

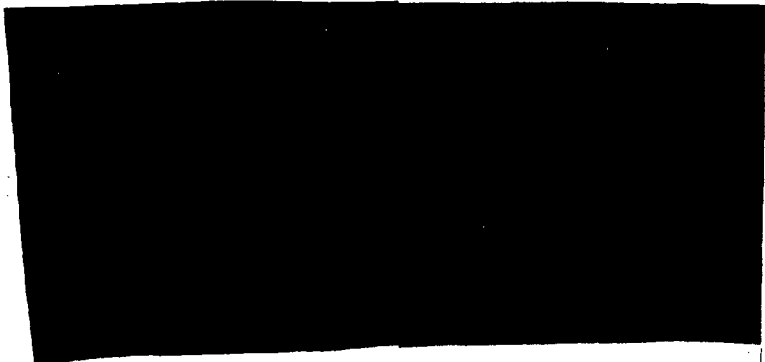
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Intelligence Report

*Warsaw Pact Mobilization Plans and the
Transition to a War Footing*



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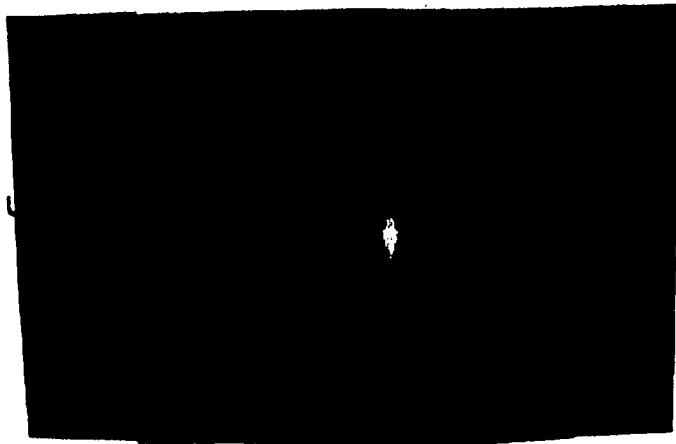


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Warsaw Pact Mobilization Plans and the Transition to a War Footing

The Warsaw Pact mobilization system is largely an outgrowth of the Soviet Union's experience in World War II, in which its forces fought for some three years on its own territory before driving the invading German army back across the prewar borders. In a broader sense, however, the system reflects lessons learned from the military history of continental Europe as a whole.

- For European nations loss of initiative has often meant major territorial loss and major military defeats before the full war-fighting potential could be realized.
- Conversely, the nation which could first mobilize and concentrate its forces for large-scale offensive operations secured great advantages at the outset, which in some cases resulted in a rapid and total conquest of the opposing nation.

In light of this experience, the Pact has formulated plans and designed national systems to mobilize within one to three days virtually the entire force with which a war in Europe would be fought.

- Analysis of its plans and systems and of mobilization exercises leaves little reason to doubt that the Warsaw Pact could assemble the majority of its forces within about a three-day period.
- Only East European ground forces and Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe would be ready and in position to enter combat by the third day, however.
- Formations in the USSR would also complete mobilization within this time period, but their entry into combat would be delayed by the time required to move component elements to forward staging or concentration areas and to assemble these forces into armies and fronts.

The initial combat effectiveness of the force mobilized is likely to be low compared with that of a full-strength, professional standing force. Pact planners acknowledge some qualitative deficiencies, but at the same time reflect a belief that these shortcomings would be offset by the strategy of massive employment of forces at decisive points from the outset of hostilities.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
March 1974

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Warsaw Pact Mobilization Plans
and the Transition to a War Footing

The Report in Brief

Warsaw Pact mobilization plans and procedures differ markedly from those employed by the US. Most differences arise from sharply divergent views of initial wartime force requirements--views which have been shaped largely by differences in the geographic proximity of the threat.

The Warsaw Pact mobilization system is largely an outgrowth of the Soviet Union's experience in World War II, in which its forces fought for some three years on its own territory before driving the invading German army back across the prewar borders. In a broader sense, however, the system reflects lessons learned from the military history of continental Europe as a whole. For European nations, loss of initiative often has meant major territorial loss, a consequent disruption of mobilization at the outset of conflict, and a major defeat before the full war-fighting potential could be realized.

Conversely, the nation which could first mobilize and concentrate its forces for large-scale offensive operations secured, without exception, great advan-

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tages at the outset of war. These have included seizure of large portions of the opponent's territory and, in some cases, a rapid and total conquest of the opposing nation.

In light of this experience, the Pact has formulated plans and designed national systems to mobilize within one to three days virtually the entire force with which a war in Europe would be fought. Analysis of these plans and systems and of mobilization exercises provides little reason to doubt that the Warsaw Pact could mobilize the majority of its forces within about three days--the minimum period of recognizable tension which Pact strategists believe is likely to precede an outbreak of hostilities.

Judgments on the potential of the system have been made by examining the plans, procedures, and institutions which form the basis of the mobilization system. These include a military force structure which is specifically tailored to permit rapid expansion, institutions to insure the availability of sufficient reserve personnel and equipment, and highly detailed and tested alert and call-up procedures.

Force Structure. The Pact countries maintain during peacetime the structure and major elements of the entire ground force intended for war, with most component units manned and equipped at less than full combat strength. A basic function of this standing skeletal force is to ensure a ready framework for the rapid expansion of ground forces in time of threat.

Availability of Reservists and Equipment. Reservists and vehicles have predesignated assignments to units which are, wherever possible, located nearby. Although there are no serious shortages of manpower or equipment reserves to fill the mobilization requirements, there are some distribution problems. These are caused primarily by the concentration of highly skilled enlisted men and officers in large urban areas where their skills are required in the peacetime economy. Vehicles and equipment also tend to be concentrated in the larger urban areas. At the worst, however, these distribution problems probably

would delay mobilization in affected units by no more than a day.

Alert and Call-Up System. Each Pact nation has a dual alert and call-up system. One half, the *National Defense Readiness Plan (or System)*, deals with the mobilization readiness of the economy and reserve call-up procedures. The second half, the *System of Combat Readiness*, defines the specific requirements and mobilization procedures for components of the armed forces. This dual mechanism provides the control and coordination necessary to change a country and its armed forces from a peacetime status to a war footing. Its elements have been tested and the system appears to function smoothly. Full Pact mobilization has never been tested, however, and it is unlikely that it ever will be--except during a war emergency--because of the resulting internal economic disruption and the international military and political implications of such an action.

Mobilization on the scale envisioned by Pact planning almost certainly would not take place without problems. As in past European wars, there probably would be some confusion and lack of coordination accompanying the effort, especially if the period of tension preceding hostilities was brief.

Although the Pact goal is to complete mobilization of all of its forces within three days, only East European ground forces and Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe would be ready and in position to enter combat at the end of that time. Units in the USSR are to be mobilized within the same time period, but the assembly of these forces into armies and fronts probably would not be completed until subordinate elements move to forward staging or concentration areas. The timing of their introduction into combat would depend on the distances to be traveled, the means of transportation used, operational needs, and enemy interdiction.

The Pact countries would prefer a longer time for war preparations and have plans to use an extended period of prehostilities tension--if it occurs--to

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enhance their readiness to mobilize. These preparatory measures would be carried out without activating the Pact alert and call-up system. Preparations would include testing the operating condition of combat equipment and trucks, checking the suitability of mobilization assembly areas, and generally reviewing specific mobilization assignments. During this period there is no plan to mobilize government reserves nor would there be any additional expenditures of national resources. These preparations would be carried out primarily by active duty military personnel and would be done in secrecy.

The initial combat effectiveness of the force mobilized according to Pact planning is likely to be low compared with that of a full-strength, professional standing force. Pact planners acknowledge some of these deficiencies, but at the same time reflect a belief that they would be offset by the Pact strategy of massive employment of forces from the outset of hostilities. Central to Pact thinking is the belief that rapid mobilization, in conjunction with deployment and concentration plans, will provide a numerical superiority in maneuver units, tanks, and artillery at decisive points, and that this superiority will offset any qualitative deficiencies the force might have.

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The Role of Mobilization in the
Continental European War Experience

Warsaw Pact mobilization plans and procedures differ markedly from those of the US. Most differences arise from sharply divergent views of initial wartime force requirements--views which have been shaped largely by differences in the geographic proximity of the threat.

The Warsaw Pact mobilization system is largely an outgrowth of the Soviet Union's experience in World War II, in which its forces fought for some three years on its own territory before driving the invading German army back across the prewar borders. In a broader sense, however, the system reflects lessons learned from the military history of continental Europe as a whole. For European nations, loss of initiative often has meant major territorial loss, a consequent disruption of mobilization at the outset of conflict, and a major defeat before the full war-fighting potential could be realized.

Conversely, the nation which could first mobilize and concentrate its forces often secured an overwhelming advantage at the outset of a war. At the least, this force could penetrate deeply into foreign territory and disorganize the mobilization of its adversaries, disrupt their war plans, and neutralize major defenses.

Consequently, the speed and efficiency with which contending nations could move from their normal peacetime posture to a war footing--marshaling, deploying, and committing the maximum force--have become essential ingredients of strategic planning for war in Europe. Strategies and war planning for the last 100 years or so have been focused on the rapid achievement of a massive strategic concentration.

The US and, to a lesser extent, the UK have relied on a system of incremental mobilization in which military power is methodically built up for the deployment of expeditionary forces to the European

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continent or other distant areas. In this approach, planning calls for units to be trained to prescribed effectiveness levels before they are to be committed. Many of these forces are intended for commitment over the longer term.

In sum, the continental European system historically has been designed to maximize the initial force commitment--to have available at the outset virtually the entire force with which the war will be fought. Mobilization in the US and, to a lesser extent, the UK has been a process through which military power is built over time to a highly trained force capable of achieving a decisive victory some time after the war has started. It reflects a defensive strategy of trading territory for the time to mobilize and train forces to full effectiveness. Although intercontinental weapons systems have changed the concepts of strategic warfare, these two basic concepts of mobilization and deployment of forces during the initial phases of a land war in Europe have remained essentially intact.

Warsaw Pact Mobilization Goal

Soviet writings of the early Sixties--primarily the documents provided by Colonel Oleg Penkovskiy but including some open source writings--describe in part the structure, operation, and goal of the Pact mobilization system. The descriptions in these documents are supplemented by the more recent testimony of former Soviet and East European military officers and enlisted men. Although most of the detailed evidence is from East European sources, similarities of East European terms and concepts with those described in the earlier Soviet writings indicate that essentially the same system is followed throughout the Warsaw Pact.

The Pact goal is the total mobilization of forces within one to three days of the order to mobilize. The system therefore has been optimized for

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such a mobilization, although provisions for contingencies requiring less than total conversion of military forces and civilian resources to a war footing have been incorporated into the overall plan. Pact planners apparently reason that, having assured the capability to amass and concentrate the maximum force in the shortest possible time, lesser requirements can also be satisfied within the same plan.

Although no evidence specifically stipulates a one-to-three-day period as the Pact mobilization goal, many human sources and analysis of mobilization exercises indicate that ground force mobilization is to be completed within this time period. Most evidence indicates that understrength army- and front-level* units and divisions are to be filled out within 24 hours. A few sources indicate that in Eastern Europe the formation of these units into combat ready armies and fronts is to be accomplished in about three days.

Although mobilization in the USSR is intended to be accomplished in about the same time, the actual formation of armies and fronts may take longer. Many units will almost certainly move some distance to forward staging or concentration areas, and their assembly into armies and fronts will not be completed until they have been relocated. In addition, the timing of the introduction of the assembled forces into combat can vary from a few days up to several weeks, depending on the situation--distances to be traveled, the means of transportation used, operational needs, and enemy interdiction.

* In Warsaw Pact terminology a front is a wartime formation usually consisting of several field armies and a tactical air army plus combat and service support units.

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Pact Mobilization Capabilities

Analysis of the mobilization system and of exercises leaves little reason to doubt that the Warsaw Pact could mobilize the majority of its forces under this system, and Pact planners apparently are satisfied with its capabilities. Full Pact mobilization has never been tested, however, and it is unlikely that it ever will be--except during a war emergency--because of the resulting internal economic disruption and the international military and political implications of such an action. There is virtually no direct, empirical basis, therefore, from which to assess the capabilities of the Warsaw Pact ground forces to meet the three-day mobilization goal indicated by the evidence.

Nevertheless, estimates of Pact mobilization capabilities can be made by examining the plans, procedures, and institutions which form the basis of the Pact mobilization system. These include a military force structure which is tailored for rapid expansion, institutions to ensure the availability of sufficient reservists and equipment, and highly detailed and tested alert and call-up procedures.

Peacetime Force Posture

The Pact countries maintain during peacetime the structure and major elements of the entire ground force intended for war, with most component units manned and equipped at less than full combat strength.* A basic function of this standing skeletal force is to ensure a ready framework for the rapid expansion of ground forces, thus avoiding the economic strain

* For a discussion of peacetime force posture, see Peacetime Posture of Warsaw Pact Ground Force Divisions Facing the NATO Central Region, [REDACTED] September 1972 [REDACTED].

Peacetime Strengths of Warsaw Pact Motorized Rifle and Tank Division



Warsaw Pact Motorized Rifle and Tank Divisions in Europe



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of maintaining large standing forces. The peacetime force also trains the large number of men called up under universal conscription and ultimately discharged into the reserve.

Some combat-strength forces--mainly Soviet units in Eastern Europe--are maintained to provide the capability to counter a NATO attack or possibly to initiate limited combat operations while understrength forces are mobilizing. The other Pact ground force units are at varying strength levels, but almost all are believed to have at least a cadre of personnel and their full complement of combat equipment except for armored personnel carriers. (See foldout map for locations and peacetime strength levels of motorized rifle and tank divisions in Europe.)

There are also several reserve motorized rifle and tank divisions in Eastern Europe. A former Bulgarian army lieutenant colonel has identified three of these divisions in his country; East German defectors have described two German reserve divisions; and a former Czechoslovak army colonel has indicated that his country has two reserve divisions. Some combat and service support units in all Pact countries would also be formed entirely through mobilization.

Reserve divisions and support units have no assigned personnel in peacetime, and their equipment is stored. They are believed to have a full complement of combat equipment, but are probably missing substantial numbers of general purpose trucks and other equipment. These units are to be manned at the time of mobilization by reservists and personnel taken from the active forces, service schools, and training units.

Equipment and vehicles designated for mobilization of divisions and support units are stored with active military units and in depots, or are in use in the national economy. Reservists and vehicles are assigned, wherever possible, to units located

in the same or adjacent counties so that most of the men and equipment can be rapidly mustered into pre-designated units.

Manpower Reserves: Availability and Control

A combination of evidence from various Pact sources indicates that there are no serious shortages of reserve manpower. Universal conscription is practiced in all Pact countries and appears to satisfy the manpower requirements of understrength units. In the Soviet Union, for example, some 1.2 million to 1.5 million conscripts--the bulk of which are in the ground forces--are discharged into the reserves each year.

Manpower distribution problems do exist, caused by the varying population densities of individual East European and Soviet counties and provinces in which understrength units are located. In addition, skilled reservists, both enlisted men and officers, tend to be concentrated in the larger urban areas where their skills are required by the peacetime economy.

Manpower distribution problems appear to be more pronounced in the Soviet Union--because of its vast area--than in the smaller East European nations. Former Soviet servicemen who served in divisions in the Baltic, Carpathian, and Ural Military Districts have reported that reservists with little or no recent training and varying in age from thirty to fifty had mobilization assignments in their units. A former Soviet lieutenant who served in a motorized rifle division in the Carpathian Military District reported that when his division was mobilized for the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia all the reservists called up were from nearby areas and therefore readily available, but many were overage and some had not had any military training in over twenty years. Such examples, evidence of the Soviet desire to ensure rapid mobilization by assigning reservists to units located in the same or adjacent counties, suggest that this practice is widespread throughout the USSR.

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The Pact countries keep track of their mobilization resources by maintaining detailed records on population movement. Personnel eligible for military service are required to report promptly a change in location. In the Soviet Union, for example, a reservist liable for mobilization call-up--up to age 50 for enlisted men and 65 for general officers--must report a change of address immediately to his military commissariat. If he moves to a different jurisdiction, he must report to the new commissariat within 30 days of his arrival so that his name can be added to its records.

Military commissariats at various administrative levels, together with province- and county-level civil administrators, are responsible for the management of manpower and equipment resources and requirements. Personnel requirements are forwarded by the understrength military units to the appropriate military commissariat headquarters where reservists, drawn from lists, are usually designated to fill specific unit slots for a period of years. Similar lists of vehicles and equipment and the units to which they are assigned are also maintained at the commissariat.

There is strong evidence that the Polish military takes great care to ensure that these records are properly maintained and constantly updated. Defector testimony suggests the Soviets maintain and continually update their records as well. If the other East European countries follow this practice, the mechanism for calling up men and equipment should function routinely throughout the Pact. The fact that these other East European countries do not appear to experience any more difficulties during mobilization exercises than either the Soviets or the Poles suggests that their records are also properly maintained.

Vehicle, Equipment, and Logistic Reserves

One of the functions of the state-controlled economy of each Pact country is to ensure that the appropriate mobilization stocks of equipment, vehicles, and logistic supplies are maintained in a

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usable condition and in the quantities required to bring the existing force up to strength. Logistic supplies are stockpiled in national reserves. Vehicles are either stored with military units or assigned to enterprises within the national economy. Upon implementation of the mobilization plan, any part or all of these stocks are immediately turned over to the armed forces.

The equipment shortages which must be made up from the civilian economies are mainly general purpose trucks and communications and engineering equipment. Defector reports, attache sightings, and open-source Soviet material indicate that in the Soviet Union a significant portion of the total national motor vehicle resource is assigned to the military as a mobilization pool. Many of the vehicles are in military reserve transport units--called *avtokolonny*--where vehicles so designated are maintained according to military specifications. Upon mobilization, these vehicles and their drivers are assigned to specific units as an integral part of the units' organic motor transport.

Neither defector reports nor Pact writings indicate there are vehicle and equipment shortages in the economies of Pact countries which would preclude understrength military units from mobilizing these resources from civilian enterprises in the quantities necessary to bring the forces up to allotted strength. It is likely, therefore, that all Warsaw Pact countries have enough of these kinds of equipment to satisfy the mobilization requirements of the existent force.

Some of these sources indicate, however, that there are distribution problems which will have some effect on mobilization times. Vehicles, for example, tend to be concentrated in urban areas, and some must travel up to several hundred kilometers to their mobilizing units. In other instances, a heavy concentration of military units in an area requires equipment and vehicles to be transported over considerable distances. It is estimated that these distribution problems--at least in Eastern Europe and the western

USSR--probably would not delay mobilization in affected units by more than a day.

Alert and Call-Up System

Each Pact nation has a dual alert and call-up system. One half, called the *National Defense Readiness Plan* (or *System*) deals with the mobilization readiness of the national administration and economy. Alert periods are defined, and detailed procedures are laid out regarding the scope, order, and timing of the mobilization of reserve manpower and civilian equipment for military duty.

The other half is the Pact-wide *System of Combat Readiness*, which sets forth readiness, alert, and mobilization requirements and procedures for the active armed forces. In combination, these mechanisms provide the control and coordination necessary to change a country and its armed forces from a peacetime status to a war footing. The schema on the next page outlines the various alert and readiness levels and the interrelationship between the two halves of the system.

Under this system both the economy and the armed forces of each Pact nation are postured during peacetime in constant readiness to mobilize. All of the detailed call-up procedures have been exercised with enough frequency to assure that civilian participants as well as active and reserve military personnel are at least generally familiar with their mobilization assignments and responsibilities.

Some of the detailed planning for call-up and assembly--such as unit requirements for exiting garrisons within an hour and for the dispersal of unit assembly areas--clearly have been influenced by the belief in a high risk of nuclear conflict. The basic mobilization concepts and the strategies which have determined the development of these concepts, however, predate the nuclear threat.

Units in Eastern Europe appear to have satisfied peacetime readiness requirements. Combat alert ex-

Warsaw Pact Alert and Call Up System

Periods of National Defense Readiness

Peacetime

The economy satisfies routine armed forces requirements and creates the necessary stockpiles of equipment required for a rapid mobilization. *Constant combat readiness* is maintained by the armed forces.

Period of Threat

Preparatory measures are taken by all elements within the nation having mobilization or wartime assignments to increase national readiness to convert rapidly to a war footing. These measures can range from a limited call-up of men and equipment to a full mobilization of the economy, the armed forces, and the territorial, border, and civil defense forces. They are intended, above all, to ensure the assembly of the greatest number of forces and resources possible prior to the outbreak of hostilities. To guard against precipitate economic disruption during a period of gradually increasing or fluctuating tension, the period of threat is subdivided into two phases.

- The first half, *increased national defense readiness*, is designated for fulfilling tasks that are primarily of an organizational nature and, in only a few cases, produce changes in the national economy. Limited organizational changes in the government and civilian administrations occur. Equipment and supplies held in national reserves, together with limited numbers of reservists, vehicles, and equipment, may be called up from the national economy. Movement restrictions are also placed on vehicles and other transport in use in the economy which have mobilization assignments. *Increased combat readiness* is ordered for most of the armed forces.

- The second phase, the state of *immediate threat to the nation*, includes those measures which lead to a definite transition of the economy to a war footing. Government ministries and state administrative organs assume their full wartime organizations and provide services and support to the armed forces. Industry is converted to the production of war materials. *Full combat readiness* is ordered for all armed forces.

Wartime

The nation is on a war footing and production is organized in the manner best suited to support the armed forces. Pact planners say little about this period, probably because it is considered to contain too many incalculable variables to plan activities in the detail noted in the other readiness stages.

Readiness Levels of Armed Forces*

Constant combat readiness is the standard Pact term designating the peacetime posture which is normally maintained by all branches of service. Units are not on alert and are conducting normal peacetime training. Measures are taken by the individual units, however, to assure their ability to mobilize rapidly.

At *increased combat readiness* units are placed on alert and take preparatory measures in anticipation of a full mobilization. Depending on the political and military situation, all military forces within a country, or one branch of service, one military district, or even one tactical formation may be placed on *increased readiness*. Those ground forces at or near full strength and having early commitment or deployment times might move out of garrison and into assembly, staging, or concentration areas under the cover of training exercises. *Increased readiness* is a transitional phase leading to *full combat readiness*. The duration of this period is directly related to the nature and the duration of the period of tension rather than to the time necessary to complete the preparatory measures.

Full combat readiness is the highest armed forces readiness level. Full mobilization is ordered and the forces prepare to undertake immediately combat missions or deploy under combat alert conditions. This readiness level will only be ordered (excluding training exercises) if there is an immediate threat of hostilities, or, as in the case of the Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia, there is an internal crisis which requires a comparable readiness posture. All forces are intended to achieve *full readiness* before the outbreak of fighting.

* See Annex for a more complete discussion of the specific activities undertaken by the ground forces at each of the three readiness levels within the system.

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ercises usually occur on a biweekly or monthly basis in most forward area divisions and in some non-divisional units as well. Analysis of these exercises, combined with human-source evidence, indicates that most tank and motorized rifle divisions in the forward area could mobilize and assemble subordinate units within one day. Units cited for not meeting all readiness requirements are given a period of time--probably about 30 days--to correct deficiencies and then are reinspected.

Evidence on mobilization capabilities of Soviet divisions based in the USSR is more limited, mainly because of a lack of human-source information, but there is some indication of difficulty in meeting the most stringent readiness requirements. The defector testimony which is available suggests that some low-strength divisions located in the USSR require between one and three days to mobilize, even though plans call for mobilization within 24 hours.

There is also some uncertainty as to the capability of the higher echelon army and front units in all Pact countries to mobilize with the same speed as the divisions. Most of these non-divisional units apparently do not conduct mobilization exercises with the same frequency as divisions. Some of these units, especially among those providing rear services support, do not exist in peacetime but would have to be mobilized entirely in time of threat of war.

Alert exercises are carried out at factories and truck combines with sufficient frequency so that reservists and employees delivering equipment to military units have some familiarity with their mobilization assignments. These exercises are intended to check the speed and reliability of the alerting system, but seldom include the call-up and integration of men and equipment into wartime organizations.

Recognition of a period of tension indicating the imminence of hostilities could be critical for the timely assembly and movement of many service support units. Divisions, especially those needing few reservists and little equipment, would probably mo-

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bilize early in a period of tension. The army and front support units require more men and equipment from the economy. Because their mobilization would have a more serious effect on the peacetime economy, these units probably would not be mobilized until a period of "immediate threat to the nation" was declared. Earlier in a period of tension, however, preparatory measures would be taken to enhance their mobilization readiness.

The Pact gained considerable mobilization experience during the invasion of Czechoslovakia, when both Soviet and East European invasion forces were successfully called up, assembled, and moved. This invasion did not, however, provide a realistic test of the rapidity with which the entire skeletal force could be mobilized. The period of tension preceding the invasion lasted about four months, far longer than the time which Soviet doctrine allows for the assembly of forces in a time of crisis. Moreover, it provided the opportunity for the Soviets to assemble the invasion force using components from several armies to reduce disruption of the economy in any one area. The intervention did exercise the capabilities of individual units and formations to mobilize and assemble rapidly, however. The bulk of data indicates that East European participants mobilized successfully within one or two days.

Information on the mobilization of Soviet forces in the USSR for the invasion is not complete. The few available sources suggest that most formations up to division size probably were able to mobilize in a day or so. Two former servicemen, however, indicated that their units were not capable of mobilizing within the prescribed time limit--probably 24 hours. One said his regiment required a week to assemble and integrate the mobilized men and equipment because of widespread confusion which occurred as the reservists were prepared for integration with active duty troops. He attributed the confusion to poor operational planning and logistic support, especially in the areas of weapon and basic equipment issues. Measures were taken to correct the problems after the unit returned to the Soviet Union.

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It is likely that the Soviets, as a result of their Czechoslovak experience, have reviewed the mobilization capabilities of their ground forces--especially in those units which experienced difficulties in meeting their schedules. The Soviets apparently have concluded that established mobilization norms can be maintained, and the limited defector reporting available indicates that measures have been taken to correct at least some of the mobilization-related difficulties found in their formations.

Force Quantity Over Quality

The mobilization times noted in this paper are minimum times required to achieve unit integrity and a combat capability. Ideally, some time would be desirable after mobilization for training before commitment to combat. This would be especially true for larger formations, some parts of which would certainly have been in cadre status or would have been formed completely from reserves. In this paper, no distinction has been made between the availability of units which have been at different levels of strength before mobilization because the evidence suggests that commitment is more dependent upon the exigencies of the situation than on the potential combat effectiveness of mobilized units. Clearly, any military commander would prefer a period for preparing his formation before sending it into combat. A Pact desire for early numerical superiority, however, could overrule considerations of improving combat effectiveness through refresher training. Thus, the minimum times for commitment stated in this paper have omitted periods required for training to increase combat capability.

Defector testimony and analysis of exercises indicate that, if necessary, Pact units would be committed to combat as soon as they could be mobilized and deployed. The initial combat effectiveness of a force

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having a high percentage of reservists, compared with a professional standing force, is likely to be low.* Pact sources have expressed concern over the fighting quality of mobilized units and especially of reservists.

Analysis of documentary and human-source evidence suggests that even if the Pact ground forces meet their peacetime training requirements, they will not be assured of high-quality trained manpower reserves. Unlike combat-strength units and formations, reduced- and cadre-strength forces do not normally train and operate as fully organized and integrated units in peacetime. Deficiencies would be most pronounced in the cadre-strength units.

According to defector reports, reserve training programs do not enable reservists to maintain all of the necessary skills. Soviet military regulations prescribe that reservists should receive training ranging from a few days up to three months every two or three years. In actual practice, the frequency and duration of training do not approach the established goals.

There is good evidence on the reserve training programs of the Polish and Czechoslovak ground forces. Numerous low-level German repatriates and Czechoslovak and Polish defectors describe highly active programs in which many reservists train annually in the units to which they are assigned for mobilization. Polish reserve training programs, however, often emphasize call-up, assembly, unit political indoctrination, and equipment familiarization procedures more than unit combat training.

In addition to suggested shortcomings in the Polish reserve training program, there are also indications of inadequacies in the active duty training programs of both the Polish and the Czechoslovak ground forces.

* For a discussion of combat effectiveness of mobilized Pact divisions see Warsaw Pact Ground Force Divisions: A Methodology for Assessing Combat Effectiveness, August 1973 [REDACTED].

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Available information indicates that morale problems in the Czechoslovak army resulting from the Warsaw Pact intervention continue. The manner in which individual units achieve and maintain mobilization readiness is inconsistent and the control of personnel and equipment lax. In addition, many Czechoslovak units have been cited for not mastering basic skills during combat training. The Poles have also expressed dissatisfaction with various aspects of combat training in their armed forces. Many Polish units, especially at the army and front level, may be incapable of performing their assigned missions.

Although the Pact countries appear to have problems in maintaining high-quality trained manpower reserves, available evidence indicates general satisfaction with the condition of most of the civilian vehicles and equipment designated for mobilization. These items are usually inspected semiannually and are reported to meet the standards set for them.

Pact planners recognize certain shortcomings in the forces, but they evidently believe that the speed of mobilization, in conjunction with deployment and concentration plans, will allow them to rapidly achieve a numerical superiority in ground strength at decisive points, and that this factor will offset qualitative deficiencies in the forces.

MBFR Implications

If the USSR, in the context of an MBFR agreement, were to withdraw combat divisions or higher echelon support units from the forward area, their availability for reintroduction and their initial effectiveness would depend primarily on whether they were relocated or disbanded.

If they were relocated in the USSR, it is likely that these forces would be maintained at reduced

[REDACTED]

manpower and equipment strengths comparable to those found in present indigenous Soviet divisions and independent units. Provisions would almost certainly be made to ensure mobilization reserves for these reduced-strength forces so that they could be restored rapidly to full strength. Although the quality or combat effectiveness of these forces when mobilized would almost certainly be less than when they were maintained at full strength, their availability for combat would be reduced only by the time necessary to mobilize and move to the area of conflict.

If the units were disbanded, their availability would depend on the disposition of the unit equipment. Destroying the equipment or reissuing it to other units would effectively preclude reconstitution. If the equipment were stored in depots, the Soviets could allocate manpower reserves and establish reserve divisions similar to those found in Eastern Europe. The availability of such divisions would likewise be dependent only on mobilization and deployment times. These forces also would have lower initial combat effectiveness than standing divisions.

It should be noted that the above are only the physical constraints that an MBFR agreement would place on the forces. The moving of divisions from East Germany to the USSR would cost the Soviets more than just the time required for mobilization and forward movement. Divisions in the USSR do not appear as threatening to the West--and East--Europeans as those in the forward area. Also, Moscow might be more inhibited from mobilizing forces based in the USSR and moving them forward in a crisis--because of the provocative nature of this act--than it would be from maneuvering forces already in the area. This would be especially so if an MBFR agreement included provisions constraining reentry of forces into the reduction area.

[REDACTED]

Annex

The Warsaw Pact Armed Forces System
of Combat Readiness

The readiness and alerting system used in the Warsaw Pact armed forces was introduced in 1967 and was developed from earlier readiness systems. Analysis of information provided by military defectors indicates that all Warsaw Pact countries use the identical system. Although the system is used by all branches of service, the following discussion is limited to its applications in the ground forces.

Under the system of combat readiness, the ground force units and formations are maintained at one of three readiness levels: *constant combat readiness*, *increased combat readiness*, or *full combat readiness*.

The combat readiness level of a unit refers to the extent to which that unit is prepared to undertake its mission in a given contingency, in accordance with the timing and scale prescribed in the operations plans for that contingency. Unit readiness is determined by the time needed for a unit to go from its peacetime posture to full combat readiness--the state in which it is manned and equipped for combat.

The quality of individual unit elements--men, weapons, and equipment--and of the entire unit are not determinants of the readiness level. Analysis of exercises and defector testimony indicates that units are intended to be committed on schedule--regardless of any qualitative shortcomings.

The general readiness requirements most frequently mentioned by defectors and the general kinds of activities which will be undertaken by all ground force formations at each of the three readiness levels are summarized on page 26. More detailed guidelines exist, but they are tailored for individual units and will vary according to the specific requirements and missions of those units.

Combat Readiness Levels of Warsaw Pact Ground Forces

Constant Combat Readiness

Minimum manpower and equipment levels (usually 70-90 percent of the authorized peacetime strength) are maintained in the unit at all times.

Weapons, trucks, and other equipment are maintained in a condition to be used on short notice. Every piece of equipment that has been used during the day is to be checked for efficiency and, like the rest of the unit equipment, must be ready for immediate operation.

Reserve supplies (ammunition, POL, spare parts, etc.) are maintained in usable condition and loaded on the unit's motor transport so that the unit can quickly leave the garrison.

Units must be capable at all times of vacating their peacetime garrisons within 30 minutes to an hour after receiving an alert (except in those cadre units where manpower limitations make this an impossibility), because of the danger of nuclear attack, or even conventional air attack.

Troops and staffs conduct normal peacetime combat training.

Increased Combat Readiness

All units and active duty personnel who are away on leave, detail, school, or exercises are recalled to their garrisons.

Some reservists and motor vehicles are called up from the economy to facilitate full mobilization if it is ordered.

Active duty personnel and equipment (referred to as mobilization nuclei) are detached and sent to low-strength cadre and reserve units.

Equipment and armaments are removed from permanent storage.

Any reserve supplies not yet on transport vehicles are loaded.

Ammunition is loaded into combat vehicles.

Repairs on equipment are accelerated and completed.

Service units and workshops that are not included in the wartime tables of organization are disbanded or transferred. Work contracts with civilian workers are terminated.

Organization groups or command teams are dispatched to unit alert or assembly areas to establish a field communications system and to organize the operation of command posts.

A troop movement control system is established.

Unit commanders are issued the required documentation for the command of troops in wartime.

Some units may leave their garrisons and go to assembly, staging, or concentration areas.

A limited tactical and political training schedule may continue, but only in the vicinity of the garrisons, or in the alert and assembly areas.

Full Combat Readiness

Units move as rapidly as possible from their garrisons to the alert or assembly areas, together with the available equipment and reserve supplies.

Full mobilization is ordered and the units receive reservists, transport means, equipment, and appropriate supplies from the national economy and national reserves.

The wartime system of command and supply is established.

Envelopes containing combat orders are issued to the units.

Troops are issued ammunition.

All routine unit tactical training ceases.

Time Limits for Achieving Full Combat Readiness

Evidence on time limits for achieving *full combat readiness* in the Warsaw Pact ground forces indicates that times will vary according to the missions of individual units. The maximum allowable time for Pact divisions in Eastern Europe that form the first line of defense against NATO is about four hours. Second-echelon* East European divisions to their rear and Soviet divisions in the USSR are allowed up to 24 hours. East European reserve divisions are allowed from 48 to 72 hours. (See map, next page.)

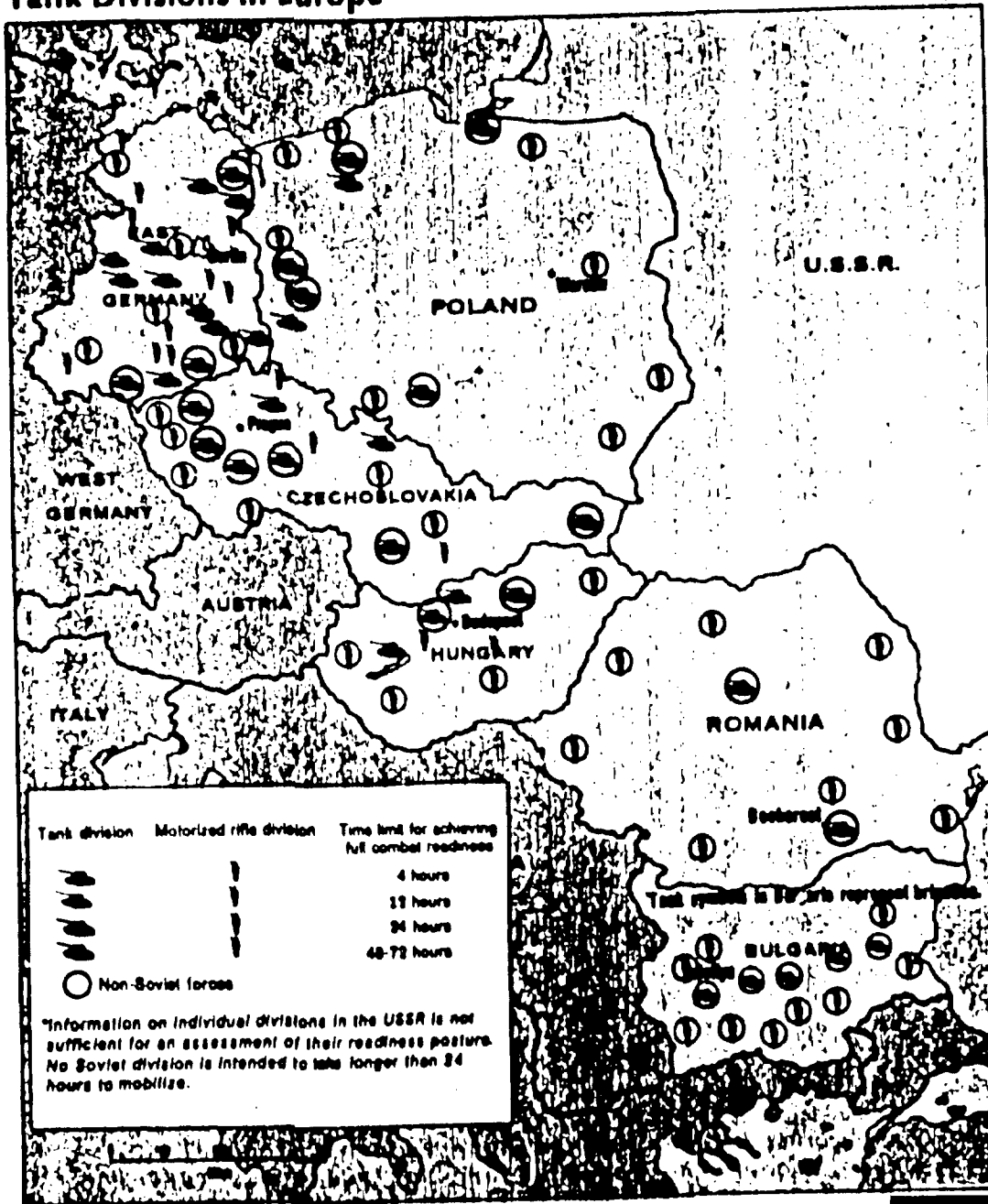
Criterion for Achieving Full Combat Readiness

Pact sources make little mention of qualitative requirements necessary for units to achieve *full combat readiness* under this system. On balance, they indicate that when Pact ground force units and formations have assembled in their alert, mobilization, or concentration areas with most or all of their manpower and equipment, and are under the field system of supply and command, they are considered combat ready.

By US standards, no reduced- or cadre-strength Warsaw Pact ground force divisions or units would be considered combat ready after mobilization until considerable retraining had been carried out. Available evidence indicates, however, that there will be little or no training of Warsaw Pact forces after mobilization. Furthermore, the time limits prescribed for Warsaw Pact ground force formations to achieve *full combat readiness* would allow for unit

* In Pact military terminology "echelon" normally is used in a tactical context to describe the employment of troops in battle. Units initially committed constitute the first echelon, while other forces, to be committed later, constitute succeeding echelons. These succeeding echelons are not reserve forces intended to replenish or augment forces already engaged. They often have separate objectives of their own.

Readiness Posture of Warsaw Pact Motorized Rifle and Tank Divisions in Europe*



[REDACTED]

assembly and the establishment of the field system of command and supply, but not for any large-scale retraining of mobilized personnel or units. The greater the likelihood of impending conflict, the more likely the Pact would be to focus on organization, assembly, and deployment of the combat units and formations so as to ensure their capability to concentrate and attack or deploy further upon command. Unit training to increase combat proficiency which required personnel and equipment to be moved from the assembly, staging, or concentration area would probably occur only if the expected hostilities did not appear imminent.

[REDACTED]

Related Publications of
The Office of Strategic Research

[REDACTED]
September 1973

*Logistics Posture of Soviet Forces
in East Germany* [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
August 1973

*Warsaw Pact Ground Forces Divi-
sions: A Methodology for Assess-
ing Combat Effectiveness* [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
September 1972

*Peacetime Posture of Warsaw Pact
Ground Force Divisions Facing
the NATO Central Region* [REDACTED]