the other hand, some of them feel a kind of pride over the foreign policy achievements and the international importance of such a small country from their own region.

Castro was quick to explain that no regime in Latin America had anything to fear from Cuban activities.[9] It was Cuba's policy, he said, to support only legal governments and only if they asked for aid officially. This reassurance by Castro, who incidentally had warned Panama against any premature steps during the last phase of the Canal negotiations, obviously stifled debate in Latin America over Cuba's African policy. Instead, it appears that Cuba is pursuing a completely different policy toward Latin America than toward Africa, where it can evidently count on greater political success because it is able to meet expectations of a different nature from those in Latin America.

Within the Third World it is undoubtedly the nonaligned movement which is most preoccupied with Cuba's presence in Africa. Cuba's role in this movement, of which it has been the only Latin American member since 1961, has always been controversial. Whereas initially Cuba needed the nonaligned movement in its search for international political support, its successful internal stabilization has made it a very self-confident member of this group. Since the Algiers conference in 1973, when Fidel Castro countered the theory of the two imperialisms, Cuba—or rather Castro—has come to embody the general political problem of the orientation of the nonaligned movement. The question, therefore, is less the extent to which Cuba remains nonaligned following its African involvement, but rather which future political trend is going to prevail within the movement.

The policy of détente certainly weakened the policy of the nonaligned movement, so important during the Cold War, of maintaining an equal distance from both of the superpowers. Meanwhile, economic and political reasons have rendered co-

operation with one or the other attractive for individual members (Mattes, 1978).

From the very beginning the nonaligned nations tailored their definition of the enemy to fit Israel and South Africa. Apart from India and Yugoslavia, it has been the Arab and black African states which in this respect have set the tone for the movement since its inception. The fact that Castro is now not only claiming a very personal leadership role in this Third World forum, but also is permitting Soviet access to the movement has led to misgivings about Cuba's role in Africa. While the number of direct conflicts between the superpowers has decreased, the number of indirect conflicts in their spheres of influence, including conflicts between members of the nonaligned movement, has increased remarkably. Some members, therefore, fear that the Cuban form of South-South cooperation could not only set a precedent but also give rise to or aggravate a host of conflict situations in the Third World resulting from this indirect intervention by the superpowers.

The greatest concern about Cuba's African policy, voiced by many major and powerful Third World states, is the fear that Cuba's excessive influence within both the nonaligned and international systems is apt to threaten their own position. This threat seems substantiated by the fact that Cuba was granted a privileged position at the 1979 summit meeting of nonaligned nations, thus enabling it to play a crucial role in determining the political course of the movement in a critical situation. Some nonaligned states fear that the Soviet Union, in view of the growing importance of the North-South conflict to the international system, might try to use Cuba's leading role in the nonaligned movement for its own purposes.

Cuba's Options and Limitations

Although Cuba's revolutionary self-perception has provided the basis for its influence in Africa, at the same time it has set the limitations for its future involvement. The government of

Cuba will surely be unable to risk the consolidation and institutionalization of its own revolution in favor of certain foreign policy objectives. Cuba will therefore continue to restrict massive intervention to those areas where it hopes to achieve a maximum of prestige with relatively limited means while at the same time protecting the interests of the Cuban revolution (Grabendorff, 1977).

The possibilities for future Cuban involvement in Africa can be predicted from its record of military intervention over the past four years. Following the failure of the so-called internal solution in Zimbabwe and Namibia, increased Cuban involvement could be expected in both of these countries. By contrast, the number of military units in Angola are likely to be reduced in order to be deployed to other crisis areas. Because of the favorable political constellation and its contacts with the SWAPO, Cuba is likely to give increasing support to the revolutionary struggle in Namibia. However, diminishing Cuban contacts with Mozambique and competition between the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) which form the Patriotic Front will cause the Cubans to be more cautious in Zimbabwe. Cuba's involvement in Ethiopia, which it does recognize unofficially as being problematic, is also unlikely to increase.

The emphasis Cuba places on its involvement in the so-called front-line states in southern Africa is completely in line with the past logic of Cuban decisions. The Cuban military contingent of 40,000 troops in Africa, roughly a quarter of Cuba's armed forces, will probably not be enlarged in the future. However, the number of civilian advisers in all fields of development politics, presently about 10,000, will probably increase.

In order to assess Cuba's options, it is useful to work out the political constellation which would be the ideal prerequisite for Cuban military involvement. Such a constellation should, according to the Cuban concept, contain the following features:

—a clearly defined and uncontested enemy, for example South Africa or Israel, which morally justifies the participation of a foreign state in the conflict

—the existence of established internal forces whose virtues, political backbone, and prospects for success are beyond dispute
—indications of an autochthonous, mostly collectivist concept for development which insures popular support for the liberation movement
—the coincidence of racist, nationalist, and ideological conflicts
—a history of long-standing informal contacts which can later form the basis for an official request for support
-OAU or UN recognition of the to-be-supported liberation movement

Cuba's past military activity in Africa suggests that the foreign policy decision-making process in Cuba is the result of a well-conceived calculation (Dominguez, 1978). The objective is not only to achieve optimum success with as limited means as possible, but also to capitalize on the weaknesses of the potential adversary (Lowenthal, 1977).

Military success in Africa is expected to fulfill three Cuban political objectives:

(1) *Regaining the position of revolutionary vanguard* of the Third World, which it had lost because of the consolidation process and increased Soviet influence over Cuba's indigenous development. Cuba hopes to convince those countries of the Third World which had at first considered Cuba's successful revolution to be a model that it was just this comprehensive Soviet support which made Cuba's present self-confident and independent foreign policy possible. On the other hand, the recovery of international status can be put to good use domestically, since the process of institutionalization has produced a certain wear in the revolutionary consciousness of the Cuban population. The Cuban leadership obviously believes that an offensive external defense of the revolution encourages additional domestic legitimization.[10]
(2) The possibility of *guiding socialism in Africa to victory*. Since Africa lacks a bourgeois middle class as found in Latin America, Castro believes that the future social development of Africa must incorporate the social systems of the various tribes, which

already display some collectivist characteristics, into a system of national socialism.[11] One will have to await developments in Angola, Mozambique, or Ethiopia to know how realistic this concept is. Certainly a short-term disadvantage is that the post colonial elites, most of whom are Europe-oriented, will be unwilling to accept this concept, although it may well be the only way to satisfy the needs of the general population. Also, the Cuban solution of having the Soviets finance the transition period is probably unacceptable. Thus, although some aspects of the Cuban model are transferable, there is no certainty that developments in Africa will follow precisely the same pattern. The only means for Africa to realize the kind of socialism which Cuba envisages is to use the extraordinary African economic resources, like those in Namibia, to finance such a development.

(3) Cuba's greatest expectation is the possibility of gaining a *two-fold bargaining power* from its African involvement. On the one hand, it could enhance its position vis-à-vis the hegemonic USSR (Ronfeldt, 1978: 19), since the Soviet Union is probably well aware of the fact that the military, organizational, and developmental achievements of Cuba could also serve antithetical interests in the Third World. On the other hand, Cuba also could gain bargaining power vis-à-vis the United States. Its African card could become a useful trump in overcoming problems and resuming diplomatic relations with the United States. In either case, Cuba, because of its military commitment to liberation movements, can count on the support of many Third World countries in solving its own problems of independence. Concretely, this would mean that after the current financial agreements with the Soviet Union expire in 1986, Cuba could negotiate similar new favorable accords with the Soviet Union and simultaneously resume trade relations with the United States, thus ending its exclusive dependence on the Soviet Union.

Examination of the limits of Cuban influence in Africa reveals that inner-African developments could have a direct impact on the future success of Cuban intervention. One particular problem could be to what extent a pragmatic approach, for example to the confusing situation at the Horn of Africa, could undermine Cuban credibility in the eyes of the liberation movements or

newly established regimes. Whenever more is at stake than defending against foreign invasion, achieving national independence, or establishing a regime similar to Cuba's, the Cuban policy will encounter substantial difficulties. This will be particularly true if border conflicts or elites competing for power force a clear division between Cuba's long-term intentions and the partner country's short-term objectives.

Given the extent of Cuba's involvement, for example in Angola and Ethiopia, one cannot rule out friction with the friendly governments, especially if Cuban troops are employed not only to fend off external invasion but also to counter indigenous guerilla forces (Segal, 1978: 5). The limits to Cuban influence become visible where consolidation of power has been accomplished and discussions start about divergent concepts of the political and economic systems. Though Cuba stresses repeatedly that it wants to supply aid without any political strings attached, conflicts cannot be avoided altogether in view of the close connections between Cuban experts and African governmental institutions.

Another restricting factor for Cuba is its unavoidable collaboration with the Soviet Union. Since relatively few critical comments by either side have leaked out, one can only speculate about possible conflicts of interest. It is not clear to what extent the differing Soviet and Cuban interests or the differences found in the means they employ, particularly in the economic sphere, could cause friction. Especially apparent, also to its African partners, is Cuba's dependence on Soviet weapons and armament deliveries and transcontinental troop transport.

Two further factors clearly limit Cuba's political maneuverability: the reactions of the West and of the nonaligned. There are a great number of indications that Cuban intervention in Angola or Ethiopia would not have taken the form it did if the West had demonstrated massive opposition. In any case, Cuba is willing to respect to a certain extent those limitations to its military involvement which the West attempts to impose only because it is well aware of the limits of such pressure.

Cuba, however, must take much more seriously any criticism emanating from the Third World, and in particular from the nonaligned movement. Cuba's rather conciliatory conduct during the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Belgrade in 1978, as well as its partial interest at the 1979 summit in Havana, followed by a concomitant adjustment to its foreign policy illustrate the importance it attaches to the opinion of the nonaligned. This limitation to its political leverage makes it all the more necessary for Cuba to pursue an uncompromising straight-line policy, particularly concerning those questions which remain unsettled within the nonaligned movement. An example is the support of liberation movements, as it is primarily in this area that Cuba can expect acceptance rather than rejection from the nonaligned movement, whose criticism has been concentrated on the difficult case of the Horn of Africa.

Besides those limitations imposed on Cuban commitments by external influences, domestic factors also play a major role despite the one-party rule in Cuba. The restrictions on Cuba's external activity imposed by internal factors do not stem from political opposition groups, but rather from the conflicts of interest of its elites who cannot agree on the degree to which Cuba should cooperate in East-South or South-South relationships. Should Cuba make a long-term commitment, the domestic strain imposed by the unavoidable sacrifices which the general populace would be called upon to make for a war being waged far from Cuba's own shore would become increasingly important. The consequences for Cuba would be inevitable: growing dissatisfaction in the population and the need to relegate Cuba's own development to a back burner, thus prolonging its dependence on the Soviet Union and putting objective limitations upon Cuba's future involvement. At the same time that Cuban civilian experts are being employed by foreign governments, there is a shortage of such expertise, particularly in the technical professions, in their own country. Teachers, doctors, and social workers can be exported more easily because they are trained at a higher rate and have largely saturated the country's infrastructure.

In addition, since the military plays a decisive role in Cuban politics (Dominguez and Mitchell, 1978), it will be unwilling to increase further its involvement in Africa, thereby limiting its own domestic presence. Although it is unlikely that the military will demand a reduction of Cuban involvement because of its losses in Africa, unofficial statements would seem to indicate that the internal limits have been reached. This would mean that any additional military activities in Africa would have to be achieved by transferring existing troops with the help of Soviet transport equipment, rather than by sending new expedition forces.

Despite all conceivable drawbacks, Cuba will presumably carry on its African activities and continue to try to justify them. Its hinge function between the socialist camp and the Third World, however, will hardly suffice to justify its activities, at least on an international level. Domestically, it will always have to retain the possibility of putting the emphasis back on its own development, while at the same time stressing the political and social aspects of its involvement in Africa over the military aspect.

It is an asset to Cuba that even in its own revolutionary history, its political and social consolidation was preceded by a long military phase. It is easy for Cuba to emphasize that because of the very success of its own revolution, it is necessary to continue to provide development and military aid to the Third World. As long as no one can offer a viable alternative to the liberation movements in southern Africa, the Cuban troops and advisers will be welcomed even by those regimes in Africa which do not a priori consider the Cuban experience to be the perfect solution. Compared to the interests of the superpowers, however, many African states regard Cuban cooperation not only as the lesser of two evils but also as the most effective in both form and substance.

NOTES

1. Fidel Castro made this very clear while visiting various African states in 1977: "That is, independence is not brought from abroad. It is conquered from inside with the support of the people of progressive countries" (Daily News, 1977).

2. This is an argument that has been used by Fidel Castro as well in his interview with Afrique-Asie (1977).

3. "After all, socialism is the only solution for all underdeveloped countries. For with capitalism they will not be able to solve any problems" (Daily News, 1977).

4. "It is a kind of new colonialism" (International Herald Tribune, 1977a) and "I don't believe that Cuba is in Africa because they were ordered there by the Russians. I believe Cuba is in Africa because it really has shared a sense of colonial oppression and domination, and is dedicated to fighting against it" (Newsweek, 1978).

5. Fidel Castro: "It has nothing to do with Carter, it has nothing to do with the United States. Our relations with Africa, that we can't discuss, that we can't negotiate" (Washington Post, 1977).

6. Very revealing in that respect is Abraham F. Lowenthal's commentary in International Herald Tribune (1978a).

7. See Cole Blasier's plea for caution in his commentary in International Herald Tribune (1978c).

8. "Castro quite openly and explicitly acknowledged the fact that Cuba was providing advice and training and logistical assistance to the liberation forces in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa" (International Herald Tribune, 1978c).

9. "No Latin American country, whatever its social system, will have anything to fear from the Armed Forces of Cuba" (Latin American Report, 1976).

10. "For many Cubans the ability to send doctors, technicians and troops abroad is perhaps the clearest sign that the revolution has succeeded at home" (International Herald Tribune, 1978d).

11. He used this argument in his interview with Afrique-Asie (1977): "C'est là qu'existent des perspectives excellentes pour pouvoir passer presque du tribalisme au socialisme sans avoir a traverser les diverses étappes qu'ont dû parcourir quelques autres régions du monde."

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