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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

HR70-14

20 March 1968

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 17-68

SUBJECT: The CIA/DIA Joint Study, "Soviet Capabilities to Reinforce in Central Europe" -- Some Support from IRONBARK

NOTE

The attached memorandum is a staff study prepared within the Office of National Estimates. It relates to and, it is hoped, makes some contribution to the intelligence community's current review of Soviet ground forces. Because it bears directly on the CIA/DIA joint study of Soviet reinforcement capabilities, it is being addressed to recipients of that study.

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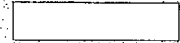
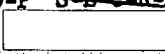
SUBJECT: The CIA/DIA Joint Study, "Soviet Capabilities to Reinforce in Central Europe" -- Some Support from IRONBARK

1. A recent survey of classified Soviet military writings in the early 1960's (in the IRONBARK series) has turned up several pieces that tend to support the major conclusions of the CIA/DIA joint study: i.e. that Soviet line divisions are considerably smaller and are maintained at a lower level of readiness than previously estimated. The IRONBARK articles also provide some insight into other findings of the joint study group respecting the apparent levels of combat and service support. The relevance of the IRONBARK material surveyed to date suggests that some further exploitation of this source may be productive.

Findings of the Joint Study

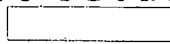
2. The initial report of the CIA/DIA joint study group was concerned with those elements of the Soviet ground forces

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which would probably provide early reinforcements for Soviet forces in the European area. It focused primarily upon 22 line divisions in the western USSR which had been covered by good, high-resolution photography. Analysis of this photography led the study group to conclude that Soviet line divisions "are intended to function" with lower levels of equipment and personnel than estimated, and it proceeded to develop new TO & E's which correspond roughly to the highest strength units observed. They are 20-30 percent lower in equipment and 10-15 percent lower in personnel than the TO & E's currently held; the personnel strengths are derived primarily from equipment count. The new TO & E's proposed are given below; they should be regarded as tentative and subject to modification and further refinement as the joint study extends to other areas.

	<u>Type of Division</u>		
	<u>MRD</u>	<u>TD</u>	<u>AbnD</u>
Men - Proposed	9,500	7,000-7,500	3,000-5,000
Current Estimate	10,600	8,300	7,300
Equipment - Proposed	2,600	2,000-2,400	800-1,200
Current Estimate	3,200	2,900	1,700



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3. The new, smaller TO & E's were used as a measurement of combat readiness. The study found that with the exception of the three armies of the Belorussian MD, the forces in western USSR suffer from sizeable equipment shortages and do not represent a source of immediate reinforcement in the forward area. (Some divisions would require as many as 1,000 additional pieces of equipment to reach full TO & E strength.) The Belorussian units appear to be maintained at or near full strength, although the seven tank divisions in Belorussia lack the artillery believed to be assigned to such units. The study concludes that the Belorussian divisions could be deployed to central Europe within three weeks from the time of decision. "Many weeks" would be required to bring the other divisions in the western USSR up to combat readiness.

Comparison with IRONBARK Materials

4. The IRONBARK collection contains no detailed information on Soviet order-of-battle. But in drawing comparisons with other forces it does provide some rough indices as to the size and combat readiness of Soviet line divisions. Most useful in this respect was an article by Defense Minister Malinovsky which

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appeared in the Top Secret edition of Military Thought in 1962:
"Some Thoughts on the Development of the Soviet Army Tank Troops".
The article dealt at length with the organization of large tank
formations, indirectly including information on the size of Soviet
tank and motorized rifle divisions.

5. Malinovsky compared the Soviet tank division with the
US armored division of the day (ROCAD) saying that the tank
division had about the same number of tanks as its US counter-
part (340), but only one-third to one-half as many men. This
would have placed Soviet tank division strength somewhere in
the range of 4,900-7,300. The higher figure falls within the 7,000-
7,500 range estimated for a full strength tank division by the
joint study group. The Marshal cited the number of motor vehicles
as one-third to one-half that of the US armored division. A direct
comparison with the study's findings cannot be made; photo inter-
pretation has not been able to distinguish motor vehicles from
other types of equipment in every case. But the new TO & E's
do seem generally in accord with Malinovsky's figures.

6. With regard to the motorized rifle division (MRD),
Malinovsky placed the TO & E strength at one-half to two-thirds

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of the US ROCID ("Pentomic") infantry division. This comes to 6,800-9,200, the upper end of which is only slightly smaller than the study group's 9,500. Malinovsky credited the MRD with "more" tanks than the US division's 125, but "less" artillery than the 64 pieces in the US division. Consistent with this, the study group took no issue with current estimate of 190 tanks and 48 artillery pieces for the MRD.

7. Malinovsky considered Soviet divisions at the time as still too heavy for efficient operation. "We must find ways to lighten the divisions further." The paucity of administrative transport which the study group found in so many military compounds in western USSR suggest that Malinovsky's efforts to reduce the division tail and to achieve further lightening of baggage were successful.

8. A comparison of the writings of other authors in the IRONBARK collection tend to corroborate this thesis. In the second issue of the 1960 Top Secret version of Military Thought, Colonel General F. Malykin wrote, "We consider that for a deploying front, as regards a western axis, stocks should be echeloned in the following order: with the troops (in regimental and divisional

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depots) mobile stocks on motor vehicles in amounts required by the troops for three or four calendar days of medium intensity combat ..." Malykin then went on to argue against reductions in the stock levels for the sake of lightening the division tail. " ... we categorically object," he wrote, "to those who, viewing the idea of easing the burden of the troops as a goal in itself, recommend lowering the fuel stocks in a division to one and a half to two calendar day requirements." Two years later Colonel V. Zemskov, in issue No. 3 of the 1962 Military Thought, spelled out the results of the controversy. "The mobile stocks of fuel in a division ... provide for the conduct of a battle for only two days ..." Colonel Zemskov also made a plea for an increase in the logistical tail, but it is obvious that he was bucking the trend.

9. The treatment of the subject of combat readiness in the IRONBARK material helps to explain the considerable variations in unit strength noted in the joint study. Major General Dzhelaukhov writing in the first issue of the 1962 Military Thought, identified the units kept at "constant combat readiness" as "the regular large units of the strategic missiles troops, groups of forces (in East Germany, Poland and Hungary), border military

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districts and naval forces, and the antiair defense troops (PVO Strany)". The author went on to point out that not all border military district troops are combat ready: "Some large units" (i.e. divisions of border MDs) will "need to complete their mobilization in event of war." Other authors have treated the problem of readiness in a similar manner, most often citing economic restraints as the prime factor limiting full combat readiness for all units. One, for example, stated that: "It is quite obvious that it is impossible to maintain all the armed forces in a high degree of combat readiness in peacetime. This would be to the detriment of the state budget."

10. The initial joint study report did not directly address the three categories of divisions which have been used in Soviet military literature to denote conditions of combat readiness. Category I has been described as a "full state of readiness for immediate operations"; Category II as "ready to proceed to areas of concentration in several days"; and category III as being capable of use "only several weeks after the beginning of full mobilization". The initial report does indicate, however, that there are probably fewer divisions maintained at high levels of readiness than previously believed.

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11. The most puzzling fact uncovered by the study group was the lack of artillery regiments in the seven tank divisions of the Belorussian MD. The report concluded that the uniformity of structure of these units probably meant that they were intended for early employment in emergency in their present configuration (i.e. without organic fire support). Whether correct or not, this concept is consistent with Marshal Malinovsky's references to the role of conventional artillery on the nuclear battlefield. "At the present time the missiles of operational-tactical designation have become the main fire weapon of the ground troops. Tube artillery has ceased to be the 'god of war'," and, "... in actuality, the combat capabilities of the tube artillery are almost all exhausted. In the future it will apparently be replaced by modern guided and homing missiles with powerful new charges."

12. If the Belorussian tank divisions are intended for early commitment, one would expect them to have all or most of their combat equipment. The explanation may lie in the Soviet view of the circumstances under which these forces would be employed. As set forth in Malinovsky's article, lack of artillery support would be less detrimental to tank operations in a nuclear environment than on a conventional battlefield. He may have felt

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that if hostilities in Europe were to develop so quickly as to require immediate commitment of the Belorussian forces, the nature of the battlefield would have escalated to a nuclear one and that conventional artillery would be less necessary. The presence of artillery in other units in the USSR suggests that they have different missions. Units earmarked for reinforcement over a longer term (as in the case of a conventional war) would probably require artillery. Cadre units, which provide the primary framework for mobilization for conventional war, would certainly require all types of conventional weapons.

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