modern dispatch #112

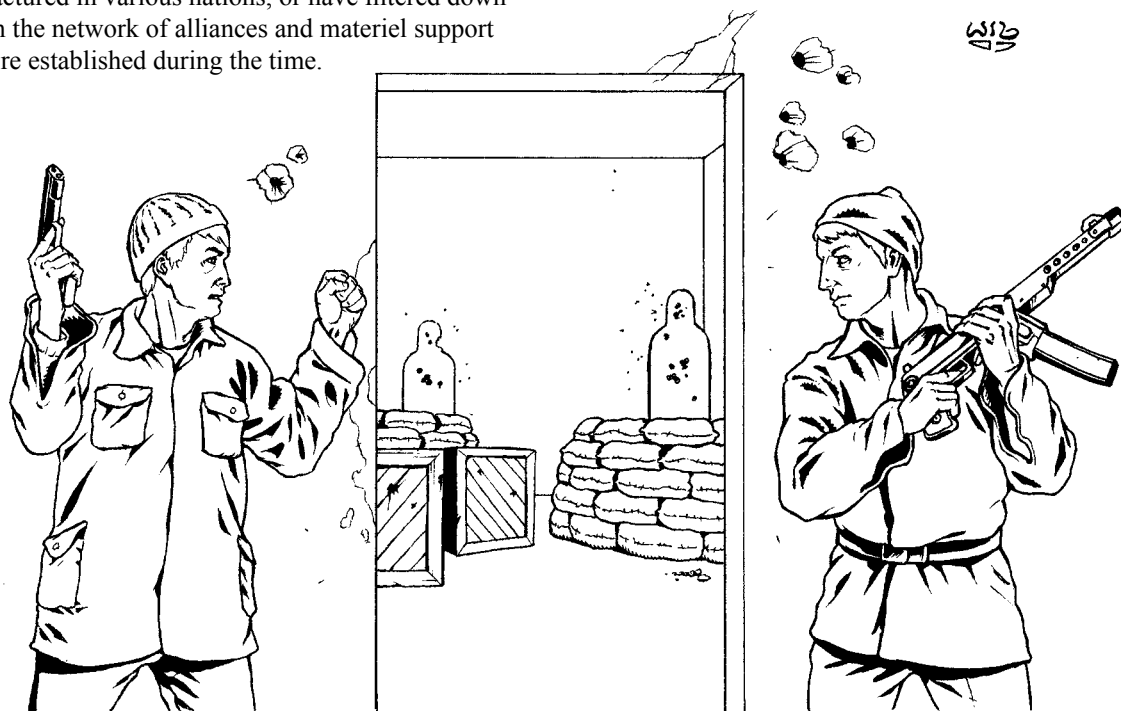# FIREARMS OF THE COLD WAR
BY MIKE DAUMEN

The proliferation of weapons during the Second World War continued during the protracted struggle between capitalism and communism. Both sides of the Cold War exported firearms as eagerly as they exported ideology. Readers need only to envision the stylized depiction of Britain's greatest spy to grasp the impact that even the smallest weapon might have.

Here is a selection of firearms used at various intervals during the Cold War. This list is designed to occupy the space between two better-detailed periods, World War Two and the present day. Several weapons were in use during the former time, and several more continue to see duty today. Many of them have been manufactured in various nations, or have filtered down through the network of alliances and materiel support that were established during the time.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

COLT OFFICIAL POLICE

Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were on the front lines of U.S. counterintelligence. These hardy revolvers were standard-issue from 1937 until 1984. Agents who expected to deal with particularly violent crime typically upgraded to the Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum.

FIREARMS OF THE COLD WAR

Weapon Name (caliber)	Dmg	Crit	Type	Range Inc.	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purch. DC
Colt Super Auto (.38 Super)	2d6	20	Ball	30	S	8 box + 1	Sm	3 lb.	12
Colt Official Police (.38 Spc)	2d6	20	Ball	40	S	6 cyl.	Sm	3 lb.	12
S&W M27 (.357 Magnum)	2d8	20	Ball	40	S	6 cyl.	Med	3 lb.	13
Tokarev TT-33 (7.62 mmR)	2d6	20	Ball	20	S	8 box +1	Sm	3 lb.	13
Makarov PM (9 mmR)	2d6	20	Ball	30	S	8 box +1	Sm	3 lb.	14
Walther PPK (.38 mm)	2d6	20	Ball	30	S	7 box +1	Sm	1 lb.	14
Welrod (9 mm)	2d6	20	Ball	10	S	5 mag	Sm	2 lb.	15
FP-45 Liberator (.45)	2d6	20	Ball	5	S	1 int (10)	Sm	1 lb.	8
CIA Deer Gun (9 mm)	2d6	20	Ball	10	S	1 int (3)	Sm	1 lb.	9
S4M (7.62 mmR)	2d6	20	Ball	10	S	2 int	Sm	2 lb.	12
Stechkin APS (9 mmR)	2d6	20	Ball	20	S, A	20 box +1	Sm	4 lb.	16
Parker-Hale M-82 (7.62 mmN)	2d8	20	Ball	120	S	4 box +1	Lg.	14 lb.	21
Remington M81 Woodsmaster (9x49 mm)	2d10	20	Ball	100	S	5/10/15/20 box	Lg	8 lb.	13
Dragunov SVD (7.62 mmR)	2d8	20	Ball	100	S	10 box	Lg.	10 lb.	20
Simonov SKS (7.62 mmR)	2d8	20	Ball	80	S	10 box	Med	8 lb.	14
deLisle carbine (.45)	2d8	20	Ball	50	S	7/11 box	Med	9 lb.	17
M-14 (7.62 mmN)	2d8	20	Ball	70	S †	20 box	Lg	11 lb.	17
FN FAL (7.62 mmN)	2d8	20	Ball	90	S †	20 box	Lg	11 lb.	18
AK-47	2d8	20	Ball	70	S, A	30 box	Lg	10 lb.	16
MAT-49 (9mm)	2d6	20	Ball	30	A	36 box	Lg	9 lb.	17
Suomi M-31 (9 mm)	2d6	20	Ball	40	A	71 drum	Lg	9 lb.	18
Sterling (.38 mm)	2d6	20	Ball	20	S, A	34 box §	Med	7 lb.	16
Uzi (9 mm)	2d6	20	Ball	40	S, A	20 box	Lg	8 lb.	18
RPD (7.62 mmR)	2d8	20	Ball	80	A	100 drum	Lg	15 lb	23
RPK (7.62 mmR)	2d8	20	Ball	90	A	30/40 box, 75/100 drum	Lg	11 lb	24
Galil AR (5.56 mm)	2d8	20	Ball	70	A	35 box	Lg	11 lb.	18

* The modifier for Sleight of Hands checks is -2 when stock is folded.

† This weapon's Rate of Fire can be converted to [S, A] after a DC 15 Repair check and 1 hour.

§ Reloading one clip with another fastened to the empty clip does not trigger an attack of opportunity.

COLT SUPER AUTO (1929)

This weapon is the first self-loading pistol to supplement revolvers in the FBI inventory. They were added during the heyday of flying squads and mobile bank robbers in the 1930s. It was an official weapon until 1958.

TOKAREV TT-33 (1933)

The USSR intended this pistol as a replacement for the Nagant M-1895 revolver used in Russia since the turn of the century. Although it never truly accomplished this goal, nearly every Communist satellite would manufacture their own variant of this semi-automatic, even after the Soviet Union ended their own production in 1954.

MAKAROV PM (1950)

This pistol was a 1950s upgrade for the wartime Tokarev, using a 9mm round instead of 7.65mm. Both police agencies and military units used the Makarov until the fall of the Soviet Union.

WALTHER PPK (1931)

Long before it was popularized by a cinematic spy, German police and non-front line personnel relied on this early double-action pistol. After the war it remained in demand with plainclothes detectives and other spies needing an easily concealed weapon.

STECHKIN APS (1950)

While physically similar to the contemporaneous Makarov, this pistol had one important difference: it could be fired as a fully automatic weapon. However, without a bulky stock attached to the grip, it is extremely inaccurate (penalties for burst fire and autofire are increased by 4 regardless of any proficiencies if used without the stock). In the 1970s, *spetnaz* teams often received suppressed versions of this machine pistol.

WELROD (1941)

This bolt-action pistol was fitted with an integral noise suppressor, making it useful on covert raids (its sights are also marked with fluorescent paint, for low-light use). Although made in Britain, it was at least as popular with the American OSS during the war, and with covert military units on either side of the Atlantic thereafter. If the gun is fired with the muzzle touching its target, Listen checks to hear the shot are made with an additional -2 penalty.

FP-45 LIBERATOR (1943)

This was designed for use by insurgents operating behind enemy lines, and produced under the designation of a flare pistol. It was envisioned as a "weapon to get another one," meaning that its user could quickly subdue a hostile soldier and acquire his firearm for more protracted use. Liberators were constructed so efficiently that it took less time to make one in the factory than reload one in the field. However, the design sacrificed ammunition capacity and accuracy at any range but point blank. The actual barrel has room for one shot, but additional bullets fit inside the grip. A subsidiary of General Motors made about a million, most of which were distributed by the OSS to Chinese and Filipino resistance forces (along with ten rounds and cartoon instructions for use and maintenance). More could have been earmarked for delivery to the various partisan bands operating in Eastern Europe shortly after war's end.

CIA DEER GUN (1962)

Following on the design principles of the Liberator, the US military-industrial complex envisioned a similar weapon for use in Viet Nam prior to the buildup of forces. This pistol came with three rounds, storable in the grip, and instructions in Vietnamese with cartoons. It was produced in much lower volume and distributed even less widely, but might make a good emergency weapon for desperate agents.

S4M (1972)

Very little is known about this Soviet pistol other than its obvious intended use. It operates essentially like a suppressed derringer – breaking open to reload – and thus is be only useful for close range assassination work. Because it uses a common Soviet rifle round (7.65 mm instead of 9mm) investigators may assume a long arm was involved.

REMINGTON M81 WOODSMASTER (1936)

This excellent long-range rifle was adopted for use by the FBI for much of the Cold War era. Among other uses, Texas Ranger Frank Hamer used one in his pursuit of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow.

DRAGUNOV SVD (1968)

The Red Army began deploying this sniper rifle in the 1960s as an infantry support weapon, rather than an assassin's tool. However, Eastern Bloc hitmen quickly warmed to its superior performance.

SIMONOV SKS (1946)

Soviet planners expected this carbine to become the front-line weapon for the Red Army after the war. And although it was used during the Korean War, the superior features of the AK-47 made its decline inevitable. Despite its obsolescence, nearly every communist satellite nation adopted its use or manufactured a variant at one point or another. Soviet-backed insurgent forces such as the Viet Cong are likely to arm with this weapon as well.

DELISLE CARBINE (1941)

This odd mishmash is more than the sum of its used parts. Essentially it is a SMLE rechambered with a Thompson barrel, over which is fitted an integral suppressor. The result is an effective commando weapon used by British special forces during World War Two and during the Malay counterinsurgency.

M-14 (1959)

This battle rifle proved more versatile that the M-1 Garand it replaced in the mid-fifties, but was ultimately doomed by performance shortcomings at the start of the USA's involvement in Viet Nam. The M-16 eventually proved to be a better weapon for jungle warfare, although American armed forces continued to use sniper rifles patterned on the M-14.

FN FAL (1950)

The FAL rose into prominence once NATO chose its ammunition as a standard cartridge for its members' service rifles. Its large size technically makes it a battle rifle, but the increased weight tends to damp the effect of recoil. Several versions of it were produced throughout the free world, making it an effective counterpart to the ubiquitous AK-47.

AK-47 (1949)

Gun manufacturers throughout the communist world have made over 100 million Kalashnikov assault rifles, and production continues today. Almost immediately recognizable, this iconic firearm appears on the national flag of Mozambique and in the logo of Hezbollah. It is cheap to make and extremely rugged, although the reduced likelihood of jams costs accuracy as well.

MAT-49 (1949)

This French submachinegun was enthusiastically adopted by Viet Minh insurgents during their struggle with their colonial masters in the decade after the war. They were happy to continue using them when Americans took the Europeans' place.

SUOMI M-31 (1931)

Despite their ultimate fate in the Winter War, the Finns are widely believed to have reached the pinnacle of design for a 9mm submachinegun in the Suomi. Treat it as a masterwork weapon.

STERLING (1952)

This hardy British submachine gun replaced the wartime Sten, serving with distinction for more than three decades. Like its predecessor, it has a side loaded magazine which its users often put to good use: another magazine facing the opposite direction can be fastened to the live clip for quick reloading.

UZI (1952)

This compact submachinegun was born simultaneously with the Israeli state, and achieved legendary status in part due to the successes of that nation's military forces. Its smallish size makes it useful as a personal weapon for support troops and light infantry units - characteristics ideal from a terrorist's standpoint as well. The West German armed forces were perhaps the most notable foreign users of the Uzi.

GALIL (1967)

The lovechild of the M-16 and AK-47, begotten by the nation happily willing to treat with both superpowers. Israeli Defense Forces began using it as a battle rifle in the mid-1970s, although it weighed more than either parent. Ultimately it saw more success when used by regular and irregular units throughout the Third World.

PARKER-HALE M82 (1982)

No self-respecting British assassin would be caught dead without this sniper rifle, which was the standard sniper's weapon for that nation's military. It includes mounts for both a bipod and scope.

RPD (1946)

This machinegun was designed during the Russian advances of World War Two, but did not enter service until after the war's end. It performs admirably as the squad automatic weapon for front-line Soviet troops, and can be found throughout the Communist world.

RPK (1974)

This machinegun replaced the RPD in the sixties. Because it appeared at the same time as the redesigned Kalashnikov, it shares many characteristics with this weapon, including the ability to fire any magazine for it.

OPEN GAME LICENSE

OPEN GAMING CONTENT