

History

International Armed Conflicts in the Final Stage of the Cold War (1975-1990) and Subsequent Period (1991-2005)

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The research is focused on the armed conflicts that were the object of a great confrontation between the West and the East during the last 15 years of the Cold War (1975-1990) and underwent various transformations in the subsequent period (1991-2005). According to different data, nearly the same number of armed conflicts took place in the world during the mentioned periods. From 1975 to 1990 there were 35 to 40 intrastate and 15 interstate armed conflicts going on in the world. 20 intrastate and 8 interstate armed conflicts started and ended before 1990, the rest of them continued even after the Cold War. 9 of intrastate and 4 of interstate armed conflicts were resolved before the end of the 20th century. Based on the same databases, more than half of the 40 armed conflicts in 1991-2005 de-escalated in a short period of time. The analysis of the international situation in the periods indicated in the article, as well as the study of individual cases of armed conflicts (Nicaragua, Angola, Israel-Palestine, Iraq-Iran), revealed certain trends in the transformation of these conflicts. © 2023 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Cold War, armed conflict, intrastate or interstate conflict, transformation

Ideological confrontation between the communist camp and the Western countries is considered one of the main reasons for the emergence of armed conflicts in the world during the Cold War period. Soviet expansionism was based on the ideology of Proletarian and Communist Solidarity, which allowed Moscow to interfere in the internal affairs of various states. As for the Western camp, led by the USA, it openly declared its support for democratic forces in any part of the world, including communist countries, which was

considered as “imperialist policy” by the USSR. The “clash” of these two ideologies, along with many other factors, created the background for violent conflicts in various regions of the world [1].

The rivalry in the Cold War was accompanied by the so-called “Proxy Wars”. Armed conflicts in the so-called Third World took place between countries as well as within states. “Big players” were behind these conflicts.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War created a feeling that armed conflicts

based on ideology would be a thing of the past, and liberal political regimes would be universally established in the future world. This vision served as the foundation of Francis Fukuyama's famous thesis about the "The End of History". The error of the indicated vision was later admitted by its author [2].

As for large-scale conflicts of the Cold War period, after the collapse of the Soviet Union some former satellites and supporters of Moscow rejected Marxism-Leninism and led the fight for power with other ideological principles. This clearly demonstrated, that ideology is often only a cover for group or personal interests [3].

From 1975 to 1990 there were 35 to 40 intrastate and 15 interstate armed conflicts going on in the world [4,5]. 20 intrastate and 8 interstate armed conflicts started and ended before 1990, the rest of them continued even after the Cold War. 9 of intrastate and 4 of interstate armed conflicts were resolved before the end of the 20th century [6]. Based on the same databases, more than half of the 40 armed conflicts in 1991-2005 deescalated in a short period of time [7].

In 1975-1990, the Cold War influenced most of the internationalized armed conflicts. The direct or indirect involvement of the "big players" in armed conflicts was most obvious in the regions of Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Central America. This phenomenon is explained by the proximity of these geographical areas to the spheres of influence of the USA and the Soviet Union, and consequently by their strategic value. However, the African continent has always been considered as a geopolitical target as well.

In the Central American region, the characteristics of the Cold War were most clearly revealed in the armed conflict in Nicaragua that claimed the lives of approximately 50,000 people.

The military conflict of the 1980s in this country has a long history related to the nearly 50-year repressive rule of the Somoza family and the fight of the country's democratic forces against it. This fight was somewhat anti-American for many

years, and it was associated with the name of Augusto Sandino, a revolutionary of the 1920-1930. Dictator Anastasio Somoza was notorious for his anti-communist attitude, which was the reason he enjoyed support from Washington, according to the logic of the Cold War. The famous phrase attributed to Franklin Roosevelt was addressed to Somoza in 1939: "Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch" [8]. This phrase is a quintessence of the criteria for selecting allies during the Cold War. Anastasio ("Tachito") Somoza Debayle, the son of Somoza and the dictator of Nicaragua until 1979, benefited from the same USA support.

Since 1977, US President Jimmy Carter's foreign policy emphasis on the principles of human rights protection resulted in the deterioration of relations between Washington and the right-wing anti-communist regimes in Central America and, consequently, the weakening of the latter. In Nicaragua, a broad coalition led by the "Sandinistas" took advantage of this situation and in 1979 they overthrew the Somoza regime through an armed rebellion. The rise of Marxist political groups, supported by Moscow and communist Cuba, was perceived by Washington as the emergence of another Soviet satellite regime on the American continent and as a serious security challenge. In 1982, Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega paid an official visit to the USSR and came to Georgia as well. In Tbilisi he gave an emotional speech about the socialist future of Nicaragua [9].

Ronald Reagan, the 40th president of the USA (1981-1989), was focused on the fight against the Soviet Union and its "clients". Supported by Washington the armed groups of "Contras" intensified guerrilla warfare against Sandinista's regime.

Soviet "Perestroika" and waning Kremlin support forced the Sandinista government to sign an agreement with the opposition in 1988 that called for an end to the armed conflict and sweeping political reforms. In accordance with the agreement, presidential and national assembly elections

were held in Nicaragua in 1990, in which the National Opposition Union won.

In 2006, Daniel Ortega won the elections again, but this time not with Marxist slogans, but with a left-wing nationalistic program. The campaign against US policy was an important part of this program and ideology, which traditionally has many supporters in Central America.

Daniel Ortega remains the head of the country till today, and his wife is the vice president. Inside and outside the country, Ortega is strongly criticized for his usurpation of power and anti-democratic governance. That's probably why the refrain: "Ortega y Somoza son la misma cosa" ("Ortega and Somoza are the same!") became popular. Elements of armed opposition groups have re-emerged in Nicaragua.

Official Managua recognized the "independence" of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region in 2008. It has a special relationship with Moscow.

The case of Nicaragua demonstrates that after the triumph over Somoza's dictatorship there was a transformation of the new revolutionary power towards authoritarianism supported by the Soviet Union. After the end of the Cold War, from 1990 to 2006, Nicaragua experienced the rule of the center-right liberal forces. But since Ortega's return to the presidency in 2006, the country jumped off the track of democratic development and this creates the danger of new violence.

The number of African states that were the arena of great confrontation during the Cold War period is substantial. The military conflict in Angola (1975-2002) was one of the most destructive with 500,000 to 800,000 people killed and over a million displaced.

After the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974, the country's new government granted independence to all its colonies, including Angola – one of Africa's richest territories in natural resources. An armed conflict for power between the various forces of Angola immediately started, in which the neighboring countries got involved. Of

the 3 main armed groups in Angola, neighboring Zaire supported the NLFA (National Liberation Front of Angola), South African Republic – UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), and Agostinho Neto, the country's first president and leader of the MPLA (The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) turned to Moscow for help. Since 1975, the Soviet Union started to provide military assistance to the MPLA. Cuban leader Fidel Castro made a similar decision. A contingent of approximately 20 thousand Cuban soldiers fought in Angola at various stages of the armed conflict [10]. Moscow provided similar assistance to the Marxist government in Mozambique.

On November 11, 1975, Agostinho Neto declared the independence of Angola, which UNITA did not recognize. During the next 15 years, UNITA became the main armed opponent of the MPLA. It was openly supported by the South African Republic, and by the USA behind the scenes. Unlike the MPLA, UNITA shared an overtly anti-Soviet and anti-communist stance, later adding elements of Chinese Maoism, along with the support from Beijing.

After the death of President Neto in 1979, MPLA leader José Eduardo dos Santos, a great supporter of the Soviet Union and an ardent Marxist-Leninist, who was well known in the Soviet Union as a former student of the Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University, became the head of the country. He visited the USSR several times and met with Soviet leaders.

Soviet "Perestroika" had a significant impact on distant Angola. According to the 1989 international agreement, the Cuban and South African troops left the territory of the country. In the early 1990s, Moscow stopped supporting the MPLA, and Dos Santos renounced communist ideology and turned to the US [11]. MPLA won the multi-party elections in 1992 (UNITA did not recognize its results) and Dos Santos ruled the country until 2017: a total of 35 years! Angola welcomed Western companies,

primarily in the oil and gas sector. Despite the grim picture of human rights violations, the West didn't have many disputes with Dos Santos. His daughter became the richest woman in Angola.

Thus, correct instinct and ideological transformation of the Angolan government yield results. Its long term rule provided certain stability and economic growth of the country.

Cold War strongly influenced the Middle East and the participants involved in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries. During the period of Soviet "Perestroika" and especially after the fall of the USSR in 1992, there were great expectations for the resolution of this complex and multifaceted conflict.

Although, the Soviet Union supported the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, since the 1948-1949 conflict, Moscow exclusively supported the Arab countries, and in 1967 it broke off diplomatic relations with Israel altogether. In the following years, the Kremlin provided military-political assistance to almost every state or political force that fought against Israel.

The US approach to the countries of the Middle East was much more flexible and sophisticated. Washington looked for allies everywhere and often found them. For example, since 1972, it had established a strong relationship with the president of Egypt, Anwar el-Sadat, who rejected the pro-Soviet orientation of his predecessor Abdel Nasser. In 1979, after the so-called Camp David Accords, a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was signed in Washington. Anwar Sadat sacrificed himself for this agreement in 1981, he was killed by the Egyptian military [12].

During Gorbachev's "Perestroika", Moscow gradually began to revise its policy towards Israel, and in 1991, one year before the collapse of the Soviet empire, it even restored diplomatic relations with Tel-Aviv.

The transformation of Washington's main adversary – the Soviet Union, and the subsequent weakening of Moscow's position on the interna-

tional arena substantially increased the US's role in the Middle East.

In 1991, the representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) met face to face for the first time at the Madrid Peace Conference. The parties agreed on the most important principle: "territories in exchange for peace". In the subsequent period, contacts between the parties and behind-the-scenes negotiations continued, which were concluded successfully with the "Declaration of Principles" on September 13, 1993 in Washington, where the archenemies – Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel, and Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO - shook hands [13].

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin also sacrificed himself for the peace initiative, like Anwar Sadat in 1981. In 1995, he was killed by a far-right religious extremist. In the coming years, despite numerous efforts and steps taken by the USA, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could not be resolved. It is still at an impasse. The recent dramatic upsurge in violence is a great challenge to the regional and global security.

Thus, the end of the Cold War failed to bring stability and peace to the Middle East. On the contrary, the II Iraq War (2003-2011), followed by the crises in Libya and Syria further aggravated the situation, which remains the reality of today.

There are still discussions about the extent to which the USA and the Soviet Union were involved in the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988).

After the Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, the antagonism between Tehran and Baghdad intensified. Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran's new leader, tried to spread the ideas of the revolution in neighboring Iraq, much to the displeasure of Saddam Hussein. In addition, there was also a personal factor: Ayatollah took refuge in Iraq until 1978, and Saddam banished him from the country. The disputed border areas rich in oil were an important part of the conflict [14]. On September 29, 1980, Iraqi units invaded Iran, which gave rise to hostilities.

After the USA lost its strongest ally in the region – Iran – as a result of the Islamic Revolution, President Reagan's administration chose to support Saddam Hussein in the mentioned military conflict. Washington provided Iraq with dual-use technology, weapons, and intelligence data. In doing so, Washington sought to weaken Khomeini's highly anti-American regime. However, from a strategic point of view, Washington was not interested in the military triumph of Iraq, which could endanger US allies in the Persian Gulf. "It is unfortunate that both of them cannot be defeated in the war!" This is how former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger assessed the situation [15].

By cooperating with Iraq, the USA tried to reduce its dependence on Soviet military aid. Iraq was the main export market for Soviet weapons at that time. In 1982-1989, Moscow supplied Baghdad with various weapons worth 24.7 billion dollars. Iraqi soldiers were trained in Soviet centers. About 5,000 Soviet military specialists were in Iraq. At the same time, the Soviet Union tried to establish special relations with Iran.

The war lasted 8 years and killed more than million people. There is evidence that Saddam's army also used chemical weapons banned by international convention.

In the end, neither side was able to win and the status quo was maintained. This meant maintaining the balance of power and spheres of influence between the Arabs and the Persians, the Sunni and Shiite domains that had existed since the 17th century.

The influence of the big players - the USA and the USSR – on the tragic Iraq-Iran war and the strategic competition between them was obvious, which fully corresponded to the logic of the Cold War.

The Soviet "Perestroika" and the end of the Cold war fundamentally changed the confrontational dynamics of international relations and its impact on regional conflicts. The unique manifestation of this was the unanimous reaction of the

international community to Iraq's military intervention in Kuwait in 1990.

On November 29, 1990, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 678, which demanded the withdrawal of Iraq's troops from Kuwait as an ultimatum [16]. This resolution was supported by all members of the Security Council, from the Soviet Union – personally by its Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze. It was then that US President George Bush stated: "The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward a historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective – a new world order – can emerge" [17]. As they say, blessed are the believers.

In accordance with the UN mandate, the international coalition created under the leadership of the USA, in which 34 countries of the world participated (including 14 Islamic countries), defeated a strong opponent – the numerous army of Iraq – in a fairly short period of time. The coalition scrupulously complied with the mandate given by the UN to liberate Kuwait, but refrained from occupying Baghdad and forcibly changing the country's government.

This was the unique case in the history of the 20th century and the following period when the UN Security Council and the international community unanimously acted against aggression.

The terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001, became the pretext for the US military intervention in Iraq in 2003 and the overthrowing of Saddam Hussein's regime. This time it happened without a UN Security Council mandate. The military operation resulted in heavy casualties, the destabilization of Iraq, the increase and strengthening of international terrorist forces, and a change in the regional balance of power not in favor of the West. The Iraq War became the reason for a serious rift between Washington and Moscow and one of the preconditions for the beginning of a new major confrontation.

One of the most tragic victims of the Cold War is undoubtedly Afghanistan. The Soviet intervention in this country (1979-1989) and the US military operation (2001-2021) gave rise to highly dramatic events that has no end in sight.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the geography of armed conflicts changed significantly (this is the subject of a separate study). If during the Cold War period, the USSR did not feature in this

respect, armed conflicts took place in Georgia (Abkhazia, Tskhinvali region), Azerbaijan (Karabakh), Moldova (Dniester), Russia (Chechnya), and Tajikistan in the next ten years. The process of breakup of the former Yugoslavia, followed by armed conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina turned out to be extremely dramatic.

ისტორია

საერთაშორისო შეიარაღებული კონფლიქტები ცივი ომის ფინალურ ეტაპზე (1975-1990) და მის შემდგომ პერიოდში (1991-2005)

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(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. გაჩეჩილაძის მიერ)

ნაშრომში განხილულია საერთაშორისო შეიარაღებული კონფლიქტები, რომლებიც წარმოადგენს დასავლეთსა და აღმოსავლეთს შორის დიდი კონფრონტაციის ობიექტებს „ცივი ომის“ უკანასკნელი 15 წლის განმავლობაში (1975-1990) და განიცადეს არაერთგვაროვანი ტრანსფორმაცია შემდგომ პერიოდში (1991-2005). სხვადასხვა მონაცემების თანახმად, თითქმის იმავე რაოდენობის შეიარაღებული კონფლიქტი არსებობდა აღნიშნულ პერიოდებში. 1975 წლიდან 1990-ის ჩათვლით მსოფლიოში მიმდინარეობდა 35-დან 40-მდე შიდასახელმწიფოებრივი და 15 საერთაშორისო შეიარაღებული კონფლიქტი. 20 შიდასახელმწიფოებრივი და 8 სახელმწიფოთაშორისი შეიარაღებული დაპირისპირება დაიწყო და დასრულდა 1990 წლამდე, დანარჩენი კი ცივი ომის შემდგომაც აგრძელებდა არსებობას, რომელთაგან 9 შიდასახელმწიფოებრივი და 4 საერთაშორისო კონფლიქტის დარეგულირება მოხდა მე-20 საუკუნის დასრულებამდე. იმავე მონაცემებზე დაყრდნობით, მანამდე წარმოქმნილი 40-მდე შეიარაღებული

დაპირისპირების ნახევარზე მეტის დეესკალაცია მოხდა 1991-2005 წლების პერიოდში. აღნიშნულ დროით ინტერვალში საერთაშორისო პოლიტიკური ვითარების ანალიზმა, ისევე, როგორც ცალკეული შემთხვევების შესწავლამ (ნიკარაგუა, ანგოლა, ისრაელი-პალესტინა, ერაყი-ირანი), გამოავლინა ტრანსფორმაციის გარკვეული ტენდენციები, რომლებიც ახასიათებდა მოცემულ პერიოდში მიმდინარე კონფლიქტებს.

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