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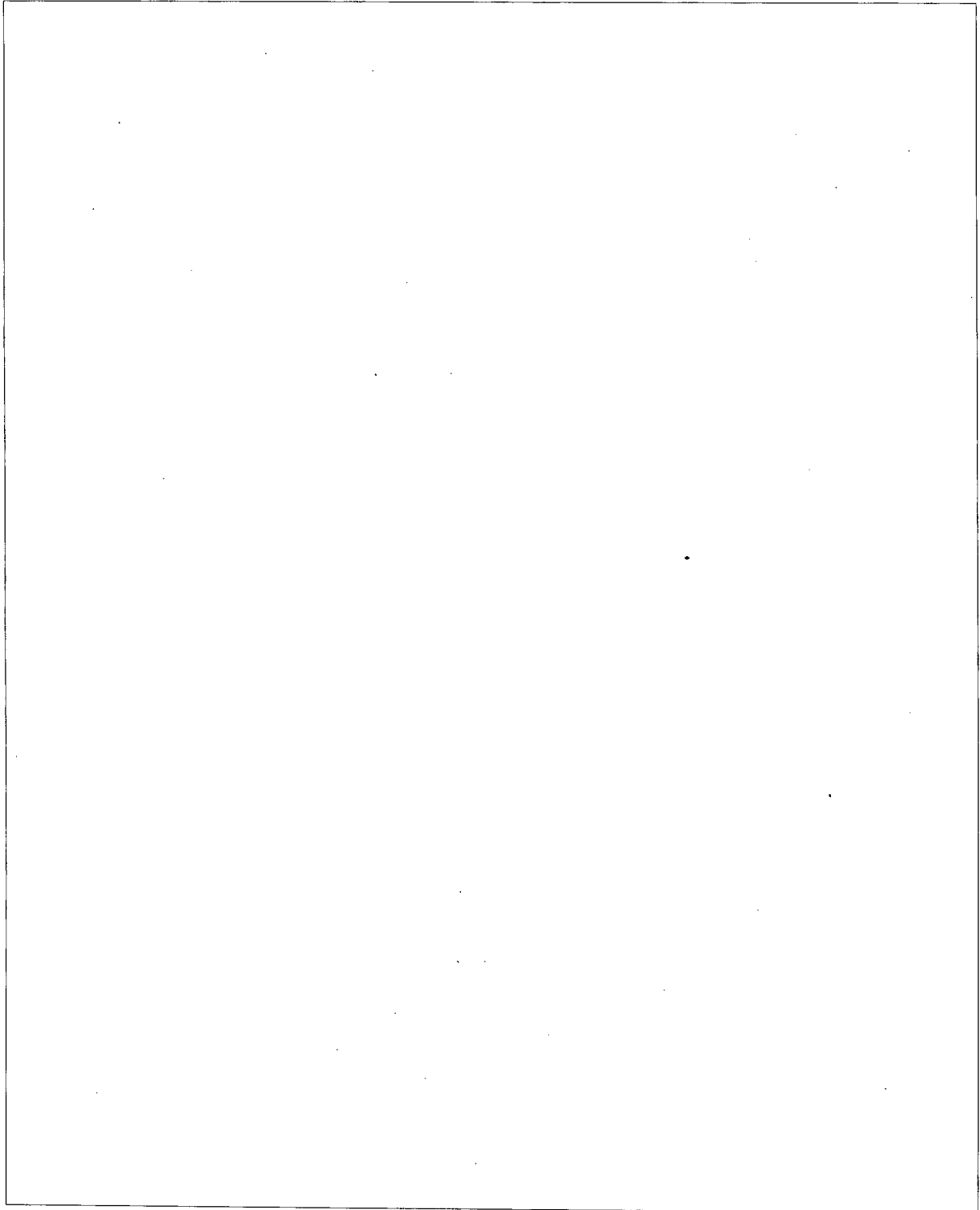
# Warsaw Pact Forces in Czechoslovakia

A Research Paper

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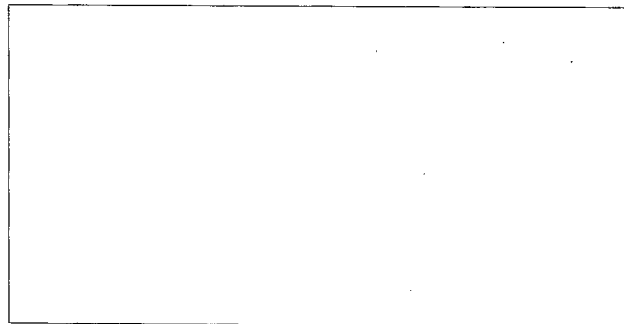


# Warsaw Pact Forces in Czechoslovakia



A Research Paper

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was used in the preparation of this report.*




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SR 80-100361X


MARCH 1980





**Warsaw Pact Forces  
in Czechoslovakia** 



**Overview**

Since the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, both Czech forces and Soviet forces stationed there have been reorganized and equipped with newer weapons, and Pact plans for their use have been modified. In a war in Europe, Czech forces and the Soviet Central Group of Forces (CGF) in Czechoslovakia would constitute the Southwest Front, one of three first-echelon Warsaw Pact fronts that would conduct the initial offensive operations against the NATO Central Region. This front would engage NATO forces in southern West Germany, in an area between Mannheim and the Swiss border. 

As Soviet confidence in the reliability of Czech forces has grown, the Czechs have been given more responsibility for operations of the Southwest Front. This permits greater flexibility in Soviet planning for the use of the CGF's five ground divisions and small air force. Exercises since 1974 indicate that, if necessary, the CGF could be resubordinated to the Central Front or to the second-echelon Carpathian Front. The Soviets might also regard a reduction of the CGF as an acceptable option should an agreement be reached on mutual and balanced force reduction. 

The most significant effect of the organizational and equipment changes in the Czech ground forces has been an improvement in their conventional artillery. Changes have included the formation of an artillery division as well as increases in the artillery holdings of maneuver divisions. The Czech air and air defense forces are receiving late-model MIG-21s and MIG-23s. 

In the CGF, modernization parallels that in other Soviet forces in Central Europe but is proceeding at a slower pace. New equipment includes self-propelled artillery, mobile surface-to-air missiles, and ground attack helicopters. Some expansion has also been noted in the tank and artillery units of motorized rifle regiments. 

 Czechoslovakia is overcommitted militarily to the Warsaw Pact, devoting a greater proportion of population to standing military forces than either Poland or East Germany. The armed forces, already taking a high percentage of annual draft eligibles, will face in the future a generally smaller conscript pool as well as increasing competition for available manpower from the economic sector. These demographic constraints leave little room for significant expansion of Czech forces in the near future. 



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### Warsaw Pact Forces in Czechoslovakia

#### Czechoslovak People's Army

By Western standards of military organization, the Czechoslovak People's Army (CSLA) would be considered a single unified armed service with three major operational components:

- A ground combat force comprising maneuver divisions (motorized infantry and tank) and other combat and support units, which in wartime would be joined by Soviet forces stationed in Czechoslovakia to form a front.<sup>1</sup>
- A tactical air army, which also is to be part of the wartime front.
- An air defense army consisting of interceptor, surface-to-air missile, and radar units organized into an integrated national air defense system.

Behind these operational components is a unified logistics support and defense management structure (see figure 1). The management structure at the Ministry of National Defense level consists of the General Staff and four main directorates (for combat preparedness, political affairs, rear services, and air and air defense forces), as well as directorates to deal with the planning, procurement, training procedures, and tactical doctrine of the various arms and services. The implementing units for the service and logistic support of the forces are similar to what are called in the West "service of common concern" components.

In wartime, a front headquarters would be formed, and the field and tactical air armies would come under Warsaw Pact operational command, for offensive operations outside Czechoslovakia (see figure 2). Support and administrative units remaining within Czechoslovakia would form a territorial defense system to be controlled ultimately by the Defense Council of State through a territorial military command. The two military district headquarters would play an

<sup>1</sup> In Warsaw Pact terminology a *front* is a joint forces command, roughly analogous to a US army group, usually consisting of several field armies and a tactical air army plus combat and service support units. The Czech-Soviet front has exercised under various designations, depending on the primary focus of the exercise. It is most often designated the Southwest Front and will be referred to as such in this paper.

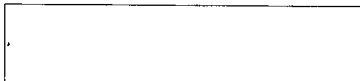
important role in this territorial system, representing a key command level to ensure that the critical territorial support functions were carried out and to govern the territory of Czechoslovakia through subordinate regional and county territorial military administrations

In peacetime, Czechoslovak ground forces are estimated to total about 143,000 men and the air and air defense forces about 57,000.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Border Guards (9,500) and Civil Defense Troops (2,000) are manned by conscripts and therefore are included in our estimate of the Czech armed forces total—about 212,000.

**Ground Forces.** In peacetime, the ground forces are subordinate to the two military districts, which roughly divide the country in half (see figure 3). The military district headquarters serves in the chain of command between the Ministry of Defense and the tactical units and is responsible for unit readiness and training. It also maintains links with the civilian population and is responsible, through the subordinate regional and country military headquarters, for recruitment and conscription, billeting and construction, military transport, and other administrative and logistics functions within its geographical area.

Although the two Czechoslovak military districts are roughly equal in geographic terms, the Western Military District (WMD) has much larger forces than the Eastern Military District (EMD) (see table 1). This inequality has historical roots. A reorganization in 1969 and 1970—planned in large part before the events of August 1968 but shaped to some extent by the need to accommodate Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia—resulted in the merging of the former Western and Central Military Districts into a single district, the Western Military District. At the same time, divisional manning was increased at the expense of some support units that were deactivated or reduced in size. The

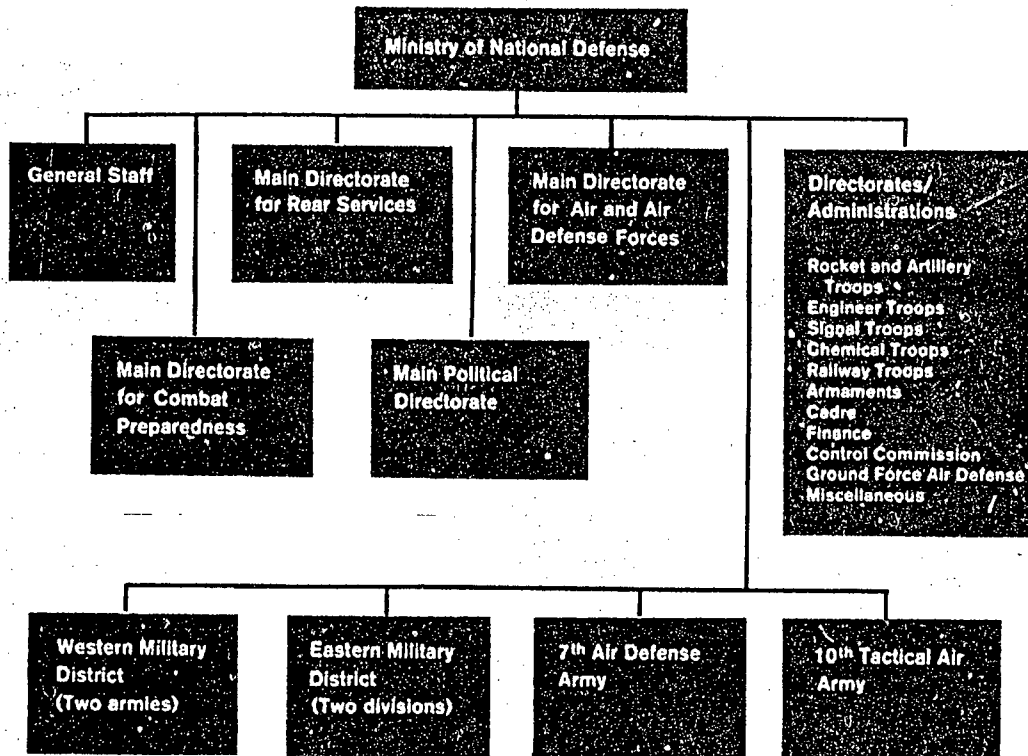
<sup>2</sup> All rear services personnel serving both ground and aviation units—that is, performing services of common concern—are counted as ground force manpower.



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Peacetime Structure of Czech Armed Forces

Figure 1

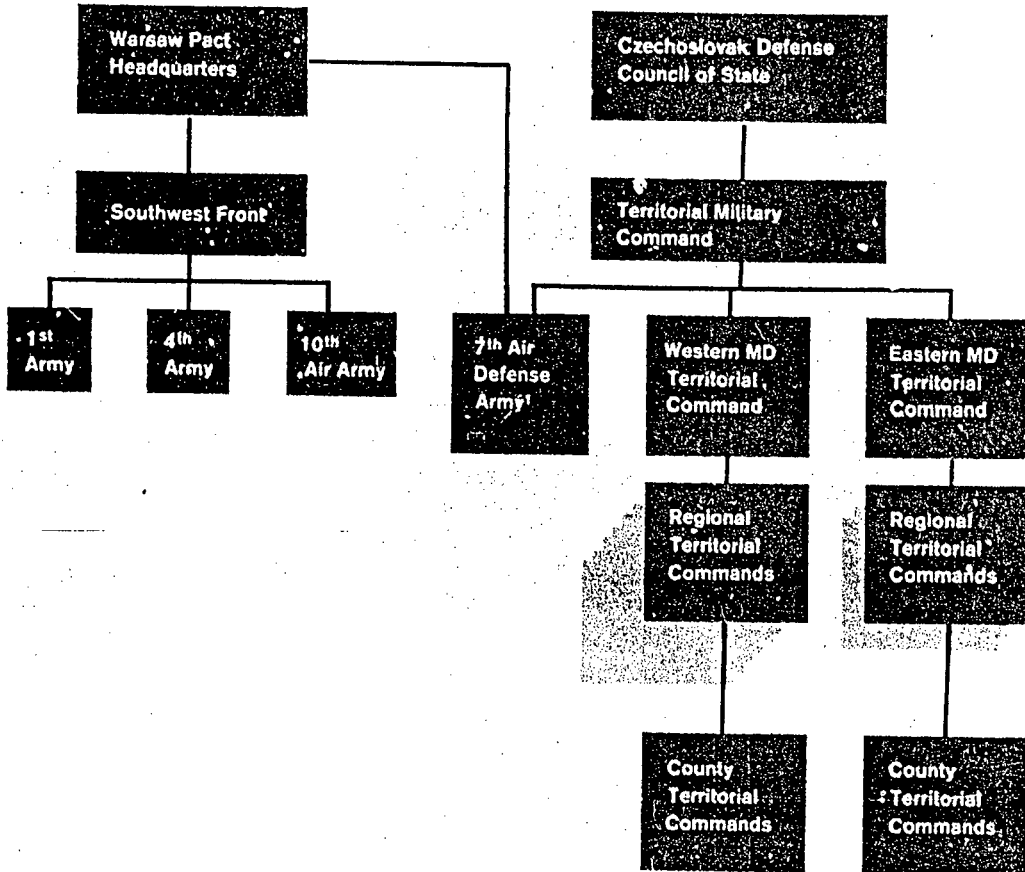


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Wartime Structure of Czech Armed Forces

Figure 2



<sup>1</sup> The 7th Air Defense Army is integrated into the Warsaw Pact Air Defense Network

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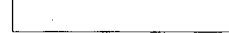
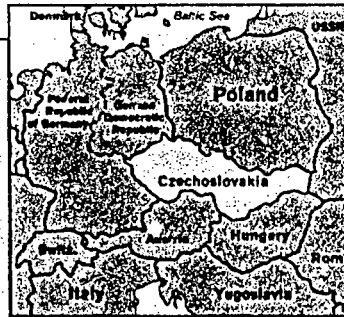
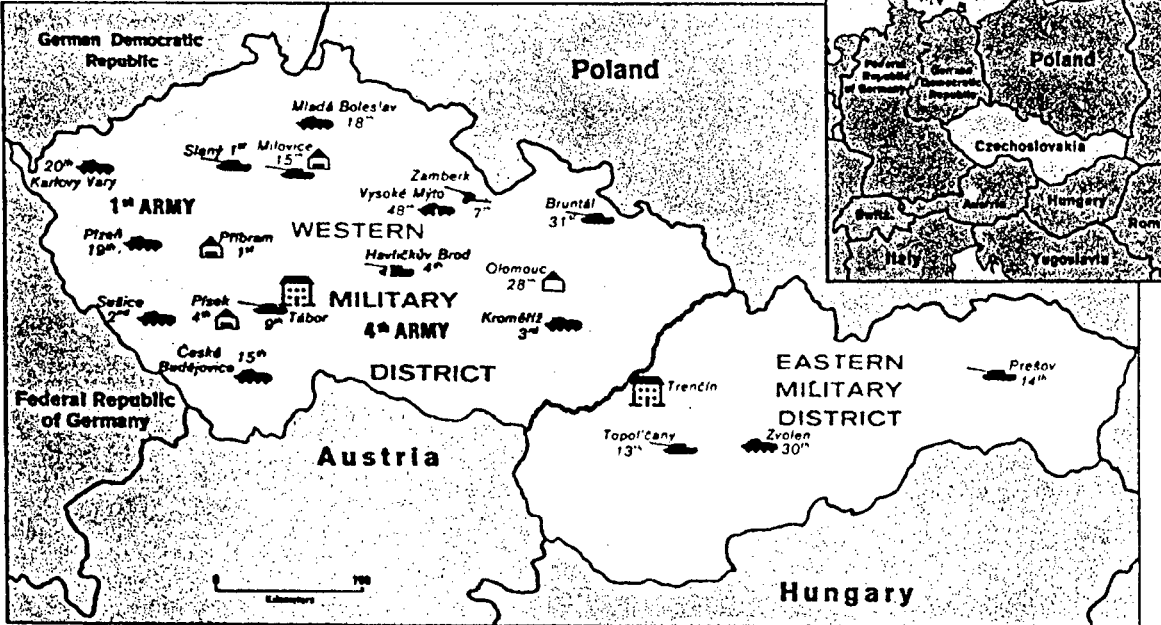


Figure 3

Ground Forces in Czechoslovakia



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Table 1

Organization and Manpower of Czech Ground Forces

Organization	Manning	
	Peacetime	Wartime
Headquarters, support, and rear services	35,000	40,000
<b>Western Military District (wartime front headquarters)</b>		
Headquarters, combat support, and rear services	15,000	65,000
<b>1st Army</b>		
1st Tank Division	7,000	9,000
2nd Motorized Rifle Division	8,500	11,400
19th Motorized Rifle Division	8,500	11,400
20th Motorized Rifle Division	8,800	11,400
Army support and rear services	11,600	30,000
<b>4th Army</b>		
4th Tank Division	6,800	8,800
9th Tank Division	7,000	9,000
15th Motorized Rifle Division	8,400	11,300
3rd Motorized Rifle Division	4,400	11,100
Army support and rear services	11,200	30,000
Airborne regiment/brigade	1,500	2,000
Mobilization motorized rifle division		11,000
Mobilization tank division		9,000
<b>Eastern Military District</b>		
Headquarters, combat support, and rear services	3,900	12,000
13th Tank Division	2,700	8,800
14th Tank Division	2,700	8,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>143,000</b>	<b>390,000</b>

This table is

wartime front headquarters was moved from the Ministry of National Defense to the WMD headquarters at Tabor. (In wartime, the WMD headquarters would split to form both the headquarters of the Southwest Front and a territorial headquarters to administer the geographic area of the district.)

The WMD incorporates most of the Czech ground forces, including all of the highest strength divisions and virtually all of the nondivisional elements of operational significance. The two Czech armies, the 1st Army (with headquarters at Pribram) and the 4th Army (with headquarters at Pisek), are subordinate in peacetime to the WMD headquarters. Each army controls four divisions: the 1st Army has three motorized rifle divisions (MRDs) and one tank division (TD); the 4th Army has two MRDs and two TDs.

A front-level artillery division (subordinate to the WMD headquarters in peacetime and to the front in wartime) has been formed in recent years. An additional artillery brigade is subordinate to each army. The Czechs have three Scud missile brigades, all in the WMD, with one subordinate to the district and one to each of the two armies. All of the mobile SAMs (SA-4s and SA-6s) are in the WMD; the SA-4 units are directly subordinate to the WMD and the SA-6 units are subordinate to the two armies and to two divisions. Motor transport regiments or brigades are also subordinate to the WMD and to each army. The WMD or elements thereof are the part of the Czech force identified most often as participating in large-scale exercises involving the Southwest Front.

In terms of forces and missions, the Eastern Military District is much less significant. It has only two divisions—both at low strength—and few higher echelon headquarters or support units.

The lesser significance of the EMD divisions is evident in the differences between them and other peacetime active divisions. The two EMD divisions are geographically remote from other divisions and from the NATO border, and their subelements are scattered over a

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comparatively wide geographic area. In peacetime, the two divisions are subordinate directly to the EMD headquarters, with no intermediate army echelon and no command association with the WMD. Their peacetime manning is much lower than that of other active Czech divisions, and they would require more time to mobilize and deploy. The EMD divisions are also not as organizationally complete or as well equipped as the other Czech divisions. Neither EMD division has a FROG battalion, and a shortage of tanks in the easternmost division suggests it may be a hybrid with two tank regiments and two motorized rifle regiments.

**Mobilization Divisions.** Czech plans envision the formation in wartime of at least two mobilization divisions—one tank division and one motorized rifle division. The only elements of these two divisions that are active in peacetime are two FROG battalions, which are subordinate to active divisions. Until 1968 one of these FROG battalions belonged to the 13th Tank Division, now an EMD division. Before the Soviet invasion, the 13th TD was an elite, capital-area unit. After the invasion, it was purged and moved to its present garrison area in Slovakia, but its FROG battalion remained in the Prague area. This battalion remained active and was resubordinated to the 4th Tank Division, which maintains stored equipment believed intended for one of the mobilization divisions. The 1st Tank Division, which maintains equipment believed intended for the second Czech mobilization division, also has two active FROG battalions. The tanks for the mobilization divisions presumably are among the 700 tanks the Czechs maintain in storage.

**Air and Air Defense Forces.** Both the CSLA and the Soviet Central Group of Forces (CGF) in Czechoslovakia possess air elements—the Czechs have a tactical air army and an air defense army, and the CGF has a comparatively small tactical air force. The Czechs provide the bulk of the air and air defense forces based in Czechoslovakia, with nearly 90 percent of the manpower, about 85 percent of the aircraft, and all the fixed surface-to-air missile sites. The peacetime manpower of the Czech air and air defense forces is about 57,000. This is believed to be less than 70 percent of their intended wartime strength. The Czech aircraft

inventory includes about 300 counterair or air defense aircraft, about 170 ground attack fighters, nearly 100 combat aircraft assigned to reconnaissance units, and about 200 combat-capable trainer aircraft.

The Czech 10th Air Army's mission is to provide tactical air combat support to Czech ground forces and possibly to Soviet forces when the Soviets are involved in Southwest Front operations. Its forces include two subordinate combat divisions, an independent reconnaissance regiment, and some independent helicopter units (see figure 4). The 1st Fighter Division has three counterair regiments, all equipped with MIG-21 variants. The 34th Fighter-Bomber Division has four subordinate ground attack regiments, which are equipped with MIG-21s, MIG-15s, SU-7s, and a few MIG-23s. Helicopter units include one general support unit serving the Ministry of National Defense, and four assault regiments and an independent assault squadron that provide airlift for ground forces.

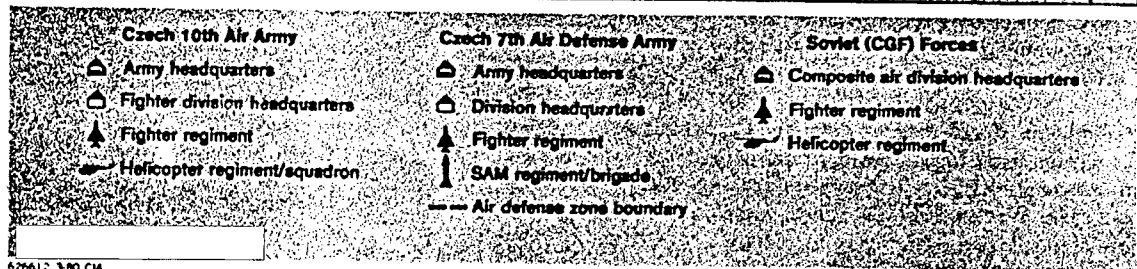
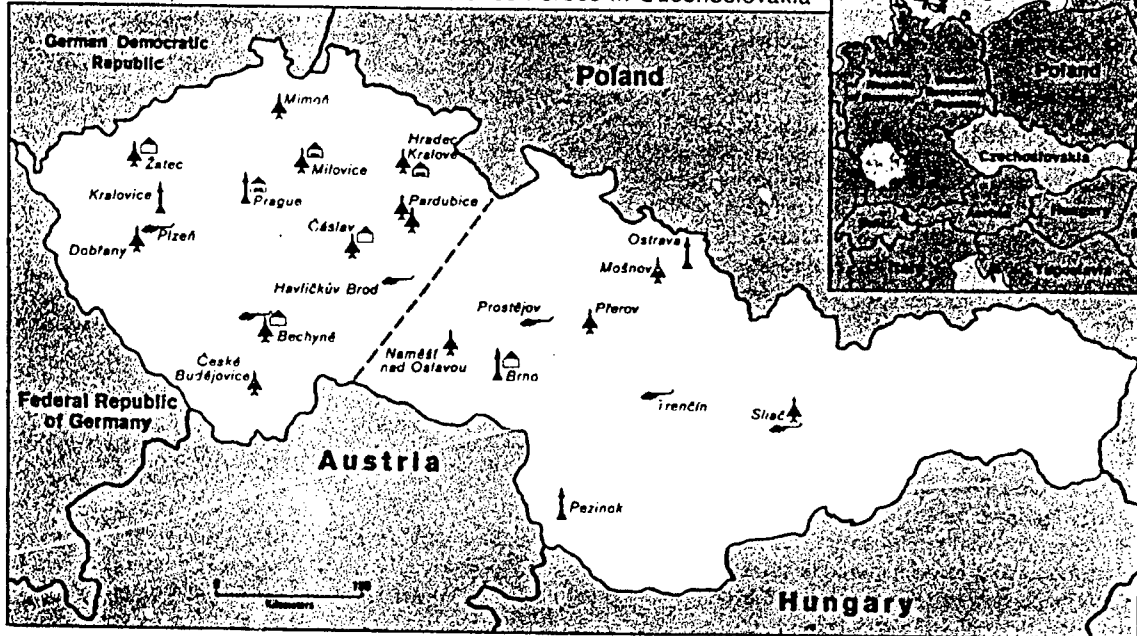
The Czech 7th Air Defense Army is an integrated force of fighter-interceptors, surface-to-air missiles, and air surveillance and aircraft control radar sites. This army controls all air defense operations over Czechoslovakia through two air defense zones. Each zone is operated by an air defense division, which maintains a mix of surveillance radars, interceptors, and SAMs. The combined force includes three MIG-21 interceptor regiments, 24 SA-2 and 7 SA-3 battalions, and more than 50 radar sites. Most of the SAMs and radars are in the western border region and near the major cities of Prague, Brno, Bratislava, and Ostrava. In peacetime, the 7th Air Defense Army apparently has operational—but not administrative—control over the 10th Air Army's three tactical fighter regiments.

**The Czech Military Burden.** The burden Czechoslovakia's military forces impose on its national resources in peacetime is at least as great as—and in some areas greater than—that of Czechoslovakia's non-Soviet Warsaw Pact allies in Central Europe. This is most apparent in Czechoslovakia's combat ground forces. The Czechs maintain a comparatively large number of peacetime active ground force divisions (10). East Germany, with a larger overall population and with a greater number of draft-age males annually, maintains

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Figure 4

Peacetime Disposition of Air and Air Defense Forces in Czechoslovakia



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only six divisions active in peacetime. Poland, with a population more than twice that of Czechoslovakia and with about three times as many draft eligibles annually, maintains only 13 peacetime active divisions. [ ]

We estimate that none of the seven Czech divisions we consider to be most combat ready and intended for early, if not immediate, commitment is manned at greater than 80 percent of its authorized wartime manning. In view of the comparisons described above, it is not surprising that divisions in both East Germany and Poland are generally manned in peacetime at a higher percentage of their authorized wartime strength than those in Czechoslovakia. [ ]

The decision to maintain 10 peacetime divisions can probably be traced to pressures from the Soviets to maximize the Czech contribution to the Warsaw Pact. It allows the Czechs to build quickly a sizable wartime combat force. From the Czech—and probably the Soviet—point of view, the sacrifice in the Czechs' immediate combat readiness in favor of a larger wartime combat force may well be an acceptable risk, a risk made even more acceptable to the Soviets by the presence since 1968 of Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia. The Czechs do have the manpower, in the form of a large number of reservists, to mobilize to meet their wartime authorized manning levels. [ ]

[ ] Czech leaders [ ] in the face of Soviet pressure, overcommitted Czech forces when Czechoslovakia joined the Warsaw Pact. The problem was exacerbated by subsequent demographic constraints and competitive economic pressures. [ ] a former Czech defense minister who said that throughout the sixties the consistent Soviet rejoinder to the defense minister's protestations about this problem was an offer to station Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. [ ]

#### The Soviet Central Group of Forces

The Soviet Central Group of Forces in Czechoslovakia comprises five ground divisions—two tank divisions and three MRDs—and associated nondivisional support elements (see figure 3). There is also a small air force composed of two counterair fighter regiments and reconnaissance, transport, and helicopter units. [ ]

**Ground Forces.** In peacetime, the CGF headquarters at Milovice directly controls one tank division and one motorized rifle division. The other three divisions—two motorized rifle and one tank—are subordinate to the 28th Corps Headquarters at Olomouc, which is in turn subordinate to the CGF headquarters. In [ ] wartime organization, all five divisions perform as an army. Combat support units directly subordinate to CGF headquarters include an artillery brigade, a Scud brigade, and an SA-4 brigade. An additional antiaircraft artillery (AAA) regiment, which would come under army command in wartime, is subordinate in peacetime to the 28th Corps. [ ]

The geographic disposition of CGF forces appears designed to meet both combat and occupation missions. The five divisions—arrayed in an arc stretching from the northwest to the Hungarian border east of Bratislava—dominate the major lines of communication with East Germany, Poland, and Hungary. This should ensure their independent means of reinforcement and resupply from outside Czechoslovakia in a period of tension or during a war. This disposition also places major Soviet combat divisions close to—but not in—the major Czech urban areas, the most likely scenes of renewed Czech political unrest. [ ]

In wartime the three divisions in the northern and northwest part of the country could move to the western border areas of Czechoslovakia in about 24 hours. The two divisions farther east would require about three days to reach the western border, or they could be held back as a reserve or to guard the lines of communication. [ ] exercise, elemen [ ]

Although none of the large formations of Soviet troops are based near the Czech borders with West Germany and Austria, small units, generally signal and radio/radar intercept troops, are in border areas. [ ]

[ ] a small Soviet unit is permanently based in the Boletice Training Area, near the triborder area southwest of Ceske Budejovice. [ ]

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**Table 2**

**Organization and Manpower of CGF Ground Forces**

Organization	Manning	
	Peacetime	Wartime
<b>Headquarters, combat support, and rear services</b>	9,900	14,200
18th Guards Motorized Rifle Division	11,900	12,525
15th Guards Tank Division	9,400	9,900
<b>28th Corps</b>		
Headquarters, combat support, and rear services	2,500	2,725
31st Tank Division	9,400	9,900
30th Guards Motorized Rifle Division	11,900	12,525
48th Motorized Rifle Division	11,900	12,525
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,900</b>	<b>74,300</b>

We estimate the overall peacetime strength of the CGF ground forces to be about 67,000 men, or about 90 percent of the estimated authorized wartime strength of about 74,000 (see table 2). The combat divisions are judged to be manned at about 95 percent of full wartime strength, as are nondivisional combat support units. Other supporting elements are probably manned at lower percentages of intended wartime strength. Rear service elements may be manned as low as 45 to 50 percent overall, although certain support elements, such as the mobile rocket technical base (supporting the Scud brigade) and the motor transport units, are believed to be more fully manned.

Understrength units probably would be filled out by reassigning personnel detailed to peacetime functions that would not be performed in wartime and by mobilizing others, probably including Soviet civilians in Czechoslovakia. Soviet civilians (mostly army veterans) are known to be working under contract in Soviet garrisons in Czechoslovakia, but their number and precise wartime role cannot be determined from the available evidence. In any case, the combat and combat support units appear to have sufficient manning in peacetime to conduct initial wartime operations.

*Air Forces.* The CGF air element, the 131st Composite Air Division, is a small force, much smaller than the Czech air and air defense forces. Peacetime manpower of the division is only about 7,400 (believed to be less than 70 percent of intended wartime strength). Only about 100 combat aircraft are assigned to the CGF.

The division is notable for its lack of ground attack fighters. It has two counterair fighter regiments, one with MIG-21s and the other with MIG-23s, a MIG-21 reconnaissance regiment, and transport and helicopter units. The helicopter units include a ground attack regiment equipped with HIND helicopters and four smaller general support units.

*Service in Czechoslovakia.* In peacetime the CGF performs not only the usual training to achieve and maintain combat readiness but also plays an occupation role. This role has become a passive one, but the Soviet military presence retains important political implications for the populace. The Soviets maintain a generally low profile in Czechoslovakia, but their disposition ensures easy access to major urban areas, and they would be able to deal quickly and decisively with any renewed Czech unrest.

Service in Czechoslovakia is disliked by Soviet conscripts, who make up some 75 percent of the CGF. Although the troops serving in the CGF have certain advantages, such as pay benefits and better quality uniforms and medical care than their counterparts receive in the Soviet Union, discipline is stricter, more time is spent in the field, and restrictions on leave and passes normally result in virtually no civilian contact for the duration of the conscript's service. Soviet officers serving in the CGF find the tours more attractive than do the conscripts, because they have fewer leave restrictions, they have increased access to consumer goods, and they can take their families with them.

CGF work details to the Czech civilian economy, which help ease the Czech labor shortage, are the exception to the lack of civilian contact for conscripts. In a regular rotation, CGF troops assist in heavy and light manufacturing, in the lumber industry, and in

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harvesting, for which service the unit, not the individual, is reimbursed. Although indications are that this practice is widespread, the extent to which these details affect the readiness of CGF units is uncertain. □

**Comparison With Other Groups of Forces.** The CGF is smaller than the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, is less modern, and plays a less dominant military role from the overall Pact viewpoint. The CGF may retain more flexible options for wartime involvement, however. The CGF is in many respects comparable to the Soviet Southern Group of Forces (SGF) in Hungary. The two forces are about the same size, and each would probably operate as an army in wartime. The pace of modernization appears to be somewhat more rapid in the SGF, and the SGF may dominate the Hungarian military scene more than does the CGF in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Northern Group of Forces (NGF) in Poland, with only two divisions and an air force, is not intended for integration with the forces of its host country in wartime and has little in common with the CGF. □

#### Wartime Organization and Role of Warsaw Pact Forces in Czechoslovakia

The Southwest Front, composed of the Czechoslovak People's Army and the CGF, would be one of three fronts constituting the initial Warsaw Pact offensive force opposite the NATO Central Region. The estimated wartime strengths of the Southwest Front are shown in table 3. The other first-echelon fronts are the Central Front, which would be made up of the East German Forces, the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG), and the two Soviet divisions in Poland; and the Northern Front, which would consist of the Polish forces. □

**Wartime Mission.** Since it was created in the mid-sixties, the Southwest Front's wartime mission has been to conduct operations into southern Germany, in the area from Mannheim south to the Swiss border. The principal Western forces in this area are elements of the US VII Corps, the West German II Corps, the French II Corps, and the brigade-size Canadian Mechanized Combat Group. □

Table 3

Projected Wartime Strengths of the Southwest Front

	Men <sup>1</sup>	Divisions	Tanks	Aircraft
Czech	395,000	12 <sup>2</sup>	3,340	570
Soviet (CGF)	85,000	5	1,400	105
Total	480,000	17	4,740	675

<sup>1</sup> Includes ground, air, and national air defense forces.

<sup>2</sup> Includes two mobilization divisions.

□  
Before 1968 the Czechs had independent national responsibility to form the Southwest Front and were relied on by the Pact to conduct the initial offensive opposite Czech borders. Then as now, a Soviet front made up of forces from the Carpathian Military District was intended as a second-echelon force in the area of initial Czech responsibility. □

□ although Czech forces were nominally supposed to advance to the Rhine, they were not really expected to do much more than move into southern West Germany and tie up NATO forces in the area until Soviet forces arrived to conduct the major advance. □

□ both Czech and Soviet forces in the front's first echelon, most often as three armies, with the CGF as the army on the right (next to the southern flank of the Central Front) and the two Czech armies on the left. □ a third Czech army, apparently formed from low-strength and mobilization divisions. The Eastern Military District headquarters may have been the nucleus of this army. A third army could act as a reserve or second-echelon army, or, given adequate mobilization and deployment time, it could function as a fourth first-echelon army of the Southwest Front. □

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[Redacted]

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[redacted] Pact planners expect to employ the CGF army initially under the command of the Southwest Front but consider it a force that also could be resubordinated to the Central Front if needed. It could provide a screen for the southern flank of that critical front should the Czech forces fail to keep pace [redacted] once the second-echelon Soviet front arrives on line, the CGF may be resubordinated to it [redacted]. [redacted] the CGF may initially [redacted] an independent army in the first echelon, becoming subordinate to a front only later, when it joined the Carpathian Front as the second echelon advanced. [redacted]

[redacted] the basic Southwest Front mission as a drive toward the Rhine, with a disruption of NATO mobilization and the tying up of NATO forces as minimum goals [redacted] the Southwest Front, at least in the late 1960s, was intended to be self-sustaining for only the initial phase of the offensive, with the second-echelon Carpathian Front to take over on the fourth, fifth, or sixth day. [redacted]

[redacted] under some contingency plans the two divisions of the Eastern Military District would not be used in a Pact offensive into the NATO Central Region but would remain in the rear area for territorial defense [redacted] the EMD divisions have participated in the offensive against NATO but as reserve divisions with a role less significant than that of the two Czech mobilization divisions. [redacted] the EMD divisions apparently did participate in the first echelon of the Southwest Front, as part of a third Czech field army probably formed from the EMD and the mobilization divisions. [redacted]

[redacted] When a threat from the Austrian axis is not anticipated, EMD divisions are more likely to assume the role of reserve divisions, replacing first-echelon divisions as needed. [redacted]

[redacted] the two EMD divisions were identified as reserve divisions, one of which replaced a 4th Army first-echelon division several days after hostilities began. [redacted]

The presence of a third Czech army, [redacted] is unusual. The logical origin of higher echelon support units for this army would be the EMD; however, we have identified few such units in this district. [redacted]

**Mobilization and Reinforcement.** A period of mobilization would be necessary to bring the Southwest Front to full combat readiness. Czech forces in particular require considerable additional manning. Seven divisions are maintained at about 75 percent of their wartime manning level and could probably be brought to full strength, in accordance with Czech mobilization plans, within 24 hours; another 24 hours might be required for assembly and movement to concentration areas. Still more time would be required for operational deployment. About four days of preparation is considered the minimum time necessary for coordinated Southwest Front offensive operations with two armies. Fleshing out the additional lower strength peacetime active divisions and two intended mobilization divisions would require additional time. [redacted]

There is some evidence that the Czechs may plan a greater combat role for the two mobilization divisions than for the lower strength peacetime active divisions of the Eastern Military District and thus place a high priority on their mobilization. [redacted] two Czech armies, the mobilization divisions have been

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integrated into the first-echelon armies, while the lower strength peacetime active divisions have remained as individual reserve divisions. While this seems paradoxical, it may have been made possible by the positioning of stored equipment, the peacetime designation of two FROG battalions as mobilization units, and the use of professional cadres from active divisions and school faculties to form the nuclei of the mobilization divisions. A tank storage site at Dobricany, for example, has long maintained a regiment of tanks newer than those in some peacetime active units. T-54 tanks were in storage there in 1965, when some T-34s were still in use in active units. Moreover, these T-54s were replaced by new T-55 tanks as early as 1971 [redacted]

Another possibility for the employment of mobilization divisions [redacted] is their integration with lower strength peacetime active divisions to form a third Czech army. This would probably require at least the full two weeks [redacted]

[redacted] also reflected the eventual mobilization of five more Czech divisions, for a total of 17 (and three Czech armies). Little is known of these additional mobilization divisions; apart from bridging equipment appropriate for a possible additional motorized rifle division, equipment to outfit them has not been identified [redacted] however, the Czechs have the ability to mobilize a number of light infantry divisions for occupation purposes. [redacted]

The CGF, like other Soviet forces in Central Europe, probably could move to concentration areas in 24 hours. Some callup of reservists may be necessary, in particular to fill out rear services units, but the force is assessed as capable of going to war, especially to defend against an attack, on short notice. [redacted]

[redacted] a training alert stressing speed required the regiment to clear the barracks area in 45 minutes. (Soviet restrictions on leave and passes help ensure a speedy alert and minimize a provocative presence in the civilian community.) [redacted]

[redacted]

**Logistics Considerations.** Logistics in the Southwest Front are structured according to Warsaw Pact doctrine, with the organizational flow of field supplies running from the front supply base downward to regimental supply points. Ammunition and POL are the priority supply items. Depot capacities identified appear more than adequate to meet the needs suggested by the various exercise scenarios [redacted]

The rear service organization in both forces is difficult to detail, but in the critical area of transportation both seem to have adequate resources. Three motor transport brigades, a motor transport regiment in each army, and several smaller motor transport units have been identified in Czech forces, and the Czechs have established a system for mobilizing large numbers of civilian vehicles. The CGF includes two motor transport regiments among its service-support units, more than usual for a five-division army. [redacted]

The transportation system in Czechoslovakia is well suited for the movement of large military forces. The distribution of major cities assures a road network covering most of Czechoslovakia, and major roads are being upgraded to expressways. The basic rail system is good, with many multitrack lines, but it offers limited alternatives for major east-west movement across the country. Major Czech rail lines have been converted to the Soviet broader clearance and heavier loading standards. Numerous transloading points and an extension of the Soviet broad-gauge system have been built near the Soviet border in eastern Slovakia. In wartime, however, many of the supplies and reinforcements from the Soviet Union would probably come through southern Poland, bypassing Slovakia altogether, and enter the Czech transportation network at points offering more options for further forward movement. [redacted]

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The extent to which Czech and CGF forces in the Southwest Front would rely on each other for rear service support in combat is uncertain, but the Soviets' apparent desire to maintain an independent capability for their forward-based forces suggests they would make an effort to ensure the CGF's wartime self-sufficiency. The CGF's proximity to neighboring Pact countries—along with its apparent capability to control the major lines of communication from these countries—contributes to the Soviet ability to introduce additional forces or supplies into Czechoslovakia with or without Czech cooperation.

Although some rear service facilities are shared in peacetime, the Soviets maintain a separate rear service organization, including POL and ammunition depots, railheads, quartermaster storage, military hospitals, and engineering, maintenance, and repair facilities. Various Czech rear service storage facilities were turned over to the Soviets as part of the agreement on the stationing of Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia; others have since been built by the CGF.

In wartime, the CGF would apparently require Czech support in heavy bridging to ensure the crossing of major Czech rivers, in particular, the Elbe and Vltava. No suitable nondivisional bridging units have been identified in the CGF. The Czechs, however, put considerable emphasis on river-crossing capability, and they are known to have stockpiled heavy bridging at major crossing points and to have assigned units the task of keeping the crossing points open, presumably for Soviet as well as Czech forces. Should the Czechs prove uncooperative, however, this could be a point of serious Soviet vulnerability in moving forces through Czechoslovakia.

**Czech Reliability.** A thorough purge of the CSLA officer corps in the immediate postinvasion years and a subsequent concerted effort to instill in the Czech military a loyalty to the Warsaw Pact transcending loyalty to individual national leaders have apparently increased Soviet confidence in CSLA reliability. This confidence may approach pre-1968 levels, when the Czechs had the primary responsibility for the Southwest Front.

Another measure of the restored Soviet confidence in the CSLA may be the considerable command flexibility displayed.

In joint CSLA-CGF tactical training, which has been more in evidence in recent years, Czech elements are sometimes under Soviet command, and Soviet elements may exercise under Czech command. In all cases, however, overall Soviet domination is implicit, if not explicit.

Although considerable anti-Soviet feeling remains in Czechoslovakia, the Czech military establishment would probably go along with Soviet military decisions, and Czech soldiers would probably follow their officers, at least in the initial phases of conflict.

Certainly the Czechs could be expected to fight more enthusiastically in their own defense, particularly in a battle on Czech soil.

They might be less reliable in an extended offensive operation, particularly against stiff NATO resistance.

Political training in the CSLA stresses the threat from NATO (particularly from West Germany); nevertheless, most Czechs would need to be convinced that a NATO attack was imminent and warranted a preemptive attack on the part of the Warsaw Pact. This need to persuade the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact of a grave danger would require a period of time in which tension and appropriate anti-NATO propaganda would be built up. This in itself would tend to neutralize the element of surprise in a Pact attack.

The Soviets probably realize that they might have to act without Czech participation in some contingencies. If our (and the Soviets') estimates of Czech reliability are ill founded, for example, and the CSLA cannot be persuaded to fight, the CGF might be forced to act on its own in an offensive. Moreover, if a crisis situation got out of control and required forces to move into action quickly (in a day or so), only the CGF and one or two Czech divisions would be ready for offensive combat. The presence of even one Czech division, however, would have considerable symbolic value and would serve to involve the Czechs from the start.

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**Expansion and Modernization**

In recent years, Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia have undergone significant modernization and expansion. Organizational changes have affected all types of forces—combat, combat support, and service support—and have included both the formation of new units and the upgrading or resubordination of existing units. Equipment introduced into the forces has covered a wide range. [ ]

**Expansion of the Czech Ground Forces.** Like other Warsaw Pact forces, the Czechs have been increasing the number and size of artillery units and the quantity and quality of artillery equipment in active units. Recent [ ] writings state that the importance of conventional artillery in modern combat has been "underestimated" and that the Czech artillery forces have suffered an "ill-considered limitation." These articles stress that a concerted effort is being made to build up conventional artillery forces. [ ]

The Czechs are in the process of making a significant increase in their breakthrough artillery with the formation of a front-level artillery division. The division's wartime table of organization calls for four brigades of four battalions each, including three 72-piece gun brigades (one each of 152-mm, 122-mm, and 130-mm weapons) and one multiple rocket launcher (MRL) brigade to be equipped with the 122-mm RM-70. This is the only artillery unit of this size among the East European forces. Only one brigade—with a mixed-weapons inventory—is active now. Filled out to its intended size, the division would effectively triple the higher echelon (front and army level) artillery of the Czech forces. Its presence reaffirms the independent wartime operational role of the Southwest Front. [ ]

The artillery division, designated the 7th, is known to have existed in some form during the 1974-75 training year. [ ]

[ ] It has since been noted repeatedly. Divisional headquarters and the only brigade confirmed active to date are at Zamberk in northern Czechoslovakia. We currently estimate the division's peacetime strength at 750 men. Its wartime authorized strength is probably at least 4,500. [ ]

An artillery division is not an entirely new organizational feature of the Czech Army. Major Czech reorganizations during the early 1960s reduced existing army-level artillery divisions to brigades. This downgrading of conventional artillery coincided with the introduction of nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). Excess conventional artillery apparently was stockpiled, and some of this probably was used to create the 7th Artillery Division. [ ]

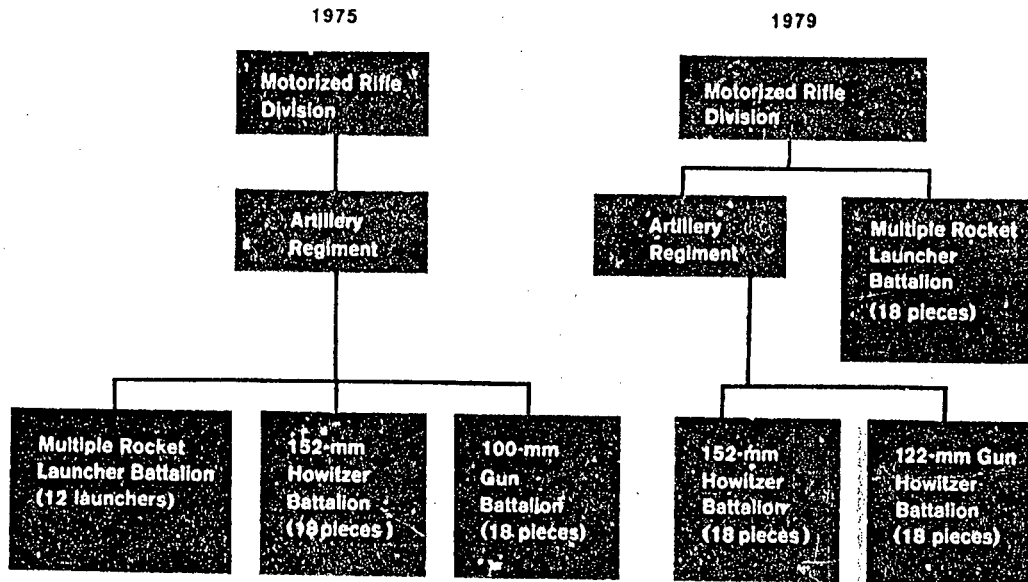
Recent changes within maneuver divisions also underscore Czech attention to improvement in conventional artillery. In the divisional artillery regiment the changes have included the separation and expansion of the MRL battalion into an independent unit with 18 launchers and the addition of a third gun battalion to the regiment. These changes, if completed, will make Czech divisions more like their non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) counterparts. But Czech regimental artillery will remain unique among NSWP forces in that it will have an MRL platoon of two launchers in each motorized rifle battalion.<sup>3</sup> (See figure 5 for an example of divisional artillery developments. Additional organizational expansion, involving tank and FROG battalions, as well as chemical, reconnaissance, motor transport, and construction units, is summarized in table 5.) [ ]

**Acquisition of New Equipment in the Czech Ground Forces.** In the past decade Czech forces have received a variety of new equipment, some of it designed or produced by the Czechs. This modernization has included the steady replacement of T-34 tanks with T-55s and the acquisition of the BMP armored infantry combat vehicle, the 122-mm self-propelled howitzer, the SA-4 and SA-6 SAMs, new ATGM launchers, a new antitank grenade launcher (RPG-75), and the RM-70 multiple rocket launcher (see table 6). Many of these weapons were first seen in Czech hands by Western observers in a May 1975 Liberation Day parade in Prague. With the exception of the RPG-75, each has subsequently been confirmed in operational units. The Czechs have also designed and developed a 152-mm self-propelled gun, six of which have been seen with the artillery regiment of the 19th MRD. [ ]

<sup>3</sup> Some Soviet regiments along the Sino-Soviet border have recently acquired a battery of six 122-mm MRLs. [ ]

Divisional Artillery Changes in Czech 2<sup>nd</sup> Motorized Rifle Division

Figure 5



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The Czech tank inventory is a mix typical of NSWP forces and includes T-54, T-55, and some T-34 tanks. The Czech arms industry produced the T-54 from 1958 through 1964 and has produced the T-55 since 1965. Many of these indigenously produced tanks have gone to equip the Czech forces; others have been exported to other Pact and Third World nations. We believe all active Czech units are equipped with T-54s and T-55s, for a total of 2,640 tanks. Another 700 tanks, including some T-34s, are in storage at various sites in Czechoslovakia. The Czechs apparently do not plan to introduce the T-62 into their forces. The Czechs are expected eventually to produce a new tank, probably the T-72, but not before 1981.

Both the SA-6 and the SA-4 mobile SAMs have been introduced into service with Czech forces. The single SA-4 brigade and the first two SA-6 regiments to be

assigned to Czech forces replaced anti-aircraft guns in non-divisional AA units, resulting in considerable reallocation and resubordination among AA elements, as shown in figure 6. Two additional SA-6 regiments have replaced AAA regiments in two 1st Army MRDs, the 19th and the 20th.

**Modernization of Czech Air and Air Defense Forces.**

The development of the Czech air and air defense forces has paralleled that of the ground forces. A 1969 reorganization brought the force more in line with Soviet command and control doctrine, establishing air elements with clear tasks of ground support or air defense. This force is being steadily modernized with newer, high-performance combat equipment. Both ground attack and interceptor elements are being equipped with late-model MIG-21 Fishbeds. In January 1978, the Czech forces began to acquire the

**Table 5**

**Czech Organizational Changes**

Unit Affected	Development/Change	Remarks
7th Artillery Division	The 7th is a new unit; it will have four brigades of four battalions each.	This unit is in the early stages of development; only one brigade is active.
Artillery regiment of maneuver division		
MRL battalion	This unit became independent of the regiment; it is now directly subordinate to the division. Its launchers increased from 12 to 18.	The independent MRL battalion has been established in all 1st Army MRDs and in at least one MRD and one TD in the 4th Army. Two of the 1st Army battalions (and possibly a third) have 18 launchers.
Gun battalions	A third gun battalion was added; gun reallocation resulted in one battalion with 152-mm howitzers and two battalions with 122-mm howitzers.	The changes affecting the gun battalions have been tied to the MRL reorganization. The new gun battalions have been confirmed only in the 2nd MRD but probably are also in the 19th.
Artillery units in motorized rifle regiments	The artillery unit has been reduced from a battalion (18 pieces) to a battery (six pieces).	This change has been confirmed only in the 2nd MRD. It is contrary to the trend in Soviet divisions and may be only a temporary measure to provide towed 122-mm howitzers for the divisional artillery regiment, pending acquisition of more self-propelled 122-mm pieces.
Tank battalions in motorized rifle regiments	The number of tanks in a platoon increased from three to four; the net battalion number increased from 31 to 40.	The change has been completed in the 1st Army and is at least partially complete in the 4th Army.
FROG battalions	The number of launchers has increased to a standard of four launchers per battalion.	The reorganization is complete in the 1st Army and in at least one division in the 4th Army.
Chemical defense units at all levels	In the Army, the regiment has been upgraded to a brigade; in the division, the company has been expanded to a battalion; and in the MRR, the platoon has become a company.	
Reconnaissance platoons in tank regiments of MRDs	The platoon has been upgraded to a company.	This change is tied to the deployment of BMP combat vehicles in reconnaissance units. The change is probably complete in the 1st Army.
Road construction brigades	One brigade has been disbanded; two new brigades have been formed.	
Motor transport units	A reorganization has taken place at military district and army level.	Two army-level brigades have been resubordinated to the Western Military District; new regiments have been formed in the 1st and 4th Armies.

MIG-23 Flogger and to date have acquired a small number of both ground attack and interceptor variants. Czechoslovakia was the second NSWP country, after Bulgaria, to receive the MIG-23. The Czechs have also acquired four Hind D helicopters. Other features of Czech air and air defense modernization include an aircraft bunker construction program and the general upgrading of air-warning capabilities with new and/or improved radars and supporting command and control means.

*Modernization in the CGF.* Although the introduction of new equipment and the organizational developments associated with Soviet force modernization elsewhere have begun in the CGF, those forces have generally lagged behind other Soviet forces in Eastern Europe in receiving new equipment.

The CGF is credited with an inventory of about 1,400 tanks. The bulk of these are T-62s; the T-55 remains the predominant tank only in the easternmost division.

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Table 6

Czech Equipment Modernization

Weapon	Extent of Identified Deployment			
	WMD/Front	1st Army (3 MRDs, 1 TD)	4th Army (2 MRDs, 2 TDs)	EMD (2 TDs)
BMP armored infantry combat vehicle		In one motorized rifle regiment and reconnaissance battalion of each division; in reconnaissance company of some additional regiments.	Some in one motorized rifle regiment of each division; some in other reconnaissance elements.	
122-mm self-propelled gun (Gvozdika)		One battery confirmed (in 49th MRR, 20th MRD)		
SA-4 SAM <sup>1</sup>	One brigade			
SA-6 SAM <sup>1</sup>		Three regiments (one at army level, one subordinate to 20th MRD, one subordinate to 19th MRD)	One regiment (army level)	
RM-70 MRL	In artillery division	In all divisions	In at least two divisions	Possibly in both divisions
BRDM-2 with anti-tank guided missile		In at least two motorized rifle regiments		
Czech 152-mm self-propelled gun (wheeled chassis)		One battery in artillery regiment of 19th MRD		

<sup>1</sup> See figure 6 for a schematic representation of organizational change accompanying nondivisional SAM deployment.

There have been reports of T-64s or T-72s with the CGF, but none have been confirmed. An early version of the T-64 reportedly was used in the 1968 invasion, but the tanks were replaced with older models when the unit assumed its occupation duties.

New or additional equipment identified in the CGF suggests that its modernization parallels that taking place in other Soviet and NSWP forces. New equipment includes the 122-mm and 152-mm self-propelled artillery pieces, the SA-4, SA-6, SA-8, and SA-9 mobile surface-to-air missiles, the ZSU-23-4 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun, and the BMP armored infantry combat vehicle. The CGF's motor transport capability is being improved by the introduction of the new heavy-duty Kamaz prime mover.

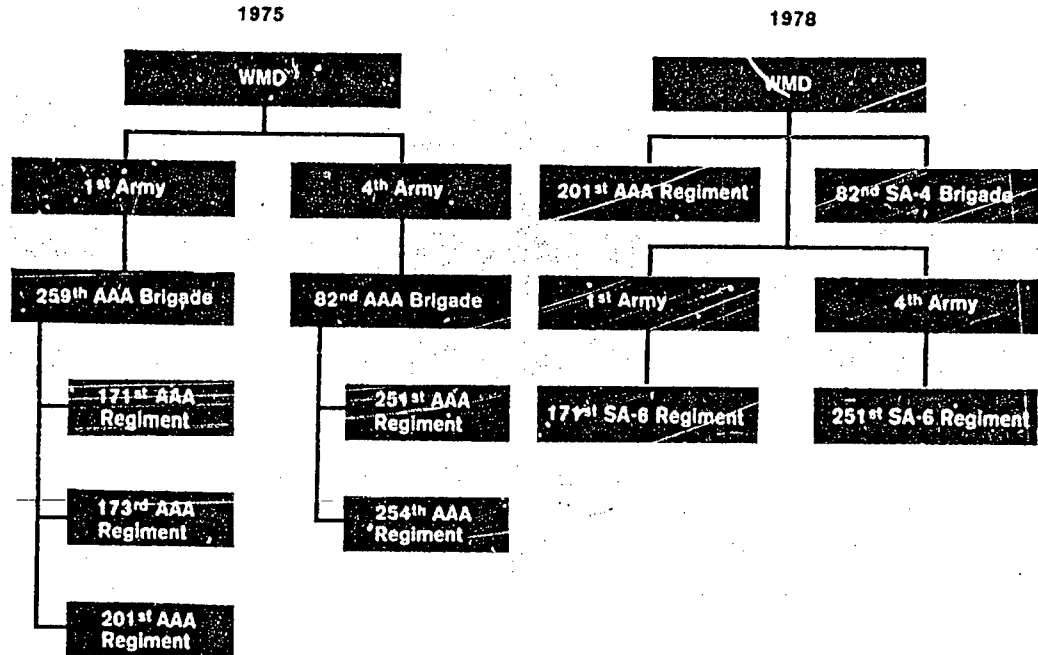
Organizational changes observed elsewhere are expected to be carried out throughout the CGF. Independent tank battalions have been identified with all three motorized rifle divisions, all tank battalions in motorized rifle regiments have been expanded from 31 to 40 tanks, and the artillery holdings of motorized rifle regiments have been increased from six to 18 pieces. Modernization of CGF air elements has included the conversion in 1976 of a fighter regiment to the MIG-23 Flogger, and the establishment in 1977 of a new ground attack helicopter regiment equipped with about 40 Hinds, the first deployment of that helicopter in Czechoslovakia.

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Organizational Changes Accompanying Nondivisional SAM Deployment in Western Military District

Figure 6



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Outlook

**Continued Modernization.** We expect the force modernization programs undertaken by the Czech forces and the CGF, now in various stages of completion, to be fully realized. Future modernization almost certainly will emphasize qualitative rather than quantitative improvements, as demographic constraints limit further expansion of Czech forces.

Much of the Czech modernization can be linked to an effort—which has also been noted in Soviet forces—to increase conventional artillery capability, reversing the trends of the early 1960s. This effort has raised Czech artillery and rocket launcher holdings in active units from 1,280 to 1,400 since 1973. If the artillery division is filled out in peacetime and the divisional artillery expansion is implemented throughout the force, unit holdings will increase by another 400 pieces.

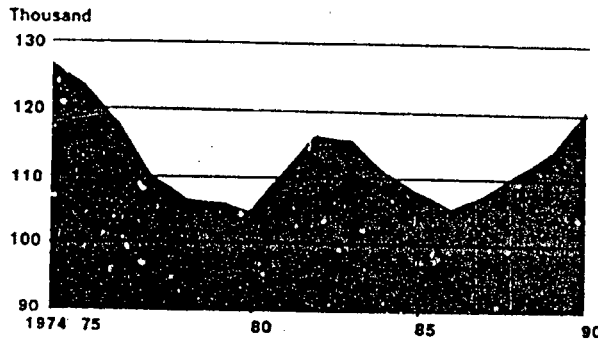
We expect modernization to continue in the CGF, although at a slower pace than in the GSFG. Manpower increases, if any, probably will be minimal, as some of the increases required by organizational expansion are offset by the lower manpower requirements of newer equipment, such as self-propelled artillery and the T-64/72 tanks.

**Demographic Constraints.** Demographic and economic pressures help to explain why the Czechs do not man their divisions in peacetime at levels comparable to those of other Pact countries. Ample available information shows that the Czechs' resources are strained. This is not a new dilemma, but it is growing more severe.

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Czech Males Reaching Age 18 Annually

Figure 7



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Czech open-source literature has lamented a "shortage" or a "tense balance" of manpower, which has caused "serious economic problems" in the fourth and fifth five-year plan (encompassing the years 1966-75), with the "future outlook even less favorable."

Available figures on the number of males reaching draft age (18) annually have shown a 17-percent drop over the past six years. This figure will fluctuate through 1990 (see figure 7), but at no time during that period will it reach the levels of the mid-1970s.

Information available for 1977 indicates that the Czechs drafted a total of about 74,000 men in the spring and fall induction periods that year. This is a fairly high percentage (67) of the number of males reaching age 18 that year (110,000). This ratio is not absolute, since the draft pool in any given year would include some men other than those reaching age 18, and the 110,000 figure for males reaching age 18 does not take into account physical condition or any criteria other than age. Nevertheless, it permits some useful comparisons.

This percentage is higher than the comparable figures for East Germany and Poland, both of which have

more draft eligibles annually than does Czechoslovakia. The comparable figure for East Germany (probably the most appropriate country for comparison) is about 60 percent and for Poland it is closer to 50 percent.

There is evidence that the number of conscripts in 1978 was less than in 1977, perhaps as much as 10,000 to 12,000 less, and that they were drawn from a smaller pool of draft-age men. Also, at least some of those drafted in the spring of 1977 were to be released three months earlier than the end of their regular two-year term of service (at the end of December 1978) in order to "balance the year groups." This release is not completely understood but may be another indication that conscription totals in 1978 were lower than those for 1977. Information on the 1979 conscription suggests that it may very nearly match that of 1977.

In addition to the manpower needs of the armed forces, Czech state planners must also accommodate the competitive demands made by the economic sector. One indication of such accommodation is an arrangement offering some draft eligibles an abbreviated active-duty service term, as short as five months, if they agree to serve longer terms in certain key industries—coal mining, for example. Soldiers from active units are also detailed every year to help with the

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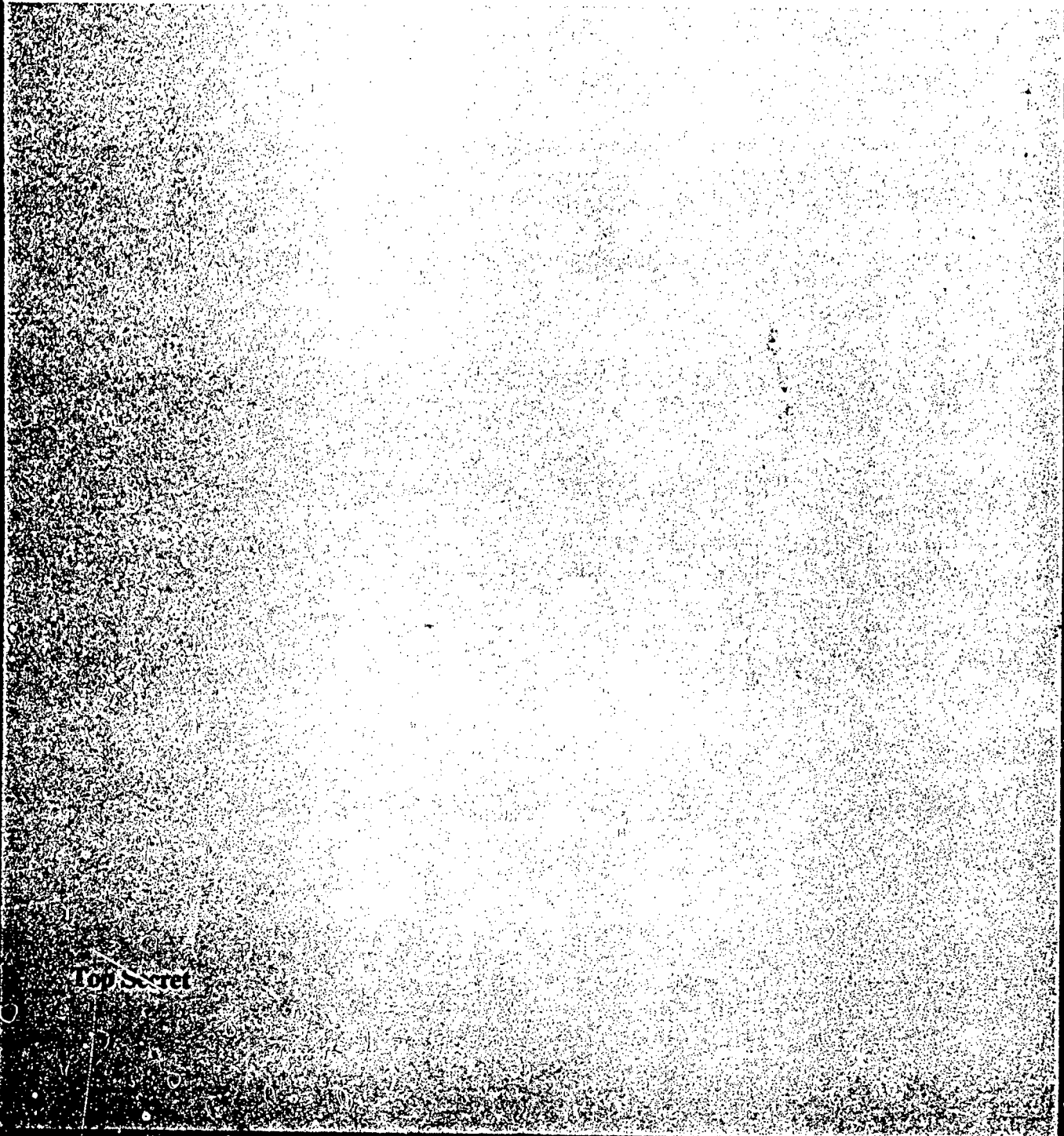
harvesting and planting, and some units detail soldiers on a rotating basis year round to work in certain factories. All such accommodations serve to undercut the combat readiness of the Czech forces.

*Possibilities of Soviet Withdrawal.* There has been evidence since 1974 to indicate that the Soviets have regained confidence in the CSLA to the point that, should an MBFR agreement be reached, they might regard a reduction of the CGF as an acceptable option. Indeed, the June 1978 Soviet MBFR counterproposal suggesting withdrawal of a corps focuses attention on the CGF, which includes the only known corps among the Soviet groups of forces

From a military point of view, all or part of the three-division 28th Corps would be a likely candidate for withdrawal. This part of the force, farthest from the NATO border, might be moved to the Carpathian Military District from where it could be reintroduced fairly quickly in a period of rising tensions. Another possibility would be the transfer of this part of the force to East Germany to replace forces withdrawn from the GSFG. Withdrawal of three divisions would leave the two westernmost CGF divisions with a role similar to that of the two-division Northern Group of Forces. Such a force would retain the flexibility—albeit with greatly reduced capabilities—to bolster the Southwest Front or join the Central Front

From a political viewpoint, the occupation mission—still a factor in the stability of Czech-Soviet relations—could be accomplished with fewer forces. Soviet discretion in keeping their forces generally apart from major population centers and largely confined to garrison makes their presence perhaps even more intimidating than if their forces were constantly visible. While aware of an "official" figure of 60,000, Czech citizens have no idea how many Soviet soldiers are in their country, with common estimates ranging from 500,000 to 1 million. Although a partial Soviet withdrawal could have a tonic effect on the Czechoslovak population, 10 years of tranquility have demonstrated the ability of the Husak regime to maintain order. If, therefore, other considerations argue for a partial withdrawal, Moscow is unlikely to be dissuaded by apprehension over the reaction of the Czechoslovak public.

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