KALASHNIKOV ENCULTURATION: THE SOVIET CONTRIBUTION TO SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE NON-STATE THRESHOLD

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The purpose of “Kalashnikov Enculturation” is to closely examine the legacy of the policies and actions taken by the Soviet Union during the Cold War in order to determine its contributions to current levels of small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation around the globe. This examination confirms as reality the perception of the Soviet Union as the primary propagator of indiscriminate small arms proliferation in the post-Cold War era. As such, the Soviet Union was a chief contributor to the current situation of global insecurity perpetuated by the creation of extensively armed and violent societies known commonly as Kalashnikov Cultures.

In examining the impact of Soviet policies on SALW proliferation, “Kalashnikov Enculturation” utilizes the concept of the “Non-State Threshold” at which, when intact, small arms and light weapons are effectively segregated between legitimate state and illegitimate non-state actors, and when breached, indiscriminate spread occurs. The Non-State Threshold will be applied to the years during and immediately following the Cold War to determine under which conditions indiscriminate SALW proliferation occurred, and to facilitate a clearer understanding of how Soviet policies and actions allowed for the permeation of the Threshold by increasing the availability, ease of acquisition, and appeal of SALW to non-state actors and illegitimate groups. This paper demonstrates how the legacy of Soviet policies has facilitated the creation of dangerously armed, rogue societies, supporting the claim that it is the actions of the Soviet Union specifically that have disproportionately contributed to the creation of Kalashnikov Cultures.