

5 The Cold War Soviet Navy in Sub-Saharan African Waters

From the Republic of Guinea to Angola and Mozambique

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Introduction¹

The dramatic growth in Soviet naval power during the late 1960s and 1970s gave the Soviet Union a global reach that was conspicuously absent during the early 1960s, and most prominently so during the Congo and Cuban Missile Crises. In 1960, during the Congo Crisis, Soviet attempts to support Patrice Lumumba's government in Leopoldville – including with the help of the newly independent Ghana – were hampered by a shortage of allies in the region and the Soviet Union's lack of capability to effectively project power beyond the Eurasian landmass. Western powers were, for example, only too aware of the Soviet Union's lack of capabilities for mounting a robust sea-lift into the region. The subsequent and very limited airlift of Ghanaian and Congolese troops using Soviet aircraft was not only limited in scale but also logistically extremely challenging for a Soviet Union lacking a network of allies in Africa.²

If the Congo Crisis had not rammed home the realities of the Soviet Union's lack of capability to project power outside the Eurasian land mass, then the Cuban Missile Crisis would. The Soviet Navy was not – perhaps thankfully when the risk of a nuclear confrontation is considered – in a position to escalate the confrontation at sea off Cuba. Soviet diesel-electric submarines were, for example, in no position to challenge the US blockade of the island – attempts to do so only highlighting the need for the Soviet development of nuclear submarines with the benefits for underwater endurance that form of propulsion would bring.³ The issue was of course not only with the Soviet submarine force, whereas the authors of a recent Russian monograph on the Soviet and Russian Navies in wars and conflicts of the second half of the 20th century note, “The Caribbean crisis showed the necessity for the creation of a navy capable of carrying out tasks in the ocean zone”, something that would involve the “perfection of the system of basing for forces of the fleet” and the “permanent presence of groupings of Soviet warships in the most important regions of the world's oceans”.⁴ Hence, in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's Cuban climb down, the Soviet Union started in earnest to increase its naval

capabilities to project power not only more widely but in a more sustained manner beyond the Eurasian land mass. While an increase in Soviet naval capabilities began noticeably during the latter years of Khrushchev's leadership, acceleration was very obvious under what would soon become the premiership of Leonid Brezhnev. Nowhere were increased Soviet naval capabilities more obvious than in Africa, where initial Soviet forays into the continent in Egypt were soon followed by a spread of Soviet influence along the coast of North Africa and south of the Sahara.

The acceleration of Soviet naval development after Nikita Khrushchev's removal from power was an important factor in the Soviet Union being in a position to increase its influence in sub-Saharan Africa, where that influence also offered the prospect of naval bases that would be of value in the wider Cold War struggle with the United States and her allies. Soviet progress in the development of an ocean-going fleet was highlighted in April–May 1970 when the Soviet navy conducted manoeuvres on a hitherto unprecedented scale under the codename "Ocean". These manoeuvres extended across Soviet fleets and many of the oceans of the world, and were intended as a show of naval capabilities as much as anything else. They were followed by a flurry of Soviet naval visits to widely dispersed ports across the globe.⁵ As Sergei Gorshkov – who had headed the Soviet navy since 1956 and would oversee much of its expansion – wrote in his *Seapower of the State*, even in peacetime "The Official visits and 'business calls' of our ships to foreign ports make a significant contribution to an improvement in mutual understanding between states and peoples, and in the strengthening of the international authority of the Soviet Union."⁶ The Soviet Union was increasingly in a position to use its fleet as a tool of foreign policy across the globe.

In addition to growing Soviet naval strength and capabilities having given the Soviet Union increased scope for engagement with newly independent states in Africa during the 1960s and early 1970s, Soviet-supplied vessels would give socialist-orientated states such as the Republic of Guinea their first tastes of their own, albeit limited, naval power. In this instance, such naval power could be used as a tool in their support of ongoing national liberation struggles in neighbours such as Portuguese Guinea-Bissau. Indeed, Guinean support for the national liberation struggle in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau – including a naval dimension – was sufficient to provoke a major Portuguese operation in 1970 against the Guinean capital Conakry, something that will be considered further below. This operation was in part concerned with the destruction of Guinean naval forces and any "naval" capabilities possessed by the PAIGC (*Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* or African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde) rebels operating from the port.⁷

By the time the Portuguese colonial empire collapsed in 1975, Soviet naval power was able to play an important part in the projection of Soviet power southwards in support of the MPLA in Angola in its struggle against the FNLA and UNITA, as well as in support of FRELIMO in Mozambique,

where the former offered bases for liberation fighters of SWAPO and the military wing of the ANC (MK) seeking independence for Namibia from Apartheid South African control and an end to Apartheid in South Africa, respectively.⁸

Without increased Soviet naval capabilities, the Soviet Union's commitments in southern Africa during the latter part of the 1970s and through the 1980s would not only have lacked credibility, but the Soviet Union and its clients would also not have benefitted from the deterrent effect that naval power provided against South African attempts to intervene in Angola and to a lesser extent Mozambique. However, neither the Soviet Union nor its ally in the region – Cuba – sought an escalation of the conflict that would see the Soviet Union or Cuba at war with South Africa – and potentially see a significant deterioration in relations with its backer the US. This desire to constrain engagement with South Africa significantly hampered the scope for Soviet naval power to have impact against increasingly brazen South African attacks on facilities in Angola – attacks in which the South African navy played a key role.

One solution to this security issue was to foster the development of an Angolan – and to a lesser extent Mozambiquan – navy although these projects had made only limited progress by the late 1980s. In Angola, it would ultimately be events on land – both in the Cuito Cuanavale region and subsequently to the south-west – that would be crucial in bringing about a negotiated settlement with South Africa both regarding South African operations and Soviet and Cuban support for the MPLA government in Angola.⁹ Nonetheless, as this article will suggest, one can reasonably argue that Soviet naval power made a meaningful contribution to the subsequent independence of Namibia in the sense that it played a role in limiting the scope for South African interference with the supply of Angolan and Cuban forces in southern Angola. Those forces would then ultimately fight UNITA and its South African allies into a position where continuing the war would have meant too significant white South African casualties for the white South African population to bear.

The Soviet Navy and West Africa

For the Soviet Union, the dramatic growth in meaningful engagement with sub-Saharan Africa from the early 1960s was something very new – where even the pre-Soviet Russian empire had little contact with a continent from which it had been shut out by European competitors during the so called “Scramble for Africa” in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A lack of existing Soviet understanding of the region at the beginning of the 1960s was highlighted by poet Evgenii Dolmatovskii, who had visited Africa on three occasions in 1960. In a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the beginning of 1961, he pointed out just how limited Soviet knowledge of Africa was, to the extent that the Soviet Union was providing goods to countries that were unsuited to local circumstances, like “matches to Guinea that in conditions

of 95% humidity won't light"!¹⁰ At this time, the Soviet navy had little experience of operating in the climatic conditions offered by the region. Growing Soviet naval penetration of the tropics by the early 1960s – both in Africa and elsewhere – is perhaps conveniently highlighted by the fact that the Soviet navy had to issue “Temporary Instructions for the Painting of Warships and Auxiliaries of the VMF, being used in a tropical climate” in 1962.¹¹

Although the Soviet Union was new to the region, the scope for the export of Soviet ideas into it – backed up by Soviet aid and the Soviet navy – was on the increase thanks to the wave of decolonization of primarily British and French colonial possessions on the continent and a thirst for development. With or without continued ties with former colonial rulers, and with the desire to see their fledgling states develop as rapidly as possible, many African leaders were willing to consider the option of seeking Soviet support. During the 1960s, African leaders had only to present themselves as vaguely socialistic in orientation in order to be considered for Soviet assistance – the Soviet Union was willing to support such governments with or without their making firm commitments to Marxism-Leninism.

Amongst those newly independent West African nations seeking Soviet support was the government of Sekou Toure in the Republic of Guinea, commitments to which provided impetus for Soviet naval penetration and indeed an increasingly sustained presence in the region. Despite ups and downs in the Soviet Guinean relationship – as Toure sought to prevent Guinea being labelled as “red” and to play East and West off against each other – Guinea remained a meaningful Soviet partner in the region into the 1970s. In fact, after Portuguese forces attacked Conakry and effectively destroyed the fledgling Guinean navy in Operation “Mar Verde” in November 1970,¹² the Guinean government asked that a Soviet naval vessel be permanently based out of Conakry. The Guinean capital Conakry was a frequent port of call for Soviet warships from the late 1960s and remained so even after the nexus for Soviet naval operations in the region had shifted southwards in the mid-1970s. Indeed, between 1970 and 1977, Soviet vessels called in at Guinean ports a total of 98 times.¹³

In February 1964, the Soviet Council of Ministers had issued an order regarding the delivery of military equipment to Guinea without charge.¹⁴ That same year, a Guinean delegation visited the Black Sea Fleet and inspected a Project 183 torpedo boat. The following year, the 10th Directorate of the Soviet General Staff – responsible for the supply of weapons to foreign powers – would officially start supplying Guinea with naval vessels. By this point, the 10th Directorate had already supplied vessels to a number of foreign powers, such as Egypt starting in 1956, Indonesia in 1958, Iraq in 1959, Cuba and Syria in 1962, Algeria and Vietnam in 1963, Finland in 1965 and after Guinea India in 1966. Vessels supplied to Guinea included Project 368P patrol boats that were widely supplied to Soviet allies in Africa, with Angola later receiving its first three vessels in the late 1970s.¹⁵ In addition, between 1961 and 1977, 122 Guinean “specialists” were trained for Soviet-supplied

torpedo and patrol craft at Poti in Soviet Georgia, with an additional six receiving training for maintenance and repair work.¹⁶

During an intense period of activity relating to Africa in the early 1960s, the Soviet Union also agreed to supply naval vessels to Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana. On 21 October 1964, the Soviet Council of Ministers issued an order for the delivery of "torpedo boats with munitions, a torpedo shop and spare parts" to Ghana – part of a wider agreement with the country that would see Soviet military specialists in Ghana and Ghanaian personnel receive training in the Soviet Union. The delivery – in the end patrol rather than torpedo boats – began that year, although not all of them were delivered before the 1966 coup.¹⁷ Although the coup against Nkrumah in 1966 would disrupt Soviet relations with Ghana, it is indicative of increasing Soviet naval capabilities and confidence in operating in the region that the Soviet leadership considered and apparently briefly agreed to supporting Guinean attempts to put Nkrumah back in power by providing support in the form of a naval vessel loaded with military equipment – in the first instance apparently to be sent to the Guinean port of Conakry. Whilst the delivery didn't take place, at least Party leader Leonid Brezhnev – even if facing opposition from his prominent government "rival" Aleksei Kosygin – seems to have been willing to use Soviet naval power as a tool in intervention in the region.¹⁸

Soviet vessels were – from Moscow's perspective both intentionally and otherwise – further involved in political affairs in both Ghana and Guinea from the mid-1960s through into the 1970s. Despite a break in Soviet-Ghanaian diplomatic relations after the coup of 1966, they were restored before the end of the decade. The restoration in diplomatic relations did not however mean that they were necessarily cordial, and there were a number of incidents in the late 1960s that increased tension between the Soviet Union and Ghana and that involved maritime affairs. The short-lived seizure of the Soviet research vessel "Ristna" off Ghana in January 1967 – its crew accused of carrying weapons for "extremists" opposed to the current government – was ended quickly thanks it seems at least in part to the fact that one of the Soviet crew had studied together in Moscow with the leader of the Ghanaian boarding detachment!¹⁹ Other incidents were resolved less quickly.

There is some discussion in the literature as to just what role the dispatch of Soviet warships to Ghana in 1969 played in the release of two Soviet fishing vessels that had been impounded and their crews detained in October the previous year. The two trawlers and their crews were released shortly after an official visit made by elements of the fifth Squadron of the Black Sea Fleet operating in the Mediterranean, namely, the destroyers (RKB – later both BPK) "Boikii" and "Neulovimii", accompanied by the submarine "Iaroslavskii Komsomolets" and tanker "Olekma". It is possible to see this visit as constituting a Soviet case of gunboat diplomacy, although economic sanctions against Ghana were also in play. As commander of the squadron, Vitalii Platonov would subsequently note, their mission was not without its challenges given the long passage from the Mediterranean with only limited

fuel available – a second tanker not being available at relatively short notice.²⁰ Such problems would of course be eased when the Soviet Union had naval forces permanently operating out of Conakry from 1971.

At the end of 1972, direct Soviet naval involvement in the affairs of Guinea threatened when the Soviet naval authorities were informed that the port of Conakry had been captured by unidentified “mercenaries”. The destroyer “Skromnii” subsequently entered the port and fired 21 rounds from its 130-mm gun – ostensibly as a salute but more to warn the supposed mercenaries of the Soviet warship’s presence. Subsequently, when the destroyer landed a detachment on shore, no sign of the mercenaries could be found – it being assumed that the “salute” had frightened them away.²¹

Then again, in January 1973 when the Soviet destroyer “Bivalii” was operating out of Conakry, the Soviet Navy would become entangled in events there in dealing with the aftermath of the kidnap and murder of leader of the PAIGC resistance group, Amilcar Cabral, that was fighting the Portuguese for control over Portuguese Guinea and operating out of the Republic of Guinea. Soviet participation in this episode was very much at the request of the government of the Guinean Republic and with the involvement of the Soviet



Figure 5.1 Angolan naval personnel on board a Soviet-supplied Project 206 patrol boat in 1983.

Source: Sputnik Images.

ambassador to the country, Anatolii Ratanov – who seized the initiative where consultation with Moscow was impractical given the rapidly evolving situation. According to one account, “At midnight on the night of 20-21 January 1973” the commander of the national army of the Guinean Republic Tuman Sangar accompanied by two Soviet personnel came aboard “Bivalii” and reported that “at around 11:00 that night” Cabral had been apprehended by unknown assailants on his return from the Polish Embassy and killed, with his wife along with a number of members of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of PAIGC taken captive. Those implicated – apparently disgruntled members of PAIGC - were reported to have fled in available Soviet-supplied boats in the direction of Portuguese Guinea – adding credibility to the suggestion that Cabral’s attempted abduction and murder was part of a Portuguese plot. Guinea’s own naval forces were apparently not in a position to give chase – in part because some vessels were under repair, with the crews of those in service also needing mustering from around the city and available boats readied for sea. “Bivalii’s” commander proceeded to order the apprehension of the fugitives by his ship – accompanied a platoon of Guinean troops that had joined the destroyer. In this instance, the Soviet navy was clearly a vehicle for direct Soviet involvement in the affairs of the region, where having supported the Guinean government without having to



Figure 5.2 The TAVKR “Novorossiisk” at sea in 1984. Her visit to Luanda the previous year was a major show of support for the Angolan government.

Source: Sputnik Images.



Figure 5.3 Soviet vessels upland in Luanda in 1987. One of the principal reasons for the Soviet naval presence in Angola was to protect Soviet and friendly shipping in the region.

Source: Sputnik Images.

resort to the use of force the commander of the destroyer was congratulated rather than reprimanded.²²

The Soviet Navy and Southern Africa

Given the increasingly sustained Soviet naval activity off the west coast of Africa during the 1960s and early 1970s, a shift of Soviet activity southwards to Angola was not a major leap in terms of operational deployment – and even where at first the Soviet navy could not rely on having basing facilities in Angola. Soviet warships had seen operations off Angola even prior to Angolan independence, with, for example, the destroyer “Bivalii” operating in the South Atlantic off the coasts of not only Guinea but also Angola during the period from November 1973 to February 1974.²³ In 1974, the so called Carnation Revolution in Portugal led quickly to the collapse of the Portuguese overseas empire – against which not only PAIGC but also other Soviet-backed groups had been fighting since the previous decade.²⁴ Whilst FRELIMO in Mozambique was able to transition to becoming the new indigenous government there in 1975 without a significant struggle, in Angola three principal groups vied for power. Belatedly the Soviet Union through its

weight behind the MPLA led by Agostino Neto, with the United States and South Africa equally belatedly opting to support the MPLA's rivals – Jonas Savimbi's UNITA and Holden Roberto's FNLA. That by the end of 1975 the MPLA was increasingly entrenched as the government of Angola owed much to both Cuban and Soviet support – with Soviet naval power playing a meaningful role as part of the latter.

Prior to Angolan independence and the ascendancy of the MPLA, the Soviet Union had been supplying arms and equipment to the MPLA through the port of Pointe-Noire in Congo-Brazzaville. For example, on 12 June 1974, the Soviet merchant vessel, the "Captain Anistratenko", arrived at Pointe-Noire with arms for the MPLA. The semi-covert supplying of arms through Congo-Brazzaville was however fraught with practical and political difficulties in terms of relations between the MPLA and Brazzaville, and the direct supply of weapons into Angola was certainly a desirable development for both the Soviet Union and the MPLA.²⁵

At the height of the first phase of the Angolan Civil War in late 1975 and early 1976, a significant Soviet naval force was deployed off Angola with a view to not only guaranteeing the security of Soviet transports bringing in material aid for the MPLA directly into Angola but also dissuading both South Africa and indeed Rhodesia from interfering in the war on the seaward flank. The core of the Soviet force deployed off Angola from 7 November 1975 to 5 July 1976 was the large anti-submarine ship [BPK] "Admiral Makarov", accompanied by the destroyer "Nakhodchivii". In support – given the absence of basing in Angola during this period – was the transport "Boris Chilikin" and tanker "El'nia".²⁶

Although into 1976 the MPLA were increasingly secure in government in Angola – with the FNLA essentially destroyed as a contender for power – the threat from Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels and South Africa remained. Angolan support for Namibia's strongest national liberation movement – SWAPO – guaranteed sustained South African interest in interference in Angola beyond any desire not to see a nominally Marxist-Leninist government on the northern border of its territory. South African forces would remain a threat to the Soviet and Cuban-backed MPLA government for the remainder of the Cold War, with UNITA persisting as a major security threat for the government through the 1990s as well.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the South African Navy was clearly the most capable navy in southern Africa – and would be used throughout the remainder of the Cold War struggle for Angola and Namibia as a potent tool in the South African armoury, and in particular as a vehicle for landing special forces in raids against Angolan ports and other targets. It is quite probable that without the Soviet naval presence in and off Angola, the South African Navy would have played a greater role in civil war in Angola than was the case, and which is discussed further below.

With the clear need for a visible Soviet naval presence in and off Angola in order to ward off at least some of South Africa's attempts to strike against

SWAPO and Angolan forces, and where the wider Cold War struggle with the United States and her NATO allies would benefit from naval facilities in southern Africa, a major step in committing to Angola was the establishment of a “permanent” naval supply and maintenance facility in Luanda. The Soviet Navy would establish a PMTO – or Material-Technical Service Point – in Luanda in 1977. In the first instance, the PMTO (877th PMTO of the Northern Fleet) was there to facilitate the operations of Soviet naval vessels in the region. Not only was maintenance for Soviet and indeed Angolan vessels provided for by a floating repair facility that was in situ from 1978 (PM-138 and others), but they could also be resupplied and refuelled. Former military journalist and translator Sergei Kolomnin served out of the PMTO in Luanda in 1977–8, and notes how in addition to facilities on shore and the floating repair shop there were “always a couple of tankers and support ships” at the small naval base – along with “our operational squadron and a few large landing and anti-submarine ships”. The base would also see visits from Soviet submarines of fourth Squadron of the Northern Fleet, their crews being provided with tours of the city and apparently making an impression on the local population in their “handsome Soviet naval uniforms” – a political fringe benefit of the Angolan base.²⁷

The operational squadron mentioned by Kolomnin as operating out of Luanda was the 30th Operational Brigade of the Northern Fleet, which had its headquarters in Luanda during the 1980s. At the height of Soviet involvement in the region in the late 1980s, up to 11 Soviet naval vessels of the Brigade were operating out of Luanda, with three vessels in port at any given time and the remainder at sea – ostensibly protecting Soviet fishing vessels off the west coast of Africa.²⁸ In 1981, the brigade was commanded by Vice-Admiral Viktor Litvinov, who noted that the brigade was not only operating in the region in support of Angola’s MPLA government and as a guard against direct intervention by South African forces, but that the protection of Soviet fisheries vessels by the squadron extended all the way from Angolan waters up the coast to the Western Sahara – with elements of the squadron also operating out of Guinea.

Those vessels based in Luanda could be deployed further south in reaction to developments there. According to Litvinov, in the late summer of 1981, vessels of the squadron under his command – namely, the large anti-submarine ships (BPKs) “Tallinn” and “Gremiashchii” with the destroyer [SKR] “Revnostnii” – were moved southwards from Luanda to Moçâmedes (later Namibe) in response to South African operations from Namibia in the south of Angola. These Soviet warships – with Litvinov in command from “Gremiashchii” – stood guard at Moçâmedes in August and September prior to a return to Luanda during the latter once the immediate threat to this key port for the supply of southern Angola by air or conventional forces had been deemed to have subsided.²⁹ Whilst the threat of attack by South African air and even conventional ground forces had subsided by the end of the summer amid considerable international condemnation of South African incursions

into southern Angola, the threat of attacks by South African special forces on ports and other installations had not. In August 1980, South African special forces of 4 Recce Commando had attacked and caused extensive damage to fuel tanks in Lobito in southern Angola, and in November 1981, what was now 4 Recce Regiment would attack oil facilities near Luanda causing significant damage. The first of the significant attacks on ships in port would take place in July 1984. Although the intended South African targets based out of Luanda – Angola’s Soviet-supplied Project 205ER (or “Osa II” in NATO parlance) missile boats – were not hit, both the 7,500 ton East German cargo vessel MV *Arendsee* and the 9,000-ton Angolan vessel *Lundoge* were holed and sunk in shallow water by South African divers who placed charges against their hulls.³⁰ More significant still was an attack by South African divers in June 1986 – on shipping in the port of Namibe – a key conduit for equipment and supplies for Angolan government forces engaged in large-scale operations against UNITA in the south east of the country. In addition to hitting the merchant vessels, a number of other targets were hit in the vicinity including fuel tanks.³¹ There were not any Soviet warships at Namibe at the time of this attack – Soviet warships only being sent to the area afterwards as recalled by Aleksandr Buchnev, who notes that the BPK “*Stroinii*” arrived at Namibe from Luanda shortly after the attack, along with the repair ship PM-64.³² This was just one of many transfers of vessels to Moçâmedes/Namibe, with other instances including the transfer of the [BPK] “*Marshal Timoshenko*” there in July 1982 in order to “strengthen its air defence”.³³

Whether having Soviet warships in Namibe would have had an impact on the outcome of the June 1986 attack is debateable – where their presence had not prevented the attacks in Luanda during the summer of 1984. Nonetheless, the presence of Soviet and Cuban personnel as a minimum provided an obstacle to be avoided by South African forces if they were not to escalate the Soviet commitment to Angola. Whilst Soviet merchant vessels were targeted by South African special forces in Angolan ports, Soviet naval vessels were strictly off limits – even if in the heat of operations South African special forces personnel apparently considered the idea.³⁴

After the November 1981 Luanda attack on oil facilities, Soviet and Cuban personnel had taken some measures against such attacks by divers, such as conducting regular counter-sabotage work. As personnel from the destroyer (SKR) “*Neukrotimii*” describe for 1982, these measures involved dropping hand grenades into the water near shipping in order to deter attacks – a literally “hit-and-miss” measure that might have had a limited deterrent effect had it been in operation in the right vicinity at the time of a South African attack.³⁵ How frequent such prophylactic measures were taken in the early 1980s is unclear – where during the attack of June 1986 on Namibe South African divers apparently recall encountering only one underwater explosion during their mission – described as a “grenade or scare charge”.³⁶ It certainly seems that there was an intensification and systematization of such measures in late 1986 after the South African success at Namibe that June.³⁷ Certainly

military interpreter Sergei Demidchuk recounts considerable expenditure of grenades whilst engaging in such measures during the second half of his service in Angola in 1985–7.³⁸

The number of Soviet vessels in Angolan ports was increased by those that made visits of varying lengths to the country – often *en route* round Africa. Such visits served as a show of support for the Angolan government, and a signal to South Africa of that support. The typical route for Soviet ships in Africa waters included calling in on other friendly nations, and not only Guinea but also Mozambique.³⁹ Although Mozambique started to move out of the Soviet orbit in the 1980s – not helped by the 1984 Nkomati Accord that meant that Mozambique had agreed not to allow foreign national liberation movements to use Mozambique as a base – Soviet assistance to the country continued through the decade.⁴⁰ Although Soviet warships were not permanently based out of Mozambique even when relations were more cordial – as was the case for Angola – Soviet naval visits did of course serve to highlight Soviet support for its government at times of international tension. Mozambique could not however expect to see Soviet warships appear in Maputo in response to events in the same way that they did in Namibe. The South African air attack on Maputo in May 1983 in retaliation for its housing offices of the ANC – which had just carried out a major bombing in Pretoria – could therefore take place without the deterrent effect of having Soviet warships in port as in the case of Luanda, and Soviet warships did not race from Angola to show the Soviet flag in Maputo in response. Some Western sources have seen the presence of the TAVKR “Novorossiisk” in Maputo in early December 1983 (1–9 December) as a response to developments in Mozambique.⁴¹ However, given that its visit was classified as “delovoi” – best translated as “routine” in this instance – then it seems likely that the stop in Maputo was a convenient part of the transfer of the vessel from the Northern to Pacific Fleet with political benefits rather than having been specifically arranged with the latter in mind.⁴²

Particularly significant in terms of political impact – and inviting visits from high ranking politicians or even a president – were such visits by major surface units of the Soviet fleet to Allied ports such as Luanda and Maputo – whether the visit be categorized as “official”, “routine” or “goodwill”. For example, in addition to the “Novorossiisk” visiting Luanda in November 1983, the carrier (TAKR) “Minsk” and helicopter carrier (PLKR) “Moskva” visited in March–April 1979 and June 1982, respectively.⁴³ On 30 March 1979, “Minsk” – accompanied by the BPKs “Petropavlovsk” and “Tashkent”, the BDK “Ivan Rogov” and tanker “Boris Butoma” arrived off Luanda. The Soviet naval command was apparently uncomfortable with the idea of flooding Luanda with Soviet sailors, limiting activities ashore to a bus excursion around Luanda for at least some personnel. Some relief for the crew of “Minsk” was perhaps provided by a visit by wives and children of embassy staff to the vessel on 1 April, prior to a visit the next day by Angolan president Agostinho Neto who apparently asked to sit in the cockpit of one of the

aircraft on board.⁴⁴ Such a visit – involving such a significant Soviet naval force anchored off Luanda – can only have impressed the VMFs Angolan guests and sent a strong signal of Soviet commitment to the MPLA regime – both for their consumption, and those hostile to it such as South Africa. Perhaps unsurprisingly, whilst the shadowing of the Soviet force on its journey round Africa seems to have been conducted in relatively good humour on the part of NATO warships, interactions with the South African frigate “President Steyn” were more tense. According to our eyewitness, the Steyn did not conduct itself “properly”, and would “get up our tail, train its weapons and imitate firing, all the while not reacting to Soviet warnings”.⁴⁵

In the case of the visit of the Soviet carrier “Minsk” to Angola in 1979, it was accompanied by the large landing ship “Ivan Rogov”. Security for Soviet naval facilities in Luanda was provided in part by the almost continuous presence of Soviet naval infantry in Luanda – also providing some security for Angolan facilities there and acting as an overt show of support for the government. These naval infantrymen were part of a force of up to regimental strength and were accompanied by a large landing ship.

Colonel Sergei Remizov commanded the marines of 61st Independent Naval Infantry Regiment of the Northern Fleet that was sent to Angola in 1977 with the large landing ship [BDK] “Krasnaia Presnia”. At the end of 1976, his unit replaced marines of the Black Sea Fleet based out of Conakry as part of the ongoing Soviet naval presence there, before being sent to Benin in mid-February 1977 in order to “assist the government in the liquidation of a coup attempt” involving French mercenaries. Although prepared to fight, the involvement of the Soviet marines was not required, and on 2 March, the BDK set off to Angola, arriving in Luanda on 7 March.

When recounting the arrival of the force in Luanda, Remizov recalls being told by the head of the Soviet military mission there that:

He said directly, that our arrival in Luanda had considerable military-political significance – the Angolan leadership, for the time being still lacking confidence, saw real support for its position in the arrival of the BDK from the USSR, and was counting on us.

Remizov goes on to note: “Our task, as established by Moscow, was to support the military presence of the Soviet navy in Angola as a demonstration of support for the Angolan people and its government.”⁴⁶

Sergei Klimenko recalls bringing Soviet naval infantry to Angola as part of a group of vessels including BDK-58 and the SKR “Sil’nii” in 1986 for the protection of the Soviet consulate, aerodrome and other facilities in Luanda.⁴⁷

In addition to serving the routine needs of visiting Soviet warships and those based in the region with their responsibilities in Angola and for fisheries protection up the African west coast, the PMTO in Luanda would have wider functions of value not only to the Soviet mission there, but also to wider Cold War objectives. Facilities at Luanda were – as former first deputy of the Soviet

Main Military Adviser to Angola in 1988-1991 noted in an interview in 2000 – in a valuable location to enable Soviet forces to “control the principal maritime arteries from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic and from Africa to North and South America”.⁴⁸ Given its important location, the PMTO in Luanda served as a communications hub for Soviet naval forces in the region with its facilities that included those for secure satellite communications.⁴⁹ Also worthy of note in this regard is support for naval operations out of Angola and wider reconnaissance functions carried out in the region by long-range naval aviation in the form of Tu-95RTs aircraft of 392nd ODRAP [Independent Long-Range Air Regiment]. Such aircraft had also operated out of Guinea, and indeed on their first flight to Luanda from the Soviet Union in January 1977 would stop over at Conakry before heading on to Luanda. Conakry would provide a reserve landing strip for flights between Cuba and Angola that began in August 1977.⁵⁰ Aircraft of 392nd ODRAP would see particularly intensive activity from Luanda during the UK’s Falkland’s Conflict with Argentina, where the unit conducted 14 reconnaissance flights in the Ascension and South Atlantic region in April 1982. The unit would conduct a total of at least 330 reconnaissance missions from Luanda between 1977 and 1990.⁵¹

More prosaic, but still important for both Soviet operations in the region and those of her local allies were both hydrographic work and the activities of Soviet fishing vessels – the protection of which was one reason for the Soviet naval presence in the region. In 1981–82, the Hydrographic Service of the Black Sea Fleet conducted a range of hydrographic and topographic work in the coastal waters off Angola – by which time there was not only significant Soviet naval activity but also of Soviet and Soviet-supplied fishing vessels.⁵² At least some of the fish caught by Soviet vessels found its way into the hands of national liberation groups such as SWAPO and the ANC.⁵³ As early as 1976, the Soviet Union had been playing a role in the development of the Angolan fishing industry as highlighted in the testimony of Vladislav Ivchenko, who in 1976–77 was engaged in survey work along the Angolan coastline in order to report to the Angolan government on “Technical-Economic Grounds for the Resurrection and Development of the fishing industry of the People’s Republic of Angola”. Ivchenko goes on to note that the Soviet Union provided six MPTK trawlers to Angola, which worked in coastal waters and provided fresh fish to the Angolan capital.⁵⁴

The Development of an Angolan Navy

While Soviet naval vessels were based out of Angola and passed through its waters, the limits to the rules of engagement for Soviet vessels and the longer-term prospects for a sustainable MPLA government in Angola required that Angola develop its own naval forces with Soviet and Cuban assistance. The Angolan Navy was officially formed on 10 July 1976, inheriting a number of former Portuguese vessels as its initial core force. These vessels included patrol boats, the largest of which were at least four, possibly five, 180-ton standard

load Argos Class vessels armed with two 40-mm guns – where it seems that a further two units were probably transferred to be cannibalized for spares. In order to have at least some personnel for the formal formation of the navy that summer, naval training courses were organised by Cuban personnel in Angola from March of 1976. These personnel were joined as initial cadres for the fledgling navy in July 1976 by a small number that had received some naval preparation in the Soviet Union in 1969–70.⁵⁵ Going forward, officers for the new navy were trained in the Soviet Union and Cuba, with enlisted men being trained in Angola – initially on-board ship but later in training facilities on land. Up to 1989, more than 2,000 junior specialist personnel were apparently trained through shore-based facilities, the first cohort of 120 to pass through such training doing so in 1977. In addition, more than 300 officers were trained in the Soviet Union and provided with either secondary or higher education up to this point. Such training evidently continued long past the Cold War Soviet commitment to the country, where different figures give a total of 591 Angolan naval personnel educated in Soviet and Russian military institutions as of 1 January 1995.⁵⁶ Having a significant number of Angolan personnel trained in the USSR clearly facilitated co-operation, not only in terms of mutual understanding of task in hand but also in terms of communication – where Angolan personnel trained in Russia could sometimes speak reasonable Russian. Military interpreter Sergei Demidchuk recalls being assigned to the adviser to the Chief of Staff of the Angolan Navy during the second year of his service in Angola of 1985–87, where the Angolan Chief of Staff had been trained in the Soviet Union and spoke Russian.⁵⁷

Soviet assistance in the formation of the Angolan Navy came under the auspices of the Tenth Board of the General Staff of the VMF, where Soviet naval personnel were involved not only in the transfer of vessels and other equipment and the training of Angolan personnel to use them, but also in their maintenance. As of 1 January 1987, the Soviet Navy had 17 advisers and 19 technical specialists in Angola.⁵⁸ V.G. Popov was one of those Soviet naval officers involved in training and advising Angolan personnel on Soviet-supplied vessels from 1979. Although Soviet advisers were under strict orders not to engage in combat, there was always the risk that a “combat” situation might arise in the course of training and advising, as in the case of an interception by a Project 206 torpedo boat with Popov and another Soviet individual on board of a vessel reported to be illegally fishing in Angolan waters in June 1980.⁵⁹ Soviet advisers and specialists worked in close co-operation with their many Cuban counterparts, where, for example, Soviet and Cuban personnel worked together in keeping the Angolan navy’s landing craft operable.⁶⁰ Soviet personnel also had a key role to play in keeping shore-based equipment functioning. Keeping the coastal observation posts – with their antiquated radar sets – functioning was just one of the tasks for Soviet specialists.⁶¹

Between 1976 and 1983, the Soviet Union supplied Angola with the following vessels⁶²:

Table 5.1 Soviet naval vessels supplied to Angola (1976–83)

| <i>Type</i> | <i>Project number</i> | <i>Number supplied</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Missile boat | 205ER | 6 |
| Torpedo boat | 206 | 4 |
| Medium landing ship | 771 | 3 |
| Guard (patrol) ship | 1400ME | 1 |
| Patrol boats | 368P/1398B “Aist” | 3/2 |
| Inshore minesweepers | 1258B | 2 |

These vessels served from the principal naval base at Luanda, a base at Lobito to the south of the capital, an “independent basing point” at Soyo to the north, and a forward operating or manoeuvre base at Namibe much further south. In addition to these naval vessels and their supporting units, there was an Angolan marine battalion. Additional support facilities were developed for the Angolan Navy in the early 1980s that included not only a torpedo service depot and torpedo storage facility but also a facility for the preparation of P-15U missiles carried by the Project 205ER vessels supplied. Naval facilities also included the five coastal observation posts equipped with radar mentioned above that were constructed in 1982–3 with Soviet assistance, with posts at not only Luanda, Lobito and Namibe, but also Cabinda and Porto Amboim.⁶³

By 1990, the Angolan Navy consisted of 2,591 personnel with 13 naval vessels, all having been supplied by the Soviet Union.⁶⁴ Despite the provision of large quantities of spares for Soviet-supplied vessels in 1989 as the Soviet presence in the country started to wind down, by 2000 it was being reported that there were no operational vessels in the Angolan Navy.⁶⁵

The Soviet Union and her allies also provided assistance in the formation of naval forces in Mozambique, albeit on a smaller scale. Despite a cooling of relations between the Soviet Union and Mozambique in the mid-1980s, as of 1 January 1987 there was a single Soviet naval adviser and 18 technical specialists in Mozambique.⁶⁶ In the mid-1980s, Soviet naval officer Vitalii Ganza arrived in Mozambique with a group of eight Soviet naval personnel to assist with the training of Mozambiquan sailors in Pemba at a time when the Soviet Union was providing the Mozambiquan naval forces with new ships in the form of two large patrol craft [Project 201] of just over 200 tons full load that arrived in June 1985. Some of the local sailors had apparently studied in the Soviet Union.⁶⁷ It is highly likely that other Mozambiquan naval personnel involved had received some education in the DDR. For the DDR, Mozambique represented a more continuous commitment than it did for the USSR, even if it was reliant on the Soviet Union for providing the ships on which DDR-trained sailors would serve (in addition to the handful of other vessels including the surviving Portuguese craft handed over at independence).⁶⁸

Conclusion

The expansion of the Soviet Navy from the 1960s onwards gave the Soviet Union the means by which it could compete with the United States and European powers on a world stage – rather than solely on a Eurasian one. A relationship between increased naval capabilities and increased Soviet engagement was particularly evident in Africa. Soviet naval power added considerable credibility and muscle to Soviet support for the Republic of Guinea and Angola in particular, even if strict rules of engagement meant that Soviet naval power was typically an inhibitor on foreign action rather than offering a direct challenge to it. Whilst these rules of engagement can be argued to have limited the military effectiveness of Soviet naval participation in the national liberation struggles in West and Southern Africa, on the diplomatic front this restraint can be argued to ultimately have paid dividends for the Soviet Union in allowing it to portray South Africa as the aggressor and play a significant role in a loose coalition of interests seeking to undermine the Apartheid regime.

Although in parts of Africa Soviet naval expertise and equipment can be seen to have had a significant impact in terms of the development of local navies – for example, in Egypt and Algeria, the Soviet-sponsoring of navies in southern Africa did not have the same longer-term ramifications. Although Soviet support for the development of limited naval power in Angola, for example, can be seen to have planted seeds of naval development, it did not have the same sustained impact as in North Africa, where the southern African navies were overly reliant on Soviet support to maintain their limited capabilities. During the 1990s, the navies of both Angola and Mozambique saw their capabilities decline significantly in part because of the absence of ongoing Soviet assistance. With the collapse of Apartheid in South Africa, the continued maintenance of a conventional Angolan naval force more suited to a state-to-state conflict than counter insurgency can also be seen to have lost its rationale.

Whilst Russian naval involvement in sub-Saharan Africa was minimal during the 1990s and 2000s, more recently under Vladimir Putin there has been renewed Russian interest in the region. Whilst the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine will no doubt have ramifications for Russian international ambitions, certainly Russia had been looking to overtly deploy its more limited naval capabilities around the globe as it sought to regain something of the major power status it lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The cruise of BPK “Severomorsk” around Africa in 2017 was in many ways reminiscent of similar cruises by Soviet warships during the late 1970s and 1980s, except in 2017 she could call into ports in both Namibia and South Africa.⁶⁹ That she could make these additional stops *en route* owed something to the goodwill generated by the activities of her Soviet predecessors, who played a role in both Namibian independence and indeed the collapse of the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

Notes

- 1 Thanks Alessandro Iandolo, Natalia Telepneva and Vladimir Shubin for taking a look at a draft of this chapter.
- 2 See Alessandro Iandolo, “The Soviet Union and the Congo Crisis, 1960–1961”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 16, Number 2 (Spring 2014), 41–49.
- 3 See G. Kostev, ‘Karibskii krizis glazami ochevidtsev’, *Morskoii sbornik*, Number 11 (1994), 14–15.
- 4 A.A. Kol’tukov (gen.ed.), *Kursom chesti i slavi. Voenno-Morskoi Flot SSSR/Rossii v voynakh i konfliktakh votoroi polovini XX v.*, Moscow/Zhukovskii: Kuchkovo pole, 2006, 302.
- 5 See, for example, A.V. Basov et al (eds.), *Boevoi put’ Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota. Izd. 3-e, dop.*, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974, 510–1 on the intent of these manoeuvres.
- 6 S.G. Gorshkov, *Morskaia moshch’ gosudarstva. Izd. 2-e, dop.*, Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979, 372.
- 7 For more information on this operation and the naval dimension to PAIGC activity, see below and A.J. Venter, *The Last of Africa’s Cold War Conflicts: Portuguese Guinea and its Guerilla Insurgency*, Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2020, 11, 129, 136. Venter makes considerable use of Cann, cited below.
- 8 The MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* or Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) was the governing party in Angola from November 1975 that hosted the armed forces of SWAPO (South-West Africa People’s Organisation) and the military wing of the ANC (African National Congress), MK (*Umkhonto we Sizwe* or Spear of the Nation). All were fighting the US- and South African-backed UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* or National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and South African Defence Force (SADF) operating from Namibia for the duration of the Civil War, with the armed forces of the MPLA, FAPLA (*Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola* or Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola) initially also fighting the US-backed FNLA (*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* or National Front for the Liberation of Angola). The governing party in Mozambique from the end of Portuguese rule was FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* or Liberation Front of Mozambique), which was soon fighting a counter-insurgency against the South Africa-backed and indeed Rhodesian created RENAMO (*Portuguese Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* or Mozambiquan National Resistance) organisation.
- 9 See Alexander Hill, ‘Review Essay: “We carried out our [international] duty!” The Soviet Union, Cuito Cuanavale and Wars of National Liberation in Southern Africa’, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Volume 34, Number 1 (2021), 139–158.
- 10 E.A. Dolmatovskii – TsK KPSS. Pismo o problemakh nalazhivaniia sviazei SSSR s afrikanskimi stranami. 2 ianvaria 1961 g., in S.V. Mazov and A.B. Davidson (eds.), *Rossiia i Afrika. Dokumenti i materialy 1961-nachalo 1970-x* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2021), p. 29. During a demonstration of amphibious assault in 1977, a PT-76 tank was disabled as a result of coolant intended for conditions in the Soviet north being unsuitable for the tropical climate in Angola – a further indication of the learning curve experienced by Soviet forces operating in these new conditions. See

- the testimony of Sergei Remizov, in Sergei Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipolnili! Angola: 1975–1992* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Studia "Etnika", IP Troshkov A.V., 2018, 141.
- 11 Noted in and superseded by *Pravila okraska korablei, vspomogatel'nikh sudov i bazovikh plavuchikh sredstv VMF*, Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo Ministerstvvo Oboroni SSSR, 1965, 2. Later, Soviet naval personnel would have to supervise the installation of Western air conditioning units into Angolan vessels at Angolan request. See V.E. Andreevnikov (gen.ed.), *Mezhdunarodnoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo Voенno-Morskogo Flota*, Moscow: "Oruzhie i tekhnologii", 2003, 198.
 - 12 On 'Mar Verde', see John P. Cann, *Brown Waters of Africa: Portuguese Riverine Warfare 1961–1974*, St. Petersburg, FL: Haler Publishing, 2007, 217–226.
 - 13 A.A. Kol'tiukov (gen.ed.), *Kursom chesti i slavi*, 253; Gennadii Belov, *Atlanticheskaiа eskadra 1968-2005*, Moscow: Gorizont, 2015, 648–653 [Google Play digital version].
 - 14 Rasporiazhenie No. 234-RS ot 8 fevralia 1964. O bezvozmezdnoi postavke Narodnoi Respublike Zanzibar i Gvinee voennoi tekhniki soglasno prilozheniiu [Order Number 234-RS of 8 February 1964. Regarding the delivery without charge of military equipment to the People's Republic of Zanzibar and Guinea by agreement], in Выпуск 7. Бюллетень рассекреченных документов федеральных государственных архивов. Архивы России. (rusarchives.ru) accessed 11 January 2022.
 - 15 V.E. Andreevnikov (gen.ed.), *Mezhdunarodnoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo Voенno-Morskogo Flota*, pp. 26, 188; A.A. Kol'tiukov (gen.ed.), *Kursom chesti i slavi*, 253.
 - 16 A.A. Kol'tiukov (gen.ed.), *Kursom chesti i slavi*, 252, 443n79.
 - 17 Rasporiazhenie No. 2307-rs ot 21 oktiabria 1964. O postavkakh v Respubliku Gana torpednikh katerov s boepripasami, torpednoi masterskoi i zapasnikh chastei [Order Number 2307-rs of 21 October 1964, On the delivery of torpedo boats with munitions and a torpedo repair shop and spare parts to the Republic of Ghana] in Выпуск 7. Бюллетень рассекреченных документов федеральных государственных архивов. Архивы России. (rusarchives.ru) accessed 10 January 2022; Sovetsko-ganskіe otnosheniia. Iz spravki II Afrikanskogo otdela MID SSSR "Respublika Gana", 26 dekabria 1961 g., in S.V. Mazov and A.B. Davidson (eds.), *Rossіia i Afrika. Dokumenti i materialy 1961-nachalo 1970-x*, 323; S.V. Mazov, 'SSSR I gosudarstvennii perevorot 1966 g. v Gane: po materialam rossiiskikh arkhivov', in *Vestnik RUDN. Serіia: Mezhdunarodnie otnosheniia*, Volume 20, Number 3 (2020), 624.
 - 18 See Natalia Telepneva, "Saving Ghana's Revolution: The Demise of Kwame Nkrumah and the Evolution of Soviet Policy in Africa, 1966-1972", in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 20, Number 4 (Fall 2018), 12–13.
 - 19 The matter soon apparently being resolved over cognac! See Aleksandr Sharov, "Nash morskoi spektakl' dlia TsRU", in *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 2 noiabria 1996, reproduced at Наш морской спектакль для ЦРУ (niskgd.ru) accessed 26 January 2022.
 - 20 See A.A. Kilichenkov, "Kholodnaia voina" v okeane. Sovetskaia voennomorskaiа deiatel'nost' v zerkale zarubezhnoi istoriografii. 2-e izdanie dopolnennoe, Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennii universitet, 2019, 642–644; and Vitalii Platonov, 'Nasha eskadra', at Наша эскадра: Флот - 21 век (blackseafleet-21.com) accessed 26 January 2022.

- 21 Gennadii Belov, *Atlanticheskaia eskadra 1968–2005*, 681–683.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 648–655; Natalia Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961–1975*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022, 160–161; and Aleksandr Dzasokhov, *Kak mnogo sobitii vmeshchaet zhizn'*, Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2019, 54.
- 23 Gennadii Belov, *Atlanticheskaia eskadra 1968–2005*, 251.
- 24 See Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation*.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 183–5.
- 26 Gennadii Belov, *Atlanticheskaia eskadra 1968–2005*, 252.
- 27 Sergei Kolomnin, “Forpost na iuge Afriki”, in V.E. Andreevnikov (gen.ed.), *Mezhdunarodnoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo Voенno-Morskogo Flota*, 193, 196–197; A.A. Kol'tiukov (gen.ed.), *Kursom chesti i slavi*, 253.
- 28 A.A. Kol'tiukov (gen.ed.), *Kursom chesti i slavi*, 255 and Ivan Kulichin, ‘Voенno-tekhnicheskoe sotrudnichestvo flotov SSSR i NRA’, in Vladimir Shubin (gen.ed.), *40-letie nachala vooruzhennoi bor'bi angol'skogo Naroda za natsional'nuu nezavisimost' i sovetско-angol'skoe voенno-politicheskoe sotrudnichestvo. Materiali nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii (Moskva, 29 marta 2001 goda)* Moscow: OOO “Izdatel'svto “LEAN”, 2002, 62.
- 29 Sergei Gurov, “Kak eto bilo: Goriachee solntse Angoli”, in *Strazh Baltiki*, 26 October 2012, 5. See also Iu. G. Ustimenko, *Ot sluzhbi ne otkazivaisia*, St. Petersburg, FL: Nika, 2010, 33–34.
- 30 See Douw Steyn and Arnè Söderlund, *Iron Fist from the Sea: South Africa's Seaborne Raiders 1978-1988*, Warwick/Rugby: Helion and Company/GG Books UK, 2014, 151–152, 196–197 and 288–291.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 347–349.
- 32 Aleksandr Buchnev, ‘Kake eto bilo ili v iune 86-go....’, at Море́мход - Как это было... (moremhod.info) accessed 9 February 2022.
- 33 Vladimir Shubin, *The Hot “Cold War”: The USSR in Southern Africa*, London: Pluto Press, 2008, 78.
- 34 See, for example, See Steyn and Söderlund, *Iron Fist from the Sea*, 287.
- 35 See the personal accounts in Sergei Gurov, ‘Kak eto bilo: Goriachee solntse Angoli’, 6 and ‘prodolzhenie’, in *Strazh Baltiki*, 2 noiabria 2012, 5–6.
- 36 Steyn and Söderlund, *Iron Fist from the Sea*, 344.
- 37 See testimony of Vladimir Ovsiannikov, in Sergei Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipolnili!*, 137; see also the testimony of Sergei Klimenko of BCh-1 BDK-58 (later “Kaliningrad”) for 1986, in Sergei Gurov, ‘Kak eto bilo: Goriachee solntse Angoli’, in *Strazh Baltiki*, 26 October 2012, 6.
- 38 Testimony of Sergei Demidchuk, in A.V. Kuznetsova-Timonova (ed.), *Voini-internatsionalisti iz Belarusi v grazhdanskoi voine v Angole: 1975–1992*, Minsk: Belaruskaia navuka, 2017, 186.
- 39 See, for example, Iu.G. Ustimenko, *Ot sluzhbi ne otkazivaisia*, 33–34, where the BPK “Tallin” did the usual rounds in the region of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique.
- 40 See Agreement on Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness between Mozambique and South Africa (Nkomati Talks) | UN Peacemaker, 16 March 1984 accessed 9 February 2022.
- 41 See, for example, Helen Desfosses, ‘Soviet Policy toward Angola and Mozambique’, in *Africana Journal*, Volume 17 (1988), 132–133.

- 42 She also called in at Luanda (12–20 November 1983)—also a ‘*delovoi*’ visit—following by a ‘*druzhestvenni*’ or ‘goodwill’ visit to Madras in India (from 5–10 February 1984). See Iu.V. Apal’kov, *Udarnie korabli. Spravochnik*, Moscow: Morkniga, 2010, 19.
- 43 See Iu.V. Apal’kov, *Udarnie korabli. Spravochnik*, pp.12–13 and 19. and Iu. V. Apal’kov, *Protivolodochnie korabli*, Moscow: Morkniga, 2010, 31.
- 44 V.V. Migachev and I.I. Strukov, *Cherez chetirnadtsat’ morei i tri okeana*, St. Petersburg, FL: Gangut, 2012, 76–79.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 85.
- 46 Testimony of Sergei Remizov, in Sergei Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipolnili!*, 137–140.
- 47 Testimony of Sergei Klimenko, in ‘Kak eto bilo: Goriachee solntse Angoli’, in *Strazh Baltiki*, 26 October 2012, 6.
- 48 Testimony of Valerii Beliaev, in Vladimir Shubin (gen.ed.), *40-letie nachala vooruzhennoi bor’bi angol’skogo naroda za natsional’nuiu nezavisimost’ i sovetsko-angol’skoe voenno-politicheskoe sotrudnichestvo*, 66.
- 49 See testimony of Sergei Kolomnin in V.E. Andreevnikov (gen.ed.), *Mezhdunarodnoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo Voenno-Morskogo Flota*, 193.
- 50 Evgenii Kalinin, *Otdel’nii dal’ne-razvedivatel’nii. Iz istorii 392 ODRAP aviattii Krasnoznamennogo Severnogo Flota*, Cherepovets: 2013, 240, 245.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 240, 274, 277.
- 52 V.I. Koriakin and S.V. Val’chuk, *Letopis’ Rossiiskogo flota. Ot zarozhdeniia morekhodstva v drevnerusskom gosudarstve go nachale XXI veka: V 3-x t. T.3. 1946-2010*, St. Petersburg, FL: Nauka, 2012, 230.
- 53 See, for example, Maren Saeboe, “A State of Exile: The ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe in Angola, 1979-1989,” MA dissertation. University of Natal (Durban), 2002, 95–96. Available at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bbe8/11a16f7e85eeaad38a087bda796216cad321.pdf> accessed 4 September 2020.
- 54 Testimony of Vladislav Ivchenko, in Sergei Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipolnili!*, 98–101.
- 55 See Miguel Junior, *Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola: First National Army and the War (1975-1992)* Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2015, 44. See also Captain John Moore (ed.), *Jane’s Fighting Ships 1986-87*, London: Jane’s Publishing Company Limited, 1986, 7.
- 56 Testimony of Ivan Kulinich, in Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipolnili!*, 120–121 and Andrei Pochtarev, ‘Otechesvennaia istoriografii po probleme sovetsko-angol’skogo voennogo-politicheskog sotrudnichestvo’, in Vladimir Shubin (gen. ed.), *40-letie nachala vooruzhennoi bor’bi angol’skogo Naroda za natsional’nuiu nezavisimost’ I sovetsko-angol’skoe voenno-politicheskoe sotrudnichestvo*, 36.
- 57 Testimony of Sergei Demidchuk, in A.V. Kuznetsova-Timonova (ed.), *Voini-internatsionalisti iz Belarusi v grazhdanskoj voine v Angole: 1975-1992*, 184.
- 58 V.E. Andreevnikov (gen.ed.), *Mezhdunarodnoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo Voenno-Morskogo Flota*, 34.
- 59 Testimony of V.G. Popov, in *ibid.*, 182–186.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 183, 185.
- 61 See Iurii Las’kov, *Angola i Prochie Sluzhebnie Nadobnosti. Pravdivie voenno-morskie istorii ot souchastnika*, Saarbrücken: YAM Publishing, 2014, 9–10.
- 62 Testimony of Ivan Kulinich, in Sergei Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipolnili!*, 118–120.

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*, 120 and Junior, *Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola*, 10.

65 Testimony of Ivan Kulinich, in Sergei Kolomnin (ed.), *Mi svoi dolg vipohnili!*, p. 120 and Commodore Stephen Saunders (ed.), *Jane's Fighting Ships 2001-2002*, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group Limited, 2001, 7.

66 V.E. Andreevnikov (gen.ed.), *Mezhdunarodnoe voennoe sotrudnichestvo Voennomorskogo Flota*, 34.

67 See *ibid.*, 145–147 and Captain John Moore (ed.), *Jane's Fighting Ships 1986-87*, 364.

68 See Klaus Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität: Militärbeziehungen und Militärhilfen der DDR in die "Dritte Welt,"* Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2010, 272, 602, 610.

69 See A. Iakovlev, 'Ot Afriki do Arktiki', in *Morskoi Sbornik*, No.2 (2018), 49–55.