

**S African Comment on "Aggressive" Soviet Weapons Build-up in Region**

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Text of commentary:

For 13 years the Soviet Union has been sending massive amounts of military hardware and thousands of soldiers to southern Africa. An important perspective on this huge military build-up was given in Glasgow this week by the director of the West European Defence Association, Mrs Evelyn de Chene. She said that it was not the mere presence of the Russians in southern Africa that was a cause for concern but the sophistication of the weapons and the seniority of the Soviet military officers sent to the sub-continent.

Mrs de Chene's perspective and her concern are borne out by published statistics on the communist penetration of southern Africa. At the last count, there were no fewer than 65 radar installations in Angola. Angola had close on 100 combat aircraft - about 70% more than in 1980 - while Mozambique had also increased her number of combat aircraft by the same margin. Most of these aircraft are MiG jet fighters. The same pattern is to be seen in respect of the build-up of tanks, helicopters, surface-to-air missiles and even naval vessels in Angola and Mozambique. Each country, for example, has no fewer than 14 naval vessels. As for military personnel, more than 40,000 troops from communist countries, led by generals and other high-ranking officers, are in Angola. The figure for Mozambique is much lower, at around 4,000.

The Soviet military build-up in these two countries has been accompanied by massive infusions of communist weapons in three other states - Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Between 1975 and 1985 the land forces of Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe increased by 120%, their combat aircraft by 274% and their tanks by 343%. The huge military arsenals in these countries is [as heard] far in excess of their reasonable defence requirements. For example, the land forces and surrogate forces of these five states stand at 832,000 - well over twice the number of 165,000 men, reserves excluded, that South Africa could readily muster. The pretext for these excessive arsenals is the supposed threat posed by South Africa, an excuse that is unacceptable, given South Africa's standing offer of friendship and non-aggression treaties to her neighbours.

The inescapable conclusion is that the communist military build-up in southern Africa is for aggressive purposes - not for the legitimate defence of the states concerned. More specifically, these states have permitted the erection on their soil of a communist umbrella of aggression pointed at South Africa and South-West Africa. This, in turn, underscores the imperative need for continual vigilance and preparedness by the counter-insurgency forces of South Africa and South-West Africa.