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Introduction by Andy DeRoche, Front Range Community College

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The H-Diplo Advisory Board and the H-Diplo Editorial team are pleased to announce that Dr. Andy DeRoche of Front Range Community College is H-Diplo's new Africa Editor. We warmly welcome Andy to the H-Diplo review editing team and look forward to working with him.

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Introduction by Andy DeRoche, Front Range Community College

Reading *A Distant Front in the Cold War* by Sergey Mazov was a real pleasure. It is a book full of new details and valuable insights that makes a major contribution to the field of foreign relations dealing with Africa during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Among the most important claims put forth by Mazov is his contention that “Khrushchev was not guided by a global strategy to take over Africa; there was no established Soviet African blueprint per se, only some drafts of it, based on flawed knowledge of the continent and its inhabitants.” (6)

Based in great part on research in the archives in Russia, Mazov provides a plethora of examples of the mistakes made by the Soviet Union in its efforts to build bridges to West Africa. In Ghana, the USSR generally failed to impress the people with its propaganda. Printed materials were typically too lengthy and technical, and Soviet films were not popular. On the other hand, American efforts seemed more successful, which reflected better organization and timing on the part of U.S. diplomats, more concise and clear literature, and the infinitely more popular American films. (146-7)

The job of American diplomats in Ghana was made easier by the common language of English, while language was a real challenge for the Soviets. The same hurdle hindered Soviet efforts in Mali. The USSR sent instructors to Mali to teach math, science, and Russian, but their French was not good enough to allow them to effectively communicate the material to the people of Mali. Eventually translators were sent, but the damage had been done. (220)

Arguably the most important American initiative in West Africa in the early 1960s was the Peace Corps. Some Soviet officials suggested that the USSR create a counterpart, and send specially trained Soviet youths to Ghana, Guinea, and Mali to help build schools and hospitals, and teach and coach the local children. Initially the plan was approved, but it was eventually cancelled because of the \$200,000 price tag. (225-6) Given the long-term success of the Peace Corps in fostering good will in nations such as Ghana, it certainly seems like the Soviets made a mistake by cancelling this proposed program.

The Soviets also committed numerous blunders in their major effort to provide higher education in the USSR to African students. Mazov’s research in the Russian archives discovered very illuminating documents on this topic which allowed him to paint “an all-embracing and unvarnished picture” of the experiences of African students in the USSR. The story was not a pretty one, and it included unsatisfactory living conditions, bland food, and most seriously, frequent instances of racism encountered by the African students. To make matters worse, as Mazov convincingly shows, the response by the Soviet government to African complaints was insufficient and added insult to injury. (213-8)

The four esteemed reviewers who contribute to this roundtable do not all agree on the importance or usefulness of *A Distant Front in the Cold War*. Piero Gleijeses, while considering the discussion of African students in the USSR to be interesting and well-

written, was generally disappointed with the book. In the view of Gleijeses, the most important weakness is that Mazov failed to address the relationship between the Soviet government and the PAIGC freedom fighters in Guinea Bissau.

Phil Muehlenbeck found considerably more to praise in Mazov's book than did Gleijeses, and Muehlenbeck judged the selection of Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and the Congo as case studies as "well selected." He commends Mazov for raising the question of when the Cold War started in West Africa, and also gives high marks for the analysis of Soviet relations with Liberia. In addition, he characterizes Mazov's section on the Soviet approach to Sekou Toure as "particularly enlightening." On the down side, Muehlenbeck criticizes Mazov for not putting enough emphasis on African agency.

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja offers a mixed review. According to Nzongola-Ntalaja, the main strengths of Mazov's work are the archival research and the clear argument. The biggest fault that Nzongola-Ntalaja finds with *A Distant Front* is its failure to accurately address the way the U.S. used the United Nations as a tool to promote its own self-interest in the Congo.

Among the four reviewers, the most thorough summary of what Mazov actually did write comes from Vladimir Shubin. In his essay, Shubin starts out by praising *A Distant Front* as "a profound and pioneering academic work." He points out that one of the great strengths of Mazov's book is that it draws on many documents which were open to research in the 1990s but are now again closed. In the case of Soviet involvement in the Congo, critical documents regarding the Soviet military or KGB have never been opened, and so the whole story remains unknown. Nevertheless, Shubin considers Mazov's treatment of the Congo crisis to be exceptional. He concludes that Mazov's book "should be read by everybody who is interested in Africa's history and politics, as well as in the history of the Cold War."

Overall, while Gleijeses and Nzongola-Ntalaja in particular raise some valid concerns about what Mazov failed to do in his book, it is probably more important to appreciate, along with Muehlenbeck and Shubin, what he has managed to accomplish. *A Distant Front* makes a major contribution to the field, and significantly increases our understanding of the mistakes made by Soviet officials in their relations with West Africa during the height of Cold War. While we have a massive and rapidly expanding literature on many aspects of American relations with Africa, much of which pays considerable attention to the importance of U.S. competition with the USSR, studies in English documenting actual Soviet efforts are extremely scarce. Mazov therefore has done a great service by publishing this interesting work.

Participants:

Sergey Mazov is a Doctor of Science (history) and Chief Research Fellow at the Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, in Moscow. He was a Cold War International History Project Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 2003. His current project is a book on "The USSR and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1964". His major publications include *A Distant Front in the Cold War. The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Stanford University Press, 2010); *Policy of the USSR in West Africa*

1956-1964. *Unknown Pages of the Cold War History* (Moscow: Nauka, 2008) (In Russian); Apollon Davidson, Sergey Mazov, Geogiyi Tsyppin, *USSR and Africa. 1918-1960. Documentary History of Relations* (Moscow: IVI RAN, 2002) (In Russian); and several collections of documents, essays and articles on Russia and the USSR and Africa.

Andy DeRoche is Africa editor for H-Diplo. He received his PhD from Colorado in 1997, and since 1998 has been teaching history at Front Range Community College. His major publications include *Black, White, and Chrome: The United States and Zimbabwe, 1953-1998* (2001) and *Andrew Young: Civil Rights Ambassador* (2003). He is currently writing a book about Zambia/USA relations, and hopes to have it finished in 2013.

Piero Gleijeses is professor of U.S. foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). His most recent books are *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-76* (2002); *The Cuban Drumbeat. Cuba's Worldview: Foreign Policy in a Hostile World* (2009); and *La Esperanza Desgarrada: La rebelión dominicana de 1965 y la invasión norteamericana* (forthcoming, 2011). He is completing a book about US and Cuban policy in southern Africa in the Carter and Reagan Years.

Phil E. Muehlenbeck is a lecturer at The George Washington University and the University of Maryland-College Park and holds a Ph.D. from the George Washington University. His forthcoming books include *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming), *Race, Ethnicity, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective*, editor (Vanderbilt University Press, forthcoming), and *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective*, editor (Vanderbilt University Press, forthcoming). His next manuscript length research project is a study of United States, Soviet, Czechoslovak, and British competition for African civil aviation markets tentatively titled, *Contested Skies: Cold War and the Battle for Africa's Hearts, Minds, and Airports*.

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja is professor of African Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and professor emeritus of African Studies at Howard University in Washington, DC. He holds a Ph.D. degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition to his academic career, he was employed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) between 2000 and 2007, for which he served as Senior Adviser for governance to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2 years), Director of the UNDP Oslo Governance Center in Norway (3 years), and Facilitator for the establishment of the Africa Governance Institute (2 years). His current project is to finish a book manuscript on the political history of Africa since 1955.

Vladimir Shubin is Principal Research Fellow of the Institute for African Studies in the Russian Academy of Sciences and Professor of African History and Politics at the Russian State University for the Humanities. He has Doctor of Science (History) degree from the Moscow State University and Ph D (Honoris Causa) from the University of the Western Cape. He is an author of several books including (in English) *Social Democracy and Southern Africa* (under the pen name Vladimir Bushin), *ANC: a View from Moscow* and *The Hot 'Cold War: the USSR in Southern Africa* and a member of the Editorial Boards of *Aziya I Afrika segodnya (Asia and Africa Today, Moscow)*, *Journal of Globalisation Studies*

(Volgograd), *Politikon* (Pretoria) and *Scientia Militaria* (Saldanha). Apart from Russian state awards he was bestowed with the South African Order of Companions of O.R. Tambo (silver).

Review by Piero Gleijeses, Johns Hopkins University (SAIS)

I was delighted to be asked to review *A Distant Front in the Cold War*, a book I looked forward to reading. I was particularly interested to learn what Sergey Mazov would say about three issues that no author has discussed: the Soviet response to the great Simba revolt in the Congo, which began in early 1964; Soviet relations with the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), which started armed struggle in Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau) in early 1963 and soon became the strongest guerrilla movement in Africa; and Soviet relations with the Cubans in West Africa, particularly in Guinea and Ghana, where both Moscow and Havana had active embassies.

Hélas, I will have to wait. Mazov does not deal with any of these topics. His account of the Congo ends in late 1963. He has only fourteen lines on all of 1964, and they add no new information. (181) As for the PAIGC, there is no mention of it, or of Guinea-Bissau, in *A Distant Front in the Cold War*. This is a glaring omission in a book that purports to discuss Soviet policy in West Africa through 1964. Is it because even as late as 1964 Moscow had no relations whatsoever with the PAIGC, and the PAIGC leaders had never approached the Soviets? I very much doubt it. Furthermore, the rearguard base of the PAIGC was Guinea, and President Sékou Touré was the movement's champion. Did Guinean and Soviet officials never speak about the PAIGC? I suspect that the reason for Mazov's silence is simple: lack of documents; the relevant files are still classified. This leads me to a more general point: I wish that Mazov had told us, his readers, about the state of the available documentation in the Russian archives on Soviet policy toward West Africa and the Congo.

My third interest – about Soviet relations with Cuba on West African matters – was, admittedly, parochial and not central to Mazov's story. I regret that he tells us nothing about it, but I don't feel that I have any solid ground for complaint.

Mazov offers instead four main case studies. In the early 1960s the "radical" countries of West Africa – indeed, of subSaharan Africa – were Guinea, Ghana and Mali, and it is on them that the Soviet Union focused. They are, with the Congo, Mazov's focus. For good measure, he adds the semi-comic story of the Soviet attempt in the mid and late 1950s to convince President William Tubman to accept a Soviet embassy in Liberia. As in the case of the Congo, Mazov's studies of Soviet relations with Guinea, Ghana and Mali end in 1963.

The most important Cold War battleground in the 1960s in Africa was the Congo, more exactly in 1960-62 and again in 1964-65. Mazov covers the first period.

I have some sympathy for Moscow's plight in the Congo. It faced a gallery of thugs. The Belgians, obviously, but also the United States of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy, intent on imposing their will in the Congo, whatever the cost for the Congolese people. Eisenhower did everything possible to unseat Patrice Lumumba and then plotted his murder, while Kennedy's excesses included refusing to intercede with Lumumba's

captors to spare his life.¹

Nikita Khrushchev violated the rules of the etiquette with his antics at the UN General Assembly in late 1960 when he lambasted the West's policy toward the Congo, but the frustration he felt at the sordid manipulations of the United States and its allies – bent on destroying Lumumba – was fully justified. Equally justified, though not elegantly phrased, were Khrushchev's aspersions of the UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who was in cahoots with the Americans. On September 6, UN troops took control of the radio station in Leopoldville and of the country's major airports to prevent Lumumba from regaining power. "Lumumba must be 'broken,'" Hammarskjöld told US ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.²

Against this array of rogues, there was little the Soviet Union could do. It lacked the means to deliver tangible support to Lumumba or to his successor, Antoine Gizenga. By far the best part of Mazov's discussion of Soviet policy in the Congo is his description of Moscow's futile efforts to assist the Gizenga government. This is new. Beyond this, Mazov adds details of lesser importance. This, I believe, must reflect the poverty of what is available in the Russian archives.

Perhaps to compensate, Mazov gives us an international history of the Congo crisis. Rather than simply focusing on Soviet policy, he devotes a large part of his account to the actions of the United States and other non-Soviet actors. In principle, this would be praiseworthy, but Mazov presents the well-known story in a rather pedestrian manner, and he has nothing new to add. Or rather, his "new" contribution is derived from the recently published memoir of Larry Devlin, the CIA station chief in the Congo, which Mazov uses indiscriminately.³ For example, Mazov writes that when Devlin received the order to assassinate Lumumba, he "was shocked. He believed that 'it was morally wrong for me or anyone under my orders to kill Lumumba, an act that I could not justify by any argument or rationalization.' He was convinced that 'the Congolese would solve the Lumumba problem themselves' by less drastic methods." (125) Mazov is quoting from Devlin's memoir, but why does he accept uncritically Devlin's pious self-description, rendered forty years after the fact?

Mazov's other case studies reflect the same strengths and weaknesses. Again, we have international history. The position of non-Soviet actors is given at great length, and Mazov adds nothing new. On Soviet policy, he offers many new details and some valuable information; again, I am sure, reflecting the state of declassification in the Russian archives.

¹ See Richard Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, 63-68

² "Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material reported to the President," Aug. 10, 1960, quoting Hammarskjöld to Lodge, WF, DDE Diary Ser., box 52, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

³ Larry Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67*, New York: Public Affairs, 2007.

Mazov includes an interesting discussion of the discrimination that Africans studying in the Soviet Union endured. He has good, solid documentation; arguably, this is the best section of *A Distant Front*. But it leaves me with one question. Given that in every other part of the book Mazov gave the non-Soviet side of the story at great length, why in this section did he focus on the Soviet Union alone? Why didn't he at least mention the discrimination suffered by Africans in the United States, the only state in the world other than South Africa, where people were denied the right to vote because of their color and where marriage between blacks and whites was a crime?

A Distant Front in the Cold War would have been a stronger book had Mazov been more modest. By padding his analysis of Soviet policy with rehashed international history, Mazov dilutes the contribution his book makes to our understanding of Soviet policy in West Africa and the Congo in the early 1960s.

In the mid-to-late 1950s while the Eisenhower administration ignored the emerging force of African nationalism, instead preferring to publically stand behind the colonial policies of its NATO allies (Suez aside), the Soviet Union, seeing Africa as the soft underbelly of imperialism and the Achilles Heel of the West, began to make vigorous efforts to expand its influence on the continent. Sergey Mazov's *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* fills a void in the literature of the Cold War in Africa through the author's unprecedented use of Russian archival research on Soviet-African relations during this time period.

The book focuses on case studies of Soviet relations with Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and the Congo. These were well selected case studies. Although Congo does not fit into the rest of the book geographically, its inclusion is important, not only because it was the focal point of the Cold War in Africa in the late 1950s/early 1960s, but also because it was a major factor in the bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and the West African states as well.

An interesting historiographical question that Mazov tackles is, when did the Cold War in Sub-Saharan Africa begin? The general consensus among historians of the Cold War in Africa is that it began with the Congo crisis of 1960. It may also be possible to point at the introduction of Soviet aid to Guinea in 1958 as an alternative starting point. But Mazov instead suggests that the superpower conflict first reached the continent in January 1956 when the Soviet Union attempted to open up diplomatic relations with Liberia. I must confess that when I first heard the author put forward this claim in a May 2002 presentation at the Woodrow Wilson International Center I was highly skeptical. After all, having consulted both U.S. and Liberian government documents, I know that there is nothing to suggest that either of those countries viewed the Cold War in Africa as having begun that early. Yet Mazov makes a persuasive argument that from the Soviet perspective, at least, the Cold War did come to Africa in January 1956 when the first official Soviet delegation to Sub-Saharan Africa visited Monrovia on the occasion of the inauguration festivities for Liberian President William Tubman.

While it was previously known that the Soviets had attempted to broker formal diplomatic relations with the Liberians on that occasion, based on U.S. and Liberian archival sources, it appeared as if the offer was rejected immediately by the Liberians without much consideration of Moscow's offer. Soviet documents, however, tell a different story. Mazov reveals how the Tubman regime initially showed a willingness to open relations with Moscow and that in fact on 12 January 1956 representatives of the Soviet and Liberian governments signed a joint communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. (38) The Liberians then spent the next four years dragging their feet over exchanging embassies. During this time the Liberians continuously misled the Soviets into believing that they would soon agree to formally open diplomatic relations, even going so far as to promise that Tubman would soon make a visit to the Soviet Union.

Mazov concludes, I believe correctly, that Monrovia never intended to open relations with Moscow and instead shrewdly used the Soviets as leverage for more aid from the United States. This is illustrated by the fact that Tubman told the U.S. ambassador that the Soviets offered Liberia economic aid when in reality no such offer appears in the Soviet archives. (36) Tubman also wrote to Eisenhower that “the Liberian government and people are not vacillating nor mercenary,” telling the American president that he would reject the Kremlin’s friendship even if it offered his regime \$100 million in aid (this is quite a statement given that U.S. aid to Liberia was only \$1.8 million that year).¹ The Liberians remained steadfastly committed to the United States even after Moscow supported Liberia’s candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Security Council while Washington instead backed Portugal (this was particularly galling to the Liberians since they had co-sponsored UN resolutions attacking Portuguese colonialism). However, Mazov errs when he refers to U.S. aid to Liberia as “massive and comprehensive” given the fact that it averaged only \$2.15 million per year from 1946-1960 and only a slightly better \$2.8 million per year during the Eisenhower administration.²

Frustratingly, Liberia disappears from the book after page 43. In Mazov’s account Soviet involvement with Liberia ends in December 1960 and formal diplomatic relations between the two countries were not established until 1972 following William Tubman’s death. However, I would have liked to have known what happened from 1961 onwards? Did the Soviets stop pursuing relations with Liberia? And if so, was it because they were frustrated by Tubman dragging his feet in exchanging diplomats? Or was it because once Moscow decided to align itself with the more radical leaders of the region such as Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Sékou Touré (Guinea), and Modibo Keita (Mali), relations with the conservative Tubman were seen as more of a liability than an asset to the Kremlin’s overall policy for the region?

Deciding when the Cold War in Africa began is ultimately in the eye of the beholder as to what constitutes “cold war.” I would argue that a prerequisite would be for the United States and Soviet Union to be actively engaged in competition with each other in order for a state of cold war to be in effect. I do not think that was not the case in Liberia in 1956 or Guinea in 1958 and therefore would place the beginning of the Cold War as 1960 in the Congo. Nevertheless, Mazov’s revelation that significant Soviet involvement in Africa began in 1956, earlier than previously believed, is one of the more valuable contributions of this book.

¹ Telegram from Liberian President William V. Tubman to President Dwight Eisenhower, 9 January 1956. See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Vol. XVIII, Africa*, (Washington: United States Department of State, 1989), 393-394 and Telegram from the American Embassy in Monrovia to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, 27 February 1957. General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives II, College Park, MD. Also see *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants [Greenbook] Database*. Rev. February 28, 2011. [Online]. Available: <http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>

² See *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants [Greenbook] Database*. Rev. February 28, 2011. [Online]. Available: <http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>. Analysis by author.

I would have liked to have seen a greater understanding of African agency during the period in which this book covers. An important point Mazov misses is that Guinea, Mali, and Ghana became Soviet allies at African initiative. That is not to say that the Soviets did not want the relationships or that it was not primarily Moscow courting African states and not vice versa. But the reason Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Egypt, and Morocco became aligned with the Soviet Union while say Liberia, Congo, Ivory Coast, and Senegal did not was ultimately because of choices made in African capitals. It was Africans themselves who decided their Cold War orientation—both Moscow and Washington were essentially willing to accept any potential ally who would accept them irrespective of that regime's political or economic outlook or strategic value. If Ivory Coast had expressed an interest in a close relationship with Moscow the Soviets almost certainly would have responded favorably.

This relates to another of the four historiographical questions that Mazov sets off to answer in his work, whether or not the Kremlin had a “master plan” for expanding Soviet influence on the continent. Mazov demonstrates that clearly there was no such plan, rather Soviet policy towards Africa was reactive. The USSR gained influence in Egypt when it replaced the U.S. in constructing the Aswan Dam; in Guinea after the French completely pulled out of the country following its decision to leave the French Republic; in Congo after both the U.S. and the United Nations refused to provide Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba with adequate support to put down the secessions in Katanga and Kasai; and in Mali after the French fell out of favor for their perceived role in breaking up the Mali Federation. The Soviets were not driving events in any of these countries but simply taking advantage of the failures of their Western adversaries.

The third of the primary questions tackled in this book is whether Soviet policy towards West Africa and Congo were driven primarily by ideological or security concerns. Mazov concludes that while most past scholarship has portrayed Soviet involvement in the region as “a model of ideology-dominated policy when the national interest had to be sacrificed for the support of ideologically close regimes, whereas policy toward ‘moderate’ states (i.e., states oriented to the West) was pragmatic and based on the national interest....this dichotomy seems to be artificial. Considerations of security and ideology had to be more balanced.” (252) Mazov puts this “dichotomy” in the proper perspective. For while the fact that Touré, Lumumba, Nkrumah, and Keita considered themselves socialists and frequently made anti-American or anti-Western statements that helped endear them to the Kremlin, the fact is they were not communists and in truth communist parties were banned in their countries. Meanwhile the fact that Liberia's William Tubman was on the far right in the spectrum of African nationalism and a strong proponent of U.S. modeled capitalism did nothing to dissuade Moscow from making intense efforts to form relations with his state. “The confrontation with the West was the chief criterion for procuring Soviet allies in West Africa” Mazov correctly asserts. (252) Although he is also correct in adding that an African state's ideological or economical outlook was not irrelevant as Moscow was likely to make a greater investment in countries it deemed more aligned with its own vision of the world.

Mazov's treatment of Soviet policy toward Sékou Touré's regime in Guinea is particularly enlightening. Guinea was the first country in Africa in which the Soviet Union got a solid

foothold. As a result, the Eisenhower administration labeled Touré a communist beyond redemption after he accepted aid from the Soviet bloc. From Washington's perspective Guinea had become the Kremlin's "African Cuba"—a bridgehead from which it would expand its influence elsewhere throughout the continent. Mazov notes that Guinea was indeed atop the USSR's "priority list" of African countries, but in fact Soviet penetration into the country was not nearly as deep as Washington believed. In fact, Soviet influence was almost non-existent outside the capital of Conakry. By the end of 1959 educational exchanges amounted to only thirty-five Guinean students studying in the Soviet Union and twelve Soviet lecturers teaching at Guinean lyceums. Even more important, Touré denied a Soviet request to open a permanent cultural exhibition in the capital while allowing the United States essentially to do so informally.

Touré's fear of overwhelming Soviet influence in his country ultimately manifested itself in the 'Solod affair' of December 1961 when the Soviet ambassador to Guinea, Daniel Solod, was declared *persona non grata* and asked to leave the country. This became an important turning point in Guinea's Cold War orientation as afterwards Conakry moved increasingly closer towards Washington and away from Moscow. This culminated in Touré's support of the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis when he denied Moscow the right to use Conakry airport (which the Soviets had just finished building only two months earlier) as a proposed refueling stop for a USSR-Conakry-Havana airlift to circumvent the U.S. quarantine around Cuba.³

Mazov concludes that there were no grounds for Solod's expulsion and that the affair was either a misunderstanding or more likely manufactured by the Guineans to facilitate a turn to the West. This may very well be the case, but he only cites the opinion of the American ambassador and a French journalist to substantiate this. This reader would have liked to have seen Mazov shed more light on the Solod affair by discussing the internal Soviet reaction to his dismissal, or at the very least discuss what types of activities the Soviet ambassador *was* involved in with the Guinean students whom he was alleged to have attempted to convert into pro-Soviet dissidents.

The Soviets did, however, draw important lessons from their Guinean experience. After they were supplanted by the U.S. in Conakry Moscow reflected back on its failures in courting Touré's regime. This resulted in what Mazov terms the "Guinean syndrome"—which caused the USSR to take a more cautious and pragmatic approach towards investing heavily in dubious African allies.

Ultimately the Soviet Union's failure to achieve long term success in West Africa stemmed from a combination of Soviet missteps, American countermeasures to Soviet influence, and African desires to remain neutral in the Cold War. While Mazov recognizes this, in addressing the fourth question of his study, "Were external actors or the USSR's own miscalculations and blunders the decisive factors in its setbacks?" he ultimately concludes

³ For more on the role of Africa during the Cuban Missile Crisis see, Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

that “Soviet plans were poorly conceived and unrealistic, and their implementation failed, mainly due to Soviet miscalculations.” (255)

While Moscow’s own shortfalls certainly did hurt Soviet African policy, greater credit should be given to the activism of the Kennedy administration in pursuing close relations with African nationalist leaders. After all, what is the biggest differential variable between 1956-1960 when Soviet influence in West Africa was on the rise and 1961-1964 when it stagnated and declined? I would argue that it was the change in U.S. foreign policy from an Eisenhower administration which had very little interest in Africa to a Kennedy administration which believed that the Cold War could be won or lost on the continent. It was simply easier for the Soviets to have success when competing against an indifferent Eisenhower administration shackled with the stigma of alliances with the European colonial powers than it was against an activist Kennedy administration which distanced itself from the African policies of its NATO allies.⁴

A weakness of Mazov’s work is his exclusive reliance on the records at National Archives II to tell the U.S. side of the story. Archival work at the Eisenhower and Kennedy Presidential Libraries would have allowed the author a clearer picture of U.S. policies and strategies, particularly during the Kennedy administration when African policy was more concentrated in the White House with the National Security Council than it was in the State Department. Nevertheless, this is a small complaint given that the focus of Mazov’s book is to explain and analyze Soviet, rather than US, policy.

These minor criticisms aside, *A Distant Front in the Cold War* makes an important contribution to the historiography of the Cold War in Africa. It is the most comprehensive and authoritative study of Soviet policy towards Guinea and Ghana, and to this author’s knowledge the *only* study of Soviet policy towards Liberia and Mali. Mazov’s work adds greatly to our understanding of Soviet policy towards West Africa and the Third World more broadly, and will serve as a valuable springboard for future research into Moscow’s involvement with Africa. Hopefully with the opening of additional Soviet archives and branching out in areas not covered by this book, future historians can build upon the significant foundation for the study of Soviet-African relations that Mazov has left us with this book.

⁴ See Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans*.

Sergey Mazov and I met at an international conference on the Cold War and the Congo Crisis, organized by the Cold War International History Project and the Africa Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and held in Washington, DC on 23-24 September 2004. In introducing the discussion on the special meeting of the Congolese Parliament at Lovanium University that resulted in the formation of the post-Lumumba government headed by Cyrille Adoula, I referred to a self-congratulatory statement by a U.S. Embassy official quoted by Stephen Weissman in his book *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* to the effect that the whole process was “really a U.S. operation but using outstanding UN personalities.”¹ Lawrence Devlin, the man who served as the CIA station chief in the Congo at the time, interjected derisively that this conclusion was “utter nonsense.”

While Devlin could understandably be expected to deny U.S. manipulation of the UN to achieve American policy goals, Sergey Mazov shows in this comprehensive survey of U.S.-Soviet confrontation in the Congo between 1960 and 1964 that U.S. policymakers had every reason to congratulate themselves for politically shaping the post-Lumumba Congo in a way that minimized, if not eliminated, any chances of Soviet penetration in Central Africa. Having collaborated with Belgium and moderate Congolese political leaders to assassinate Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected prime minister of the Congo, the United States proceeded to politically neutralize Lumumba’s followers and political allies, who were led by Antoine Gizenga, Christophe Gbenye, and Pierre Mulele.

The reason for this American triumph over Nikita Khrushchev and the USSR establishment is widely applicable beyond the Congo to other African countries, particularly the three West African states under the rule of radical leaders: Ahmed Sekou Touré’s Guinea, Kwame Nkrumah’s Ghana, and Modibo Keita’s Mali. Mazov’s conclusion on the Soviet failure in the face of a comprehensive and well-coordinated U.S. strategy for counteracting the “Communist penetration” is worth quoting: “In West Africa and the Congo, the Americans challenged the Soviets in every sphere – political, diplomatic, economic, social, and military – and their countermeasures and preemptive steps helped to frustrate Soviet plans. Moreover, the Soviet plans were poorly conceived and unrealistic, and their implementation failed, mainly due to Soviet miscalculations” (255).

This is a major strength of this book, namely, its ability to state the author’s argument so clearly and to back it up with a rich array of documents from U.S. and Soviet archives. Unfortunately, and this is not the author’s fault, the most sensitive archives from the major political organs of the Soviet Union are not yet available to the public. It would indeed be most interesting to see to what extent Soviet officials subjected their misconceptions of Africa and their policy miscalculations to self criticism. Were they capable of listening to

¹ Stephen Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-64* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 147.

knowledgeable Soviet academics? Did the latter feel sufficiently free to go beyond established dogmas to provide a more accurate understanding of the African realities? These are some of the questions that may help to further elucidate Soviet policy toward the new states of Tropical Africa.

Another major strength of Mazov's book is the author's recognition of African agency. Some of the most interesting passages of the book clearly show how African leaders took advantage of the Cold War to optimize their gains in economic assistance from both East and West. A very simplistic view, even among Africans, is the analogy of the Cold War to two African elephants fighting, with the result being the grass that is destroyed. The reality is that African leaders were not passive witnesses or victims of the Cold war confrontation. Even in the case of Lumumba, whose assassination may be interpreted in this fashion, there remains the fact that he could not have been murdered without the complicity of his Congolese political rivals. Without African collaboration, the original American and Belgian assassination plots remained non-starters.

Mazov is therefore correct in stating that "in dealing with the USSR and the United States, the leaders of Ghana, Guinea, Mali and the Congo showed themselves to be historical actors with their own agendas, not mere pawns of the superpowers" (256). Sekou Touré wanted support in reversing the economic damage done to his country by France's retaliation for Guinea's radical break from the French empire. Nkrumah's main obsession was to build the Akosombo Dam on the Volta River as the basis for the industrialization of Ghana. And Modibo Keita was determined to show that socialism, as autonomously defined and conceived by Malians, would prove to be a better path to development than the capitalist and French-dependent system chosen by his rival, President Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal. As for Lumumba, his single and overriding goal was to preserve the unity of the Congo against the anti-patriotic designs of the secessionist regimes supported by the Belgians in the provinces of Katanga and South Kasai.

Having extolled the strengths of Sergey Mazov's book, I now turn to a critique of its weakest part: his discussion of the Congo crisis in Chapter 2. My critique will focus on the author's failure to address in a satisfactory manner the critical issue of how the United Nations Organization was used as a tool of U.S. policy in the Congo.

Mazov devotes so much attention to a critique of Khrushchev's hostility toward UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld that he seems to ignore the collective responsibility of the UN Secretariat under Hammarskjöld and his American associates (Ralph Bunche, his deputy; Andrew Cordier, his executive assistant; and Heinrich Wieschhoff, his *éminence grise*) in Lumumba's demise. As I have shown elsewhere, the secretary general and the Western members of his staff who dealt with the Congo question "shared a common Cold War outlook with Western policymakers, and saw their mission in the Congo as that of preserving the then existing balance of forces in the world."² Evidence from the memoirs

² Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2002), 114.

of two non-Western diplomats who had great admiration for Hammarskjöld and from UN archives, which I have consulted, clearly reveals the secretary general's pro-West bias. Thomas Kanza, the first Congolese representative at the UN writes that Hammarskjöld "believed that the West had a sacred mission towards Africa in general, and especially the Congo."³ In the promotion and defense of this mission, Hammarskjöld wrote in a cable of 15 August 1960 from Léopoldville (now Kinshasa) to his executive assistant Cordier in New York that "the Congo should not be permitted to become a Korea, nor should it become a Hungary – or a Munich."⁴ The second diplomat to reveal Hammarskjöld's pro-West bias is Rajeshwar Dayal, an Indian who served as special representative of the secretary general in the Congo, who reported how his boss excluded Georgyi Arkad'ev, the undersecretary general for political affairs and a Soviet citizen, from all Congo discussions.⁵ Mazov is aware of this exclusion and of the American monopoly in the UN Secretariat's Congo Club (in which the Congo files were kept by Arkad'ev's US assistant), but he does not draw the logical conclusion of UN collusion with U.S. policy.

There is no doubt that in the conflicting interpretations of the original Security Council resolution establishing the UN peacekeeping mission, it is Lumumba, and not Hammarskjöld, who had the correct reading of the UN mandate. According to that resolution, the Council directed the secretary general to provide military assistance to the Congolese government to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian troops from the Congo, to end the Katanga secession, and to restore law and order throughout the country. It also directed him to provide technical assistance to the government to ensure the smooth running of essential services.

With U.S. and Western support, Hammarskjöld chose to ignore the first part of the mandate, except the restoration of law and order, and to concentrate on the second, which corresponded to his grandiose vision of UN role in global governance. He refused to expel Belgian troops from the Congo and to send UN troops into the Katanga province, arguing that the secession was an internal matter. With the rebel authorities in Katanga using Belgian troops and white mercenaries to repress all those who were opposed to the secession, why would the UN ignore issues of law and order in Katanga when it was dealing with similar issues in other provinces? Moreover, if the Katanga secession was an internal matter for which UN action was not needed, why did Hammarskjöld see it proper to interfere in the clearly internal dispute between Prime Minister Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu by closing down the national radio station? Hammarskjöld and his aides

³ Thomas Kanza, *Conflict in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1972), 220.

⁴ For this and other statements by the secretary general and Bunche, see Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, "Ralph Bunche, Patrice Lumumba, and the First Congo Crisis," in Robert A. Hill and Edmund J. Keller (eds.) *Trustee for the Human Community: Ralph J. Bunche, the United Nations, and the Decolonization of Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 148-157.

⁵ Rajeshwar Dayal, *Mission for Hammarskjöld: The Congo Crisis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 308.

knew very well that they were depriving Lumumba of the ability to use the radio to keep his popular support. Kasavubu, on the other hand, could cross the river and use the Brazzaville radio, which was under the control of a president with whom he shared the same ethnicity.

Thus, while he advised his associates not to appear as though they were out “to get Lumumba,” the secretary general was very clever in using his prestige to advance the Cold War agenda in the Congo. Like Bunche, who was hostile to radical pan-Africanism, Hammarskjöld described Nkrumah’s pan-African vision and unification project as an “African Hitler-Mussolini drive.”⁶ Willingly or unwillingly, the secretary general and his entourage provided to those seeking Lumumba’s demise, and U.S. policymakers in particular, the justification and the opportunities they needed to remove a democratically elected leader from office by illegal means, and to kill him.

Finally, there are a number of factual errors in this chapter, but I will address one of them only. There is an erroneous assertion made on pages 113 and 126 that Stanleyville (now Kisangani) was Lumumba’s “tribal” base. This is most shocking, because Mazov should know that Lumumba was the only major Congolese political leader with a national following, and no ethnically or regionally based political party. Lumumba was an Atetela from the Sankuru District of Eastern Kasai, which is far away from Kisangani. That his political base was located in an area other than his own ethnic homeland is one of the facts that established him as a truly national figure and the Congo’s most distinguished patriot.

⁶ Hammarskjöld to Cordier, Cable of 15 August 1960 (UN Archives, New York, File B472)

The book by Dr. Sergey Mazov of the Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences is really a profound and pioneering academic work. Not much has been written so far on Soviet policy towards West Africa and even less on its policy towards the Congo. A specific feature of his book is the meticulous use of practically all accessible archive materials, in Russia and the USA.

Mazov was lucky to have an opportunity to work in the RGANI (Russian State Archive of Contemporary History) in the 1990s, and he often refers to documents that are not accessible to researchers any more. Thus, documents stored in Collection (Fond) 5, that is, of the CPSU International Department and its predecessors are nowadays accessible only up to 1957; the famous “thirty year” rule is in reality fifty-four!

The structure of the book by and large looks logical. It is divided into four chapters (though unequal in their size) on a chronological principle.. It traces the establishment of the relations between Moscow and several countries of West Africa – Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali – and Soviet activities in the region in the second half of the 1950s and in the early 1960s. However, with reference to Chapter 4 – “The Struggle for the Souls of the West African Elite, 1963-1964” – this principle looks somewhat ‘absolutised,’ because that ‘struggle’ cannot be limited to these two years. After all, as Mazov mentions himself, the training of Africans in various fields began in the USSR several years earlier.

In the Introduction to his book Mazov puts forward several questions about Soviet policy in West Africa and Congo: when did the Cold War in Sub-Saharan Africa begin, did the USSR have a special “master plan” for the continent, what was the balance between Soviet security and ideological imperatives, and were external factors or the USSR’s own miscalculations the decisive factors in its setbacks?

In the first chapter – “Building Bridges, 1956-1959” Mazov not only describes Moscow’s efforts to establish relations with Liberia and newly independent countries of West Africa – Ghana and Guinea -- but also looks at a broader issue: “Did Khrushchev have a special African strategy?” He concludes that “there was no document specifying an established Soviet African doctrine per se,” (16) but discusses several Soviet documents on Africa, adopted in the late 1950s (16-19).

Mazov shows how Soviet plans to establish the embassy in Liberia, then the only independent country in West Africa, were thwarted by Washington’s efforts, including a special message sent by Eisenhower to Liberian President William Tubman (38). This method was also used in the case of Ghana when the U.S. prompted Tubman to send a relevant letter to Kwame Nkrumah (45). On the other hand Mazov explains how skillfully Nkrumah “always linked the issue of Soviet-Ghanaian relations to that of American aid in financing Volta River Project” (49). A year and a half elapsed between reaching the agreement and the opening of the USSR Embassy in Accra (50).

A different situation developed in Guinea, where independence achieved in November 1957 was accompanied by a boycott by France and (initially) its allies. The USSR Embassy was established soon after (66), and a number of agreements signed. In his assessment of Moscow's attitude to Guinea at that time Mazov claims that Soviet leaders "were delighted with the fact that at last a worthy strategic ally had been found in Sub-Saharan Africa." (74) However the term "ally" (which, by the way, Mazov often applies to Moscow's partners in other chapters of the book as well) was hardly used in the Soviet vocabulary with reference to African countries.

In any case, As explained by Mazov in Chapter 2 "Achievements and Failures in the "Year of Africa, 1960," "danger signals," such as delay in opening of the Soviet cultural centre, appeared soon (136); though, according to Mazov, they were not yet "considered by Moscow as threats to the Soviet positions in Guinea" (137).

In this chapter Mazov speaks about Moscow's "rapprochement with Ghana" (130-147), but the bulk of it is naturally devoted to the Congo crisis. Moreover, the Congo story occupies a considerable part of Chapter 3 as well – "Seeking More Pragmatic Approaches, 1961-1962."

Explaining in detail the process of establishing and developing of Moscow's relations with Congolese nationalists, Mazov rightly points out that the Soviet Union "was very cautious in offering aid to Congolese political organizations and leaders" (86). He painstakingly considers many Soviet (as well as American) documents on Moscow's policy and practical actions during the crisis. (Perhaps, only one significant document did not come to his attention – notes on Antoine Gizenga's visit to Moscow in early 1960, accessible at the GARF – State Archive of the Russian Federation).

It is very difficult to paint a full picture of the Soviet involvement in Congo, the country which, as Mazov correctly says, "was destined to become the first 'hot spot' of the Cold War in Sub-Saharan Africa, ushering in an era of U.S. and Soviet military involvement in the region." (77)The reason is an absolute absence of accessible archival documents of the USSR Ministry of Defence (and the KGB as well). However, in the opinion of the reviewer, Mazov's book nevertheless analyses these developments more deeply, broadly, and objectively than any other one published in Russia or in the West.

To be fair, Mazov perhaps underestimates Moscow's intention to support Gizenga and his government in Stanleyville in 1961. The fact that his envoy Pierre Mulele had discussions in Moscow not only with Soviet diplomats, but with Defence Minister Marshal Rodion Malinovsky (167), speaks for itself.

But Mazov is right to say that practical support for Gizenga, especially in the military field, was impossible due to the lack of consent from African countries, especially Sudan. The same applies to his comment that Moscow "had failed to enlist the Afro-Asian Bloc's support in the UN for voting on the key resolutions about the Congo...." (127)

(It may be added that unfortunately recent events show once again the lack of consistency in the policy of African states: by supporting a notorious resolution on Libya in the Security

Council, three of them gave their “blessing” to a Western “coalition”/NATO to attack a sovereign African country.)

However the reviewer can hardly agree with Mazov’s (rather gloomy) general conclusion on the Congolese story. For example, he writes: “The assassination of Lumumba was a heavy blow to the prestige of the Soviet Union.” (165) Meanwhile in the eyes of many in Africa it was, on the contrary, “a heavy blow” to the prestige of Washington and its allies. (The reviewer was an eye-witness of the reaction to this crime in an African country, Egypt).

Mazov even calls “the Soviet defeat” in Congo “crushing and humiliating.” (181) In contrast, it can rather be called a moral victory: Moscow supported those in Congo, who stood for its genuine independence and its stand was highly appreciated. Ben Amathila, one of the founders of SWAPO, the ruling party in Namibia, said at a recent conference in Moscow: “Again, the demonstration that the Soviet Union was ready to intervene and rescue the weaker in Africa did not miss our attention. Two of my colleagues in Namibia in 1961 during the Congo crisis, recognizing the potential the Soviet Union has, sent a telegram to Mr. Khrushchev to send troops to Namibia...”¹ As naïve as this request may be, it shows the appreciation of Moscow’s role.

Meanwhile the U.S. “victory” in the Congo resulted in over three decades of Joseph Mobutu’s ruthless dictatorship. When finally he was overthrown and had to flee the Congo, Laurent-Desire Kabila, one of the Lumumbists, became its head of state. Moreover, after the democratic general election held in 2006 none other than Antoine Gizenga became Prime Minister. After his resignation due to advanced age, Gizenga was designated as National Hero, the DRC’s highest honor.

In his conclusion Mazov correctly states that “Soviet policy toward West Africa and the Congo was a complicated synthesis of ideological and security considerations.” (254) He is also right to say that “Africans were not passive witnesses or victims in the Cold War contest.” (256)

However here Mazov also expresses rather controversial views. True, Soviet policy in West Africa suffered a number of failures and Mazov rightly reminds us about the expulsion of the Soviet Ambassador from Conakry in December 1961 (257). Yet he himself admits that five years later “the American Ambassador...shared the same lot.” (257) Mazov is also correct when he mentions earlier that during the Caribbean crisis in 1962 Moscow was not allowed to use the Conakry airport, built with its assistance, but we should remember that this very airport later, in 1975, played a vital role in the Soviet air bridge to Luanda.

¹ 50 let Goda Afriki. Sudby natsionalno-osvoboditelnyh dvizheni: Vzglyad iz Afriki, Rossii i Zapadnoi Evropy. [50 years of the Africa Year. Destiny of national liberation movements: View from Africa, Russia and Western Europe], Moscow, 2011, 192.

It is hard to agree with Mazov that Nkrumah took “the East’s side in the Cold War” (257), even if his anti-imperialist rhetoric contributed to the Western support of those forces which ousted him in 1966 in a bloody coup. However we should not forget that he, rather than the coup-makers, is regarded as a national hero in Ghana nowadays.

Besides, in the case of Sudan, the situation also changed to the better and in 1964-1965 its government provided both airspace and airfields for Soviet transport An-12 planes which delivered supplies to Congo rebels under Algerian flags.

The book is also not free of some minor mistakes, or, may one say, “slips of the pen.” Thus, South-Africa-born Colin Legum can be hardly called “the authoritative British Africanist” (15-16); having lived in the UK for decades he asserted that he had never become “an assimilated Englishman.” Besides, for a Russian reader, the text looks too Westernized; for example, when the Soviets are called “Russians” even if the head of the USSR delegation was a Tajik.(88)

Perhaps one more comment is in order. Mazov’s hard work in the archives deserves great praise. At the same time his study would be enhanced if he had interviewed the remaining Soviet witness-participants in those events, such as Marshal Victor Kulikov, who, as a young general came to Ghana at Nkrumah’s request in early 1961.

All these comments notwithstanding, Mazov’s book is an extremely valuable product of many years of hard work, and should be read by everybody who is interested in Africa’s history and politics, as well as in the history of the Cold War.

**Author's Response by Sergey Mazov, Chief Research Fellow at the Institute of World History,
Russian Academy of Sciences**

I am extremely grateful to the H-Diplo roundtable organizers, especially Thomas Maddux, for having selected my book to be reviewed in such a representative forum of qualified and authoritative experts. It is a privilege to offer my response to comprehensive, thorough and thoughtful reviews by Piero Gleijeses, Phil Muehlenbeck, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja and Vladimir Shubin.

All four of the reviewers actually agree with the core arguments and conclusions in *A Distant Front in the Cold War*. And I also accept most of their criticism for it derives primarily from the state of the available documentation in the Russian archives on Soviet policy toward West Africa and the Congo. My work reflects the brilliance and poverty of Russian archival collections not sealed from scholars and in this way it is exposed to justified critique.

All archival items on Soviet military and other assistance to Sub-Saharan guerilla movements remain classified, since the “thirty year” rule does not work for them (and unfortunately not only for them). It is impossible, for example, to obtain documents concerning military assistance to the legitimate African governments. That is the reason for my “inattention” to the Soviet response to the Simba revolt in the Congo and Soviet relations with PAIGC in the former Portuguese Guinea. I share Gleijeses’ view that this is “a glaring omission”, but I have only to regret with the reviewer my inability to reveal the Soviet role in these movements to complement his excellent works.¹

Inaccessibility of certain categories of archival documents caused another shortcoming of the book – the unbalance between “details of lesser importance” (Gleijeses) and information on salient issues, e.g. Nikita Khrushchev’s meetings with African leaders or the decisions of the supreme body of the Communist Party, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU) Presidium. The records of the meetings remain classified. It is a sensitive lacuna, for the narrative uses archival documents on the surrounding context but then falls back upon public statements or later memoirs for the actual summits. It cost me a lot of effort to obtain two of the Presidium’s resolutions in the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (Rosyiskiy gosudarstvennyi archiv noveisheyi istorii, RGANI), the former archive of the CC CPSU.² My special request was met

¹ Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002); *Idem*. “Flee! The White Giants Are Coming’: The United States, Mercenaries and the Congo, 1964-1965,” in *Empire and Revolution: the United States and the Third World since 1945*, eds. Peter L. Hahn, Mary Ann Heiss (Ohio State University Press, 2001).

² RGANI, f. 3, op. 14, d. 354, l. 73-77. Decree of the CC CPSU “On the Extension of Cultural and Public Relations with the Negro Peoples of Africa and the Strengthening of the Influence of the Soviet Union on these Peoples”. From Protocol no 260 of the CC CPSU Presidium of January 20, 1960; *Ibid.*, f. 3, op. 14, d. 304, l. 12-13. Decree of the CC CPSU “On the Establishment of the Africa Institute in the USSR Academy of Sciences”. Protocol № 226, point XXII of the meeting of the CC CPSU Presidium, 2 July 1960.

only after I had found mention of them in other documents and could prove that they actually did exist.

The reviewers rightly argue that my study doesn't evenly cover the period (1956-1964) that the book purports to discuss. Again I was limited by the unavailability of Soviet archival documents. There was the first wave of declassification in the Russian archives in 1992-1993 but due to the "thirty year rule" it did not touch the year of 1964. The second wave has not yet come,

and the declassification process is moving at a snail's pace for various reasons. No new significant documents on Soviet policy in West Africa and the Congo have been declassified during the last eighteen years. On the contrary, "reclassification" has been carried out. Several collections of documents crucial for my study stored in the RGANI have been sealed off. Professor Shubin laments in regard to the Collection of the CPSU International Department that the "famous 'thirty year' rule is in reality fifty-four". Inventories of materials from the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Archiv vneshnei politiki Rossyiskoi Federatsii, AVP RF) have been removed from the reading room and the staff is free to give you only originally unclassified documents mostly of little use. Together with Muehlenbeck I would have liked to have known what happened in Soviet-Liberian relations from 1961 onwards, but failed to obtain declassified materials.

It is not the desire "to compensate...the poverty of what is available in the Russian archives" (Gleijeses) that led me to write an international history. It is impossible "to simply focus" on Soviet policy for it was often reactive. As a Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington in 2003, I was impressed by the efforts of the researchers involved in the Project to create a real international history of the Cold War. My intention to examine the Soviet-U.S.-African triangle of relations that evolved with respect to West Africa and the Congo became stronger after reading a dissertation by Lise Namikas, the only researcher of the Congo crisis who used to work extensively in the U.S. and Russian archives.³ I tried to pay equal attention to studying both the African and Western sides of this triangular. According to Nzungola-Ntalaja "the author's recognition of African agency" is one of the major strengths of the book.

It is different with respect to my interpretation of the Western position in the triangle. The reviewers rightly assert that my exclusive reliance on the records of the National Archives and the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress is a weakness of the book. There is no doubt that "archival work at Eisenhower and Kennedy Presidential Libraries would have allowed the author a clearer picture of U.S. policies and strategies" (Muehlenbeck). If I had consulted the UN archives, I would have addressed in a more articulate manner "the critical issue of how the United Nations Organization was used as a tool of U.S. policy in the Congo" (Nzungola-Ntalaja). While working in the U.S. archives I was delighted by the abundance and high quality of declassified documents there in comparison with the

³ Lise Namikas, "Battleground Africa: The Cold War and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1965," unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2002.

relative poverty of the Russian archives. I was consumed with archival work... but my scholarship in the CWIHP lasted only about four months, not enough time to cover even the two archives.

It is true that my study of non-Soviet actors is incomplete and sometimes controversial. However, Gleijeses' verdict that it is nothing more than "rehashed international history" which "dilutes" the contribution the book makes to our understanding of Soviet policy seems to me groundless. My international history builds up a better understanding of Soviet plans and conduct in West Africa and the Congo.

I wonder what Gleijeses found "semi-comic" in the Soviet failed attempt to open up diplomatic relations with Liberia in 1956. I decided to reveal this story for two reasons. Firstly, no author has discussed it. Secondly, as Muehlenbeck correctly observed, it critically contributes to clarifying an interesting and debatable historiographical question about the time the Cold War in Sub-Saharan Africa actually began.

I agree with Shubin that I should have interviewed the Soviet witness-participants. Their evidence can partially fill a substantial gap in the available documentation when a vast array of materials on Soviet policy toward West Africa and the Congo remains classified.

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