Director of Central Intelligence

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The Readiness of Soviet Ground Forces

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

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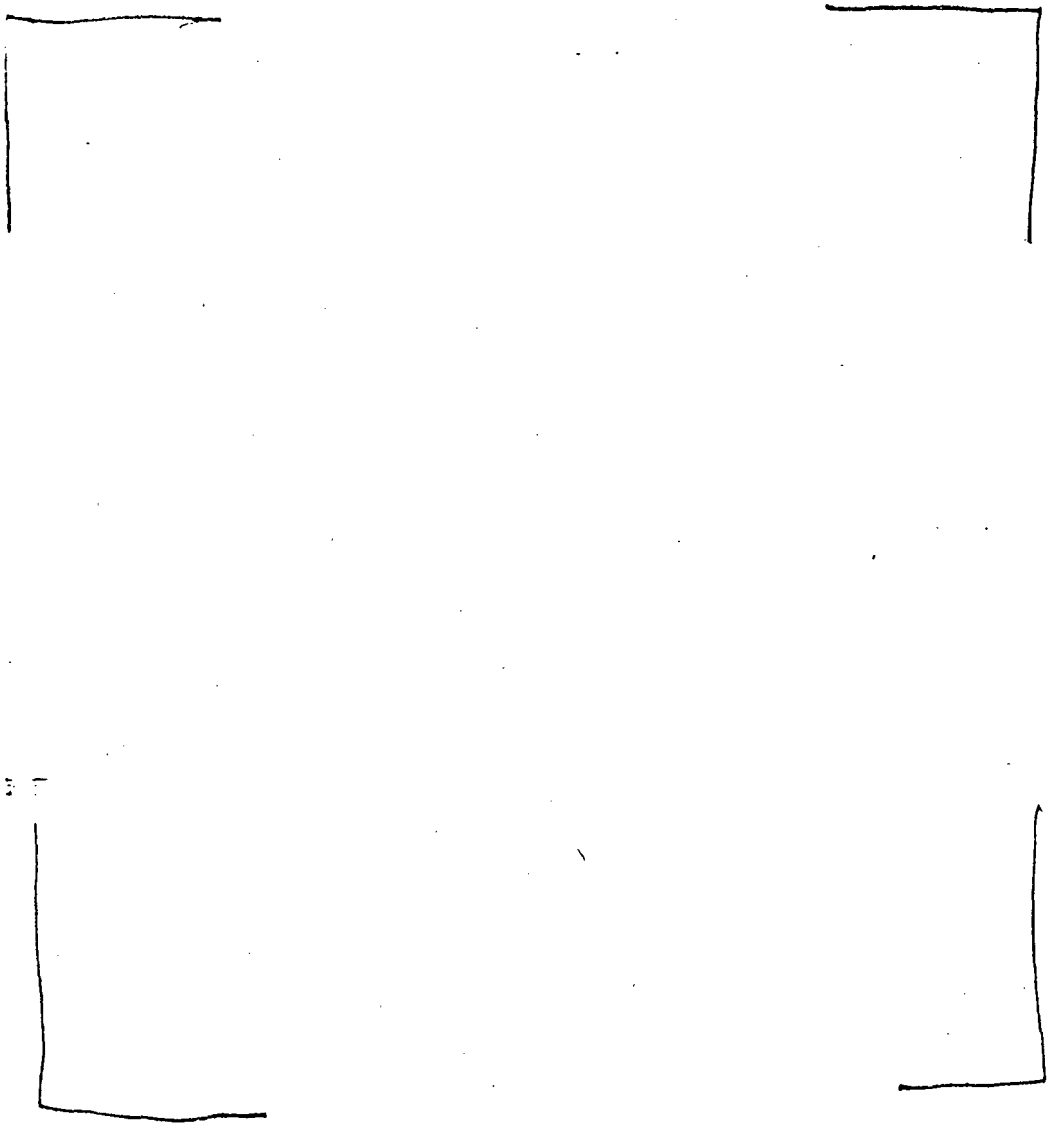

NI IIM 82-10012

THE READINESS OF SOVIET GROUND FORCES

Information in this document, particularly data on force strength levels, order of battle, and weapons inventories, is current as of 1 January 1982, when the data base held 210 Soviet divisions. A few additional divisions have been formed since then.

PREFACE

This Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB), on 26 October 1982, was commissioned by the Director of Central Intelligence in response to a request by the Secretary of Defense for an in-depth analysis of the readiness posture of the Soviet Ground Forces. The Memorandum draws, in part, on research and analysis published in more detailed studies by the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency. These studies (not reviewed or approved by NFIB) are cited throughout the Memorandum. (U)

The Memorandum contains a number of comparisons of Soviet and US forces. These are included only to provide a framework for reference in viewing Soviet readiness. The reader should not conclude from these comparisons superiority on either side in meeting wartime requirements. The reliability of data on Soviet forces varies considerably from one region to another, particularly for weapons inventories (see annex C). (C)

This Memorandum does not address in detail the readiness of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces or problems inherent in organizing and executing coalition warfare. Nor does it address warning of war. The times associated with the mobilization and preparation of forces for war in this document should not be interpreted as warning time. (U)

The Memorandum was produced under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. It was prepared by an interagency working group consisting of representatives of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army. Contributions were provided by the US Army Foreign Science and Technology Center and the US Army Missile Intelligence Agency. The Memorandum was drafted by [ ] Directorate for Research, Defense Intelligence Agency. It was coordinated within DIA and with the Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency; the National Security Agency; and the intelligence components of the military services. (U)

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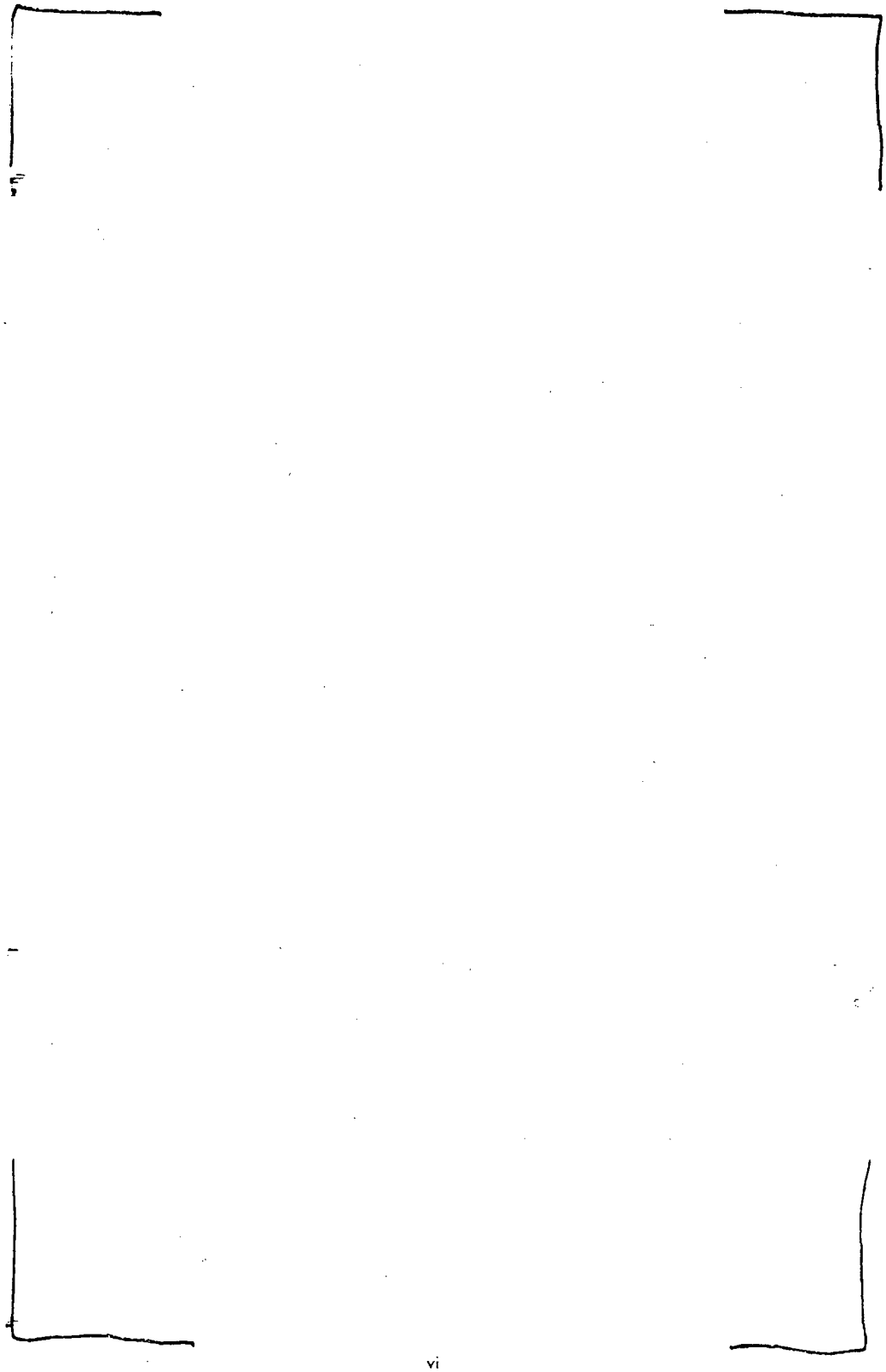

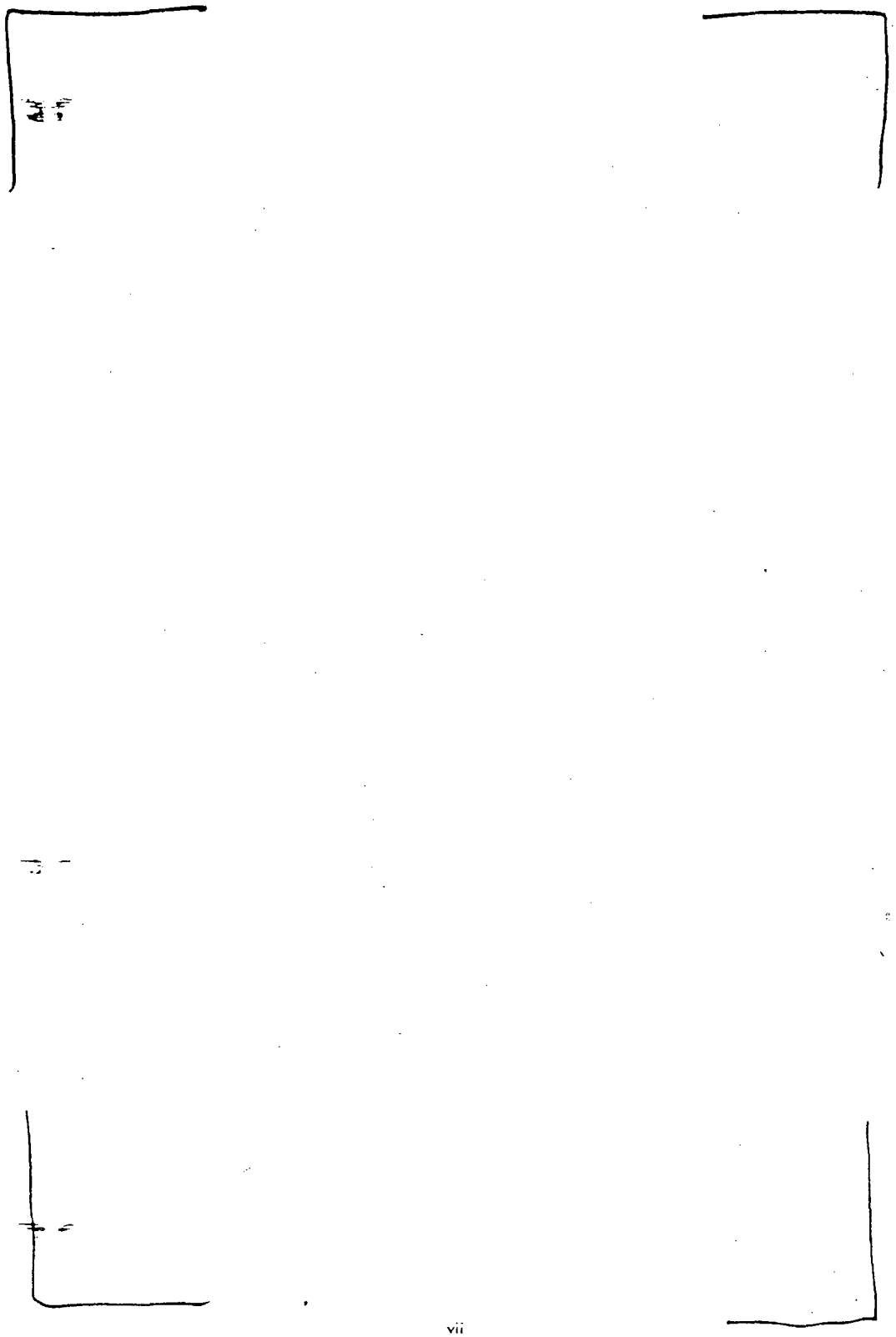

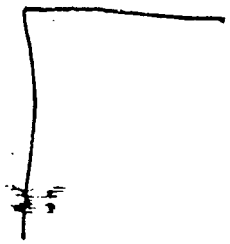

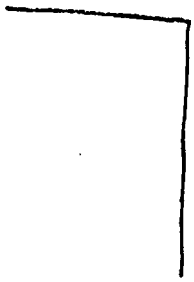

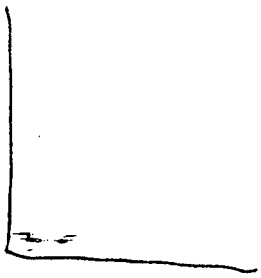

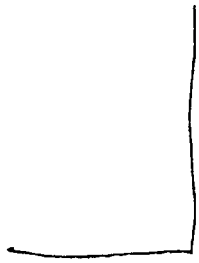

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The Soviets make a clear distinction between "ready" and "not ready" portions of their ground forces:

- "Ready" units are the most highly manned and the best equipped and trained, and they are at least minimally prepared for combat operations with little or no mobilization.
- "Not ready" units require extensive mobilization and probably would not be available for immediate combat operations. While the necessary reservists can be mobilized quickly, the Soviet reserve system does not immediately convert "not ready" units into cohesive fighting units. Rather, the units must train if they are to perform proficiently in high-intensity combat.

The most combat-ready Soviet units are five airborne divisions in the USSR, 30 motorized rifle and tank divisions in Eastern Europe, one airborne and three motorized rifle divisions in Afghanistan, and one tank division in Mongolia:

- These divisions are manned at or near full strength, are fully equipped, and complete a full annual training program. They could complete normal alert actions and disperse out of garrison in 36 to 60 hours.
- Another 42 divisions, located primarily along the eastern and western borders of the USSR, are maintained in a peacetime "ready" posture but at somewhat lower manning and training levels. These could complete the mobilization and dispersal process in two to four days but would not be as fully prepared for combat because of their lower peacetime training status.

Well over half of the Soviet divisions (103 cadre-strength divisions and 25 mobilization base divisions), as well as much of the nondivisional support structure, are "not ready" for combat in peacetime:

- This skeletal element of the force requires substantial preparation to overcome deficiencies in manning, equipment, and training, particularly if the units are to be committed to offensive operations in a combat environment such as that expected in Europe.

— The time required for these units to complete the mobilization process and move to dispersal areas would vary from 3.5 to 9 days. We believe, however, that they would require 19 to 33 days of training to be trained to the "ready" divisions' minimum standard for offensive combat.

The Soviets believe that a period of prehostilities tension probably will provide the time necessary for "not ready" units to mobilize and prepare for war:

— The Soviets may increase the readiness of selected elements of their "not ready" forces prior to full-scale mobilization, thus shortening postmobilization preparation time.

— Although they could do so within 11 days, the Soviets do not necessarily intend to mobilize all 210 divisions at once. They stress the initial availability of forces in each theater of military operations, but the force generation process is designed essentially to maintain a steady flow of well-trained and well-equipped units into the battle area. By maintaining large strategic reserves and skeletal units, the Soviets can generate additional forces to fight a prolonged war.

The Soviets have two basic options in preparing their forces for combat. Between these lie a range of potential trade-offs between combat proficiency and force availability:

— They could choose to commit forces as soon as they have completed the alert and mobilization process. Should they opt for this approach, a large number of divisions would not have received a level of training equivalent to that of the "ready" divisions, and the Soviets would have to accept a degradation in the combat potential of the mobilized force.

— Alternatively, the Soviets could take a more deliberate, phased approach, allowing time to more fully prepare and train their forces, thus increasing their combat potential—by more than 50 percent for the full 210-division force.

— Although circumstances would determine which option the Soviets chose, we believe they would opt for the more deliberate process when they had some control over time and events.

Our findings on the readiness of forces opposite NATO's Central Region are as follows:

— For an offensive against NATO, the Warsaw Pact could—as noted in NIE 11-14-81 (*Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite*

NATO)—organize its forces in Eastern Europe into three fronts as the first echelon and those in the western USSR into two fronts as a second echelon.

— Ultimately, the readiness and combat potential of Pact forces opposite NATO would be heavily dependent on the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) forces that would make up over half of the divisions in the three first-echelon fronts.

— Soviet planners could elect to begin hostilities with the three first-echelon fronts before the two second-echelon fronts from the USSR were in place and available.

— Moscow could ready the Soviet elements of the Pact three-front force—as its nucleus—in three to five days, excluding movement time. These forces would not require additional training. Although we have not assessed NSWP readiness in detail, we believe that some NSWP divisions (six East German and a few Polish and Czechoslovak) could be mobilized as quickly as the Soviet divisions. We do not believe that all non-Soviet forces could be as fully prepared in as short a time as their Soviet counterparts stationed in Eastern Europe.

— If the Soviets were willing to make units in the USSR available for combat immediately after alert and mobilization, the two fronts in the western USSR could be readied in 10 to 11 days plus whatever movement time was required. Many of the divisions, however, would have a relatively low combat potential due to low peacetime training levels.

— Should the Soviets choose to train "not ready" units to achieve a higher level of combat proficiency (consistent with minimum requirements for offensive operations against NATO), the preparation time for the two fronts in the western USSR and thus for a full five-front force would be phased over a considerably longer period of about 45 days. The additional time invested in postmobilization training for the "not ready" divisions would increase the theoretical combat potential of this 62-division force by as much as 30 percent.

Our findings on the readiness of forces opposite Southwest Asia are as follows:

— With the exception of airborne divisions and those divisions committed in Afghanistan, the majority of Soviet forces available for offensive operations in Iran and the Persian Gulf are

poorly equipped (relative to their counterparts opposite NATO's Central Region) and maintained in a "not ready" status in peacetime.

— The Soviets could mobilize in 60 to 80 hours a force of the size we believe they would require for limited operations into the Azarbayjan region of Iran (three to five divisions plus support forces). The forces for a full-scale invasion of Iran (some 20 or more divisions) could be mobilized in five to six days. To achieve a high level of potential combat proficiency, however, they would require additional time for postmobilization training. Without such training the 20 divisions would have the combat potential of only seven to eight of the better equipped and trained Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe.

— We believe the Soviets would take whatever time was available to train these forces up to higher proficiency levels: some 20 to 30 days of training after mobilization could double the combat potential of the 20-division force.

Our findings on the readiness of forces opposite China are as follows:

— Twenty-five of the 56 Soviet motorized rifle and tank divisions in the Far East opposite China are maintained in a "ready" status in peacetime. Many of these "ready" divisions are nearly as well equipped as their counterparts stationed in Eastern Europe.

— We believe the Soviets could mobilize these 25 "ready" divisions in the Far East and complete their training in seven to nine days.

— The Soviets could mobilize the 31 "not ready" divisions in 11 days but these divisions would require extensive training to achieve a level of proficiency comparable to that maintained in peacetime by the ready divisions.

— The full 56-division force could be mobilized and trained to a minimum level of proficiency we judge sufficient for offensive operations over a 50-day period. This additional training theoretically would increase the combat potential of the total force by some 60 percent.

The Soviet logistic, manpower and equipment mobilization, training, and maintenance systems all are geared to a rapid mobilization and short, intense war. Although we question the long-term effectiveness of

the repair and maintenance system, we detect no shortcomings that would affect initial force readiness. The major factor affecting initial readiness is the semiannual (spring and fall) rotation of new conscripts into units to replace troops completing their active duty tours. For about a month after troop rotation, new conscripts (about 20 percent of the ground force manpower) receive basic training in provisional training units. This practice results in a semiannual degradation in unit proficiency, cohesion, and readiness.

The foregoing text is classified Secret.

SUMMARY

Introduction

This Memorandum assesses the readiness of Soviet ground forces and estimates the time required to convert the forces from a peacetime to wartime posture and to engage in operations in a mid-to-high-intensity combat environment.[1] It focuses on those situations in which the Soviets have the initiative in planning and preparing their forces for offensive operations at a time and place of their choosing. It also assesses the theoretical combat potential of the forces both upon mobilization and after a period of training. (C)

The Memorandum does not attempt to isolate the most likely scenario under which the Soviets would prepare for combat or to predict their decisions regarding the extent and duration of these preparations. Rather it assesses the relative costs and benefits—in quantifiable terms—of Soviet choices, which range between two basic options:

— The Soviets could commit their forces as soon as they had been alerted and mobilized. Should they opt for this approach, they would have to accept a degradation in the combat potential of the mobilized force due to the low peacetime training levels of a large portion of the force.

— Alternatively, the Soviets could allow varying amounts of time following alert and mobilization to more fully prepare and train their forces. This would extend overall preparation time but would enhance the total force's combat potential. (C)

While we believe the Soviets would prefer to make deliberate, time-phased preparations prior to committing their forces, the point at which they would consider their forces prepared for offensive operations would depend on the region in which the conflict was to take place, the nature of the opposition, and other scenario-dependent considerations. (C)

Soviet military doctrine has been heavily influenced by World War II experience, when the lack of preparedness and initiative resulted in a

[1] A mid-intensity conflict is defined as a war in which the belligerents employ the most modern technology and resources, excluding nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. A high-intensity conflict would include the use of these weapons. (U)

three-year campaign on Soviet soil against invading German forces with devastating territorial, human, and economic losses. Soviet writings and exercises stress the ability to respond to a surprise attack and to conduct a successful emergency defense of the homeland. Today, the Soviet readiness and mobilization systems emphasize speed and efficiency to maximize the initial availability of forces and to assure that any ground war is not fought on Soviet territory. (S)

The maintenance of a large standing army in peacetime, concepts for the echelonment of forces, the existence of a quick-reaction mobilization system, and a doctrine that emphasizes offensive operations are all designed to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophe the USSR suffered during the initial stages of World War II. Postwar developments in weapons technology—particularly the availability of nuclear weapons—have only increased the emphasis Soviet planners place on the decisive nature of the "initial period of war." Nonetheless, the Soviets expect their forces to be able to respond to a full spectrum of situations and have structured and equipped their forces for a protracted conflict. The Soviet force generation process is designed to maintain a steady flow of well-trained and well-equipped units into the battle area. By maintaining large strategic reserves and skeletal units, the Soviets can generate additional forces to fight a prolonged war. (S)

Soviet and US definitions of combat readiness are similar, focusing on the capability of a unit, force, or equipment to perform the missions or functions for which it is organized or designed. In its most basic terms, readiness involves two essential elements: the *availability* of forces, as determined by such factors as alert status and manpower and equipment levels; and the *preparedness* of forces, which depends on such factors as maintenance, training, logistics, and weapon system capabilities. This Memorandum addresses readiness in its broadest sense, taking into account both availability and preparedness. (U)

The development of combat readiness in its broad sense involves two key factors or variables: *force generation*—or the conversion of forces from a peacetime to wartime status—and the development of *combat potential*. Force generation is largely a function of time, involving those actions necessary to alert, mobilize, and deploy a force for combat. Combat potential, simply defined, is a force's assessed capability to carry out its wartime mission. More specifically, it is the product of numerous factors, including the effectiveness of weapons, the ability of personnel to operate their weapons and equipment, and skill in carrying out integrated and coordinated maneuvers. The first

factor is primarily a function of technology; the latter two are established, maintained, and enhanced by training. (C)

In assessing combat potential, this Memorandum takes into consideration both the weapon systems available to Soviet divisions and the training status or proficiency of the divisions. It distinguishes between the combat potential of high-strength divisions—such as those in the groups of forces in Eastern Europe—and that of divisions in the interior of the USSR. These latter divisions suffer by comparison with the forward-deployed divisions on two counts. First, they are equipped for the most part with older models of equipment and frequently lack major items such as armored personnel carriers. Second, they are unable in peacetime to develop the same level of combined-arms skills as high-strength divisions because of their lower level of peacetime manning and training. The skills required to approach or achieve full proficiency could be developed by increasing peacetime manning and then expanding training programs, or by conducting a period of postmobilization training before the units enter combat. (C)

Combat potential also is affected by the capability of the force's command, control, and communications system; leadership and troop morale; and the ability of a logistic base to sustain combat operations. These factors are assessed in general terms, but they are not quantified. In assessing and comparing the readiness of Soviet units in quantifiable terms, the Memorandum focuses on the time required for divisions and nondivisional support units to move through the force generation process and on the combat potential of these forces in terms of weapon effectiveness and training proficiency. (C)

Background

Theater War: The Soviet View. Soviet doctrine for theater warfare emphasizes numerical superiority, offensive action, massed firepower, and maneuver. Defense is considered merely an expedient or temporary phase until an offensive can be mounted. Emphasis is placed on combined arms operations involving the coordinated use of armor, aviation, artillery, and motorized infantry to breach enemy defenses either from the march or in breakthrough operations. (C)

To sustain continuous and powerful offensives, the Soviets echelon their forces and assign specific missions and forces to each echelon. The success of the Soviets' echelonment strategy is largely dependent on effective timing and the ability to develop the quick, powerful offensives stipulated by their doctrine. Although the Soviets stress the rapid offensive in their doctrine they also recognize the necessity for planning

Soviet Alert Stages

Constant combat readiness: the normal peacetime readiness status of the Soviet armed forces. Routine training and activity take place. Leaves and passes may be granted at commanders' discretion.

Increased combat readiness: unit personnel are recalled from leave or TDY, and division subunits conducting field training return to garrison. Mobilization and contingency plans are reviewed and updated by staffs. Unit personnel remove equipment from storage and begin to prepare reception points for reservists. The division's field command post (CP) is partially manned and deployed to a dispersal area. Staffing of the garrison command center is increased.

Threat-of-war combat readiness: units deploy from garrison to dispersal areas. The control of the division is transferred from the garrison command center to the field CP. Selected reservists with specialized skills may join the unit.

Full combat readiness: full mobilization takes place and reservists join their units. Equipment mobilized for the unit also arrives. Units establish their wartime command, control, and communications structure. At this point, the alert, dispersal, and mobilization process is complete.

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and preparing for a protracted conflict and have structured their forces accordingly. (S)

The Force. The Ground Forces constitute the largest component of the Soviet armed forces. The peacetime force structure consists of 210 divisions at varying levels of manning and readiness, including 25 inactive mobilization base divisions, consisting of pre-positioned equipment configured in unit sets. Motorized rifle and tank divisions are the basic tactical maneuver formations. Ground units are most heavily concentrated in the groups of forces and the military districts of the western USSR opposite NATO and opposite China. (S)

The Soviet Readiness System

The Soviet and US readiness systems both divide units into "ready" and "not ready" categories. The United States generally has more demanding manpower requirements for its "ready" units. The Soviets, however, require full equipment sets in all "ready" units, while marginally ready US units can lack up to about one-fourth of their equipment. Equipment operational readiness rate requirements are roughly comparable in Soviet and US ready units. There is a major difference in approach, however, in the way Soviet and US officials rate the contribution of training to overall readiness, and US standards appear more demanding. (S)

Soviet "ready" units are at least minimally prepared for combat operations with little or no mobilization. "Not ready" units, however,

Table 1

Manning in Soviet Divisions

Division Manning Level	Characteristics
Full-strength ready	Manned at or near 100 percent of wartime authorized strength Includes divisions in groups of forces Total: 40 divisions
Reduced-strength ready I	70-85 percent of wartime authorized strength Located in border areas of USSR Total: 22 divisions
Reduced-strength ready II	55-70 percent of wartime authorized strength Some elements at cadre strength Total: 20 divisions
High-strength cadre	25-40 percent of wartime authorized strength Includes all training divisions One motorized regiment in each motorized rifle division is manned at reduced strength Total: 51 divisions
Low-strength cadre	5-25 percent of wartime authorized strength; cadre manpower concentrated in staff elements and driver/mechanic skills Usually motorized rifle divisions Total: 52 divisions
Mobilization base	No permanently assigned staff Usually colocated with active units Total: 25 divisions

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would require large-scale mobilization and therefore would not be available for immediate combat operations. This system is also found in microcosm within large units: a division might be composed of one or more "ready" regiments while all other regiments are "not ready." There also is a distinct difference between peacetime and wartime authorized manning levels in most Soviet units. A total of six discernible manning levels have been identified in divisional units, and nondivisional units are apparently manned in a similar fashion (see table 1). The units that are most combat ready and that have the highest strength are airborne divisions, divisions in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan, and, to a lesser extent, divisions along the western and eastern borders of the USSR. (S)

In addition to classifying units as "ready" or "not ready" for combat, the Soviets maintain their units in one of four alert stages (see inset) that dictate their peacetime activities. These alert stages provide for and define an orderly, manageable transition for Soviet units from their normal peacetime posture to full combat readiness. (C)

Together, the unit categorization system and formal alert stages reflect the Soviets' approach to readiness:

— They have an orderly approach to the management of manpower and materiel, and concentrate them with "ready" units located in regions where Soviet interests are most vital or perceived threats are most severe.

— They apparently expect warning of war and will take advantage of the period prior to hostilities to systematically increase both the preparedness and alert condition of a portion or all of their forces. (S)

Readiness Reporting and Monitoring. The Soviet readiness reporting and inspection system provides a systematic but inflexible and burdensome approach to monitoring manpower availability, training status, and the technical condition of equipment. When conscientiously applied, the system can give commanders valuable tools with which to manage resources in order to meet standards. Inspections are stringent and competently administered in the groups of forces outside the USSR, although grades are somewhat inflated. Throughout most of the interior of the USSR, however, unit readiness is far more dependent on individual command emphasis than on any formal monitoring system. Readiness reports are often greatly inflated or falsified and inspections are frequently lax, perfunctory, or circumvented. (S)

In both the Soviet and US armies, unit readiness is a command responsibility. Soviet commanders, however, delegate most equipment readiness authority to technical officers. No single Soviet readiness reporting document equivalent to the US unit status report is known to exist, but divisions do prepare a monthly report that summarizes training accomplishments and conditions bearing on the "internal order of units." There is no evidence that Soviet commanders are required—or permitted—to provide subjective evaluations of unit readiness. (S)

Determinants of Readiness

Manpower. Manpower availability should not be a constraining factor on overall Soviet force readiness. The Soviets have a large manpower pool upon which to draw and a well-organized and efficient mobilization system. Variations in leadership ability would be found throughout the ground forces, but it is difficult to predict whether leadership deficiencies would be more prevalent in the less ready force elements. Morale problems exist in peacetime, but calculating their overall impact on readiness or performance in combat is problematic. Nonetheless, the nationwide problem of alcoholism and the evident

morale and discipline problems in units in Afghanistan are factors that the Soviets must take into account in their own readiness assessments. (c)

Soviet law requires universal male military service, and few qualified males escape some form of military service. Conscripts are discharged into the reserves automatically after completion of mandatory service and remain subject to callup until age 50. More than 50 million Soviet males are estimated "fit" for military service. Of this total, at least 25 million are reservists who have been added to the reserve pool since January 1970. We estimate that all active Soviet divisions and nondivisional units, as well as inactive mobilization bases, could be mobilized to their wartime authorized strength without depleting the pool of reservists who have served as conscripts in the ground component of the armed forces within the last five years. (c)

Mobilization System. Historically, the Soviets have succeeded in meeting their military manpower and equipment needs, most notably during World War II. Their ability to respond to crises under conditions of partial mobilization were tested during the Czechoslovak crisis and most recently during the invasion of Afghanistan. In these and other instances of partial mobilization, the manpower and equipment generation system functioned well. The Soviet mobilization system has not been tested on a large scale, however, since World War II. Nonetheless, if Soviet planners have the initiative and time to prepare deliberately for military operations, they should be able to minimize the difficulties that would be likely to characterize a large-scale emergency mobilization. (c)

Training. Premilitary training has been obligatory since 1968 and consists of an abbreviated basic training program designed to ease the transition of youths into military service. Postinduction training is conducted according to a common set of regulations, and the annual training program is divided into winter and summer periods. Each six-month cycle begins when conscripts are rotated into units to replace conscripts completing their active duty tours. For about the first month after troop rotation, new conscripts receive basic training in provisional training units formed within each division. This results in a semiannual degradation in unit proficiency, cohesion, and readiness. (c)

The unit training program formally begins when new conscripts complete their basic training and are integrated into units. Heavy emphasis is placed on individual, squad-level, and platoon-level training. Field exercises—designed to perfect individual and collective skills

and to train commanders and their staffs in simulated combat—are considered essential to forge unit integrity and proficiency. The peacetime manning of units determines the extent of the training program which they actually can accomplish in peacetime. "Ready" divisions carry out the full training program and appear to accomplish the required number of exercises. Other divisions train to the extent possible with their assigned personnel but cannot complete a full training program. (S)

The Soviet reserve system provides a large pool of manpower with military skills. Reservist training, however, is of uneven quality and frequency at best. Individual reservists seldom participate in the full number of callups allowed, and rarely train with the same unit more than once. The bias of the reserve system for conscripts with recent active service leads to a heavy turnover on unit mobilization rosters and limits the development of cohesion in low-strength units. Upon mobilization, these units would require training to achieve or approach the levels of training proficiency attained in peacetime by "ready" units. (S)

Equipment. Soviet ground force equipment is designed to satisfy both technical and tactical requirements on the battlefield. Each new system or product improvement is designed to enhance the system's capability on the battlefield, to be produced in large numbers, and to be equal or superior to comparable existing or projected Western counterparts. A program of continuous product improvement and incremental development makes maximum use of each piece of equipment or subcomponent during its life cycle. Soviet designers, however, have demonstrated they are capable of much more than incremental product enhancement when the situation demands it. Soviet design practices provide a product that is usually quite reliable and repairable. (S)

The size of the Soviet force structure requires an incremental approach to the fielding of new equipment which results in a lack of standardization; complicates the problem of providing spares, ammunition, and maintenance skills to match requirements; and makes it more difficult for the reserve system to match man and machine. (S)

The practice of peacetime storage of large quantities of weapons and equipment to reduce wear and tear and conserve resources distorts the demand for repair parts and maintenance that would be faced in wartime. The repair supply system supports an artificially low vehicle population that would greatly expand in wartime. There is only minimal stockage of repair parts below division level, so the system is heavily dependent on motor transport. (S)

The Soviet system for maintenance support of combat units is well suited to a fast-moving conflict with frequent replacement of frontline units, but the system is dependent on this rotation for repair and maintenance of equipment. Divisions forced to remain in mid-to-high-intensity combat for longer than five to six days could begin to encounter serious maintenance problems as losses overwhelmed repair capabilities. The Soviet maintenance organization, however, is tailored to support Soviet tactical concepts that do not require sustained maintenance support for frontline divisions. (U)

Sustainability. The Soviets have stockpiled large quantities of ammunition and POL to satisfy their operational concepts for supporting and sustaining committed forces. The Soviets also recognize the need for a flexible and responsive transportation system to move supplies when and where required. Current assessments indicate that the Soviets have sufficient quantities of ammunition and POL to supply their initial wartime needs. (U)

Assessment of Readiness

The Soviets have two basic options in preparing their forces for combat. Should circumstances dictate, they might choose (or be forced) to commit their forces as soon as they had completed the alert and mobilization process. Should they opt for this approach, a large portion of the force would not have received a level of training equivalent to the "ready" divisions and the Soviets would have to accept a degradation in the combat potential of the mobilized force. Alternatively, the Soviets could take a more deliberate, phased approach, allowing time to more fully prepare and train their forces. Although circumstances would determine which option the Soviets chose, we believe they would opt for the more deliberate process when they had some control over time and events. (U)

The Force Generation Process

The Soviets have developed an orderly, systematic process to convert their forces from a peacetime to a wartime posture. This process is designed to provide units with sufficient manpower, equipment, and training to engage in effective operations. Soviet/Warsaw Pact exercises often include a prehostilities warning period—varying between several weeks and several months—during which preparatory unit training could occur. Following the commencement of hostilities, the preparation of uncommitted forces could continue. Historically, the Soviets have recognized the need to prepare their forces for combat and have done so to the extent that time was available. (U)

The force generation process begins with a unit's peacetime status. The completion of the alert and mobilization process, however, does not produce a fully combat-ready force. The time required to produce a prepared force is the sum of the time necessary to alert, mobilize, train, and move the force, and to accomplish final preparations and deployments. (S)

Alert, Dispersal, and Mobilization. The mechanism for mobilizing the force is the formal alert system, which involves the transition of units through four alert stages. The time required to execute measures associated with each alert stage would vary depending on the threat. In an extreme emergency, such as reaction to (or anticipation of) a surprise attack, an attempt would be made to mobilize rapidly and accomplish required alert measures on compressed time lines. Under less extreme circumstances the process would be accomplished gradually. (S)

Divisional Mobilization. The time required for Soviet maneuver divisions (tank, motorized rifle, and airborne) to complete the alert, dispersal, and mobilization process would vary between one and a half and nine days. About 90 percent of the 210 Soviet divisions could complete this process in six and a half days, but many divisions would require additional training to increase their proficiency to levels comparable to the full-strength ready divisions. Within one and a half to two and a half days, however, the full-strength ready divisions could complete preparations, vacate their garrisons, and move to nearby dispersal areas. (S)

Nondivisional Units. The time to alert and mobilize the large nondivisional support base—units assigned at front and army level—would range from 11 hours to over six days. These units include artillery, missile, engineer, signal, chemical defense, intelligence, electronic warfare, air defense, and logistic organizations. (S)

Command and Control Structure. We estimate it would take about three to five days to establish the command and control structure of a front and its subordinate armies in the groups of forces in Eastern Europe and about seven to 10 days to the internal military districts of the USSR. (S)

Training

If time were available, we believe Soviet units would conduct postmobilization training to improve combat proficiency. Reduced-strength and cadre units would require individual refresher training for reservists, unit training and exercises, and staff training—including

command post exercises—to increase their proficiency to levels comparable to full-strength ready divisions. The duration and type of training actually conducted would depend on the time available and the unit mission. (C)

Divisions in the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) and other groups of forces are the most proficiently trained in the force structure. At the end of their semiannual training cycles, when they are at peak proficiency, we believe they would meet Soviet standards for commitment to offensive operations in a mid-to-high-intensity combat environment. In our analysis of the semiannual training cycle of these divisions, we have established three milestones that we use as a yardstick for assessing the proficiency of other divisions:

— **Minimum Proficiency:** The lowest level of training proficiency, which occurs at troop rotation. We believe that, given a choice, the Soviets would prefer not to commit divisions at this point, but would do so in a situation in which they did not have control of time and events.

— **Minimum Standard for Commitment to Offensive Operations:** Occurs about three months into the training cycle, after conscripts have completed basic training and company- and battalion-level training is well under way. At this point, we believe, divisions have achieved sufficient cohesion and proficiency for commitment to offensive combat in a mid-to-high-intensity combat environment.

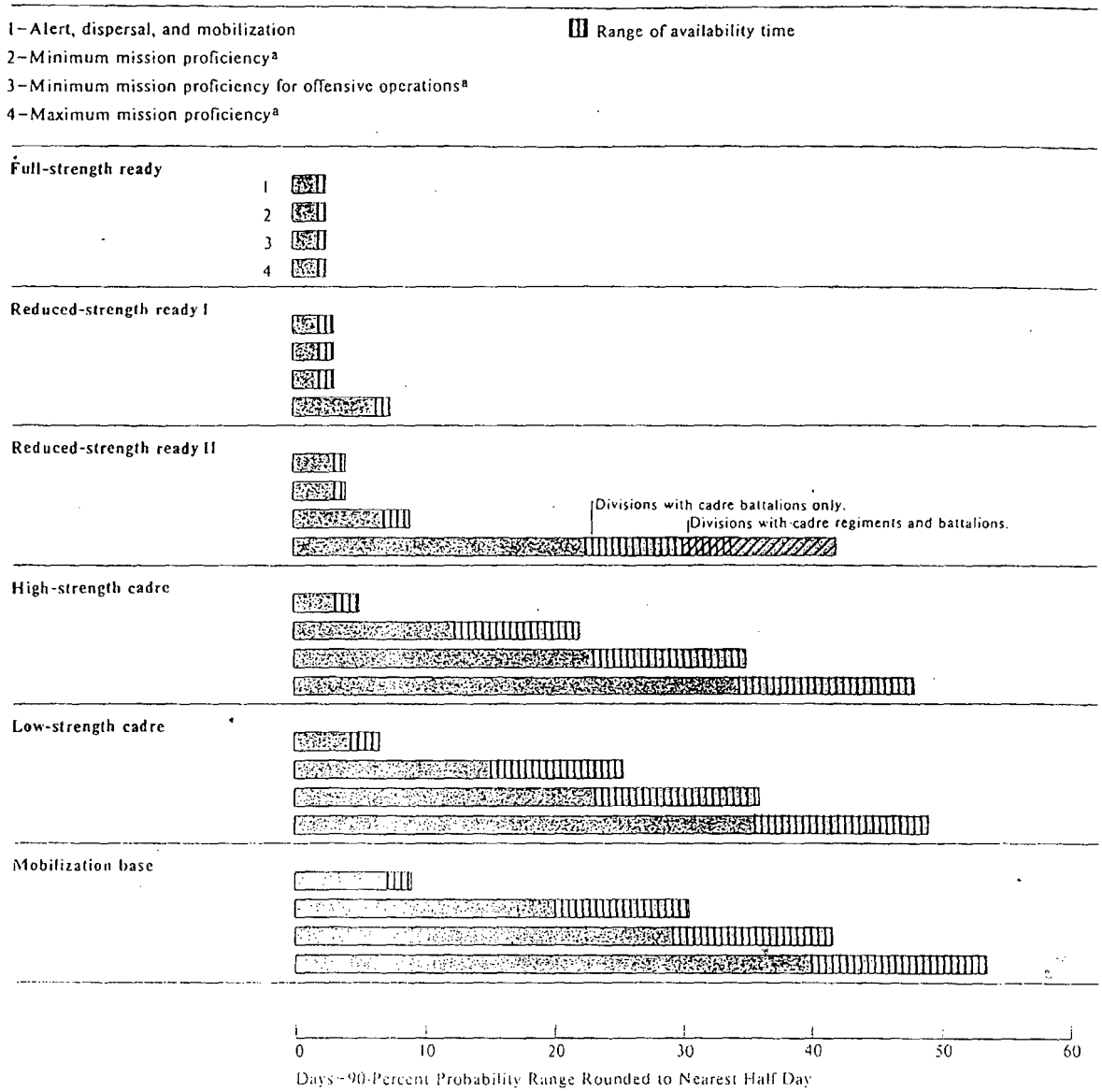
— **Maximum Proficiency:** Occurs at the end of each training cycle, when all required training has been completed. (S)

The amount of training required by Soviet divisions to attain GSFG standards varies depending on peacetime manning levels and the proficiency level desired. If sufficient time had elapsed since troop rotation, "ready" divisions would require either no training at all or up to five days of training to achieve minimum proficiency for offensive operations, while "not ready" divisions would require from 19 to more than 30 days of training to achieve the same standard. If the required training were conducted after mobilization, division availability for commitment to combat would vary from one and a half days (for full-strength ready divisions) to more than 40 days (for mobilization bases) (see figure 1). (S)

Weapon Effectiveness

Major variations in weapon effectiveness occur between "ready" and "not ready" divisions and on a regional basis. "Ready" divisions

Figure 1
Cumulative Force Availability of Soviet Divisions



[a] Includes mobilization time.

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generally are better equipped, with newer, more capable weapon systems and have a full complement of weapons. "Not ready" divisions, particularly low-strength cadre and mobilization base divisions, are equipped with older weapons and do not have a full complement of equipment. On a regional basis, the Western Theater of Military Operations (TVD) facing NATO's Central Region not only contains more divisions than other TVDs, but its divisions typically have a higher overall equipment effectiveness. Soviet divisions opposite China in the Far Eastern TVD in aggregate are the next best equipped in the force structure, followed by those in the Southwestern TVD, those in the Strategic Reserve, and those in the Southeastern and Northwestern TVDs (see figure 2). Divisions opposite areas of lesser threat clearly have a lower priority for more modern and effective weapon systems. (C)

Overall Combat Potential

Combat potential is a function of numerous factors, including mission proficiency (determined by training); equipment effectiveness; command, control, communications, and intelligence; leadership and morale; and the logistic support base. While the last three are important—particularly in assessing opposing forces—we have not attempted to quantify these factors. Therefore, our analysis focuses on two key quantifiable factors: equipment effectiveness and mission proficiency. Although weapon effectiveness generally would remain static during the force generation process, mission proficiency—and therefore overall combat potential—would increase through training: the more time allocated for force generation—particularly training—the greater the payoff in terms of combat potential.[2] (C)

We believe that the Soviets plan essentially to employ only those forces stationed in the vicinity of a given operational TVD, reinforced perhaps with reserves from the military districts in the central USSR. There is little indication that they contemplate major redeployments of high-readiness units from one theater command to another. In fact, the major variations in overall readiness and combat potential between the TVDs suggest that each is uniquely structured, manned, and equipped to meet contingencies peculiar to that region. (C)

On a regional basis divisions in the Western TVD would have the highest overall combat potential upon completion of alert and mobiliza-

[2] Our quantification of theoretical combat potential uses the effectiveness of a unit's weapons as a baseline measure of combat potential. Mission proficiency is expressed as a coefficient. If the unit's mission proficiency is assessed to be less than the theoretical maximum (1.0), the overall combat potential of the unit will be degraded. We believe that, in general, this approach is consistent with the Soviet approach to assessing combat capability. (C)

Table 2

Theoretical Increase in Divisional Combat Potential by Theater [a]

TVD	Aggregate Combat Potential Upon Mobilization	Aggregate Combat Potential After Training	Percent Change [b]
Strategic Reserve	3,200	7,400	133
Southwestern TVD [c]	6,250	12,450	99
Southeastern TVD	6,050	11,100	84
Northwestern TVD	1,750	2,900	64
Far East TVD	16,750	26,800	60
Western TVD [c]	27,550	35,850	30

[a] Divisional combat potential is the aggregate combat potential of all maneuver divisions within a theater of military operations.

[b] The change in combat potential is influenced chiefly by the ratio of "ready" and "not ready" divisions within a theater. Essentially, the greater the number of "ready" versus "not ready" divisions, the fewer the number of divisions that need training; thus the lower percentage change in combat potential.

[c] Does not take account of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces, which, if included in the TVD force, would increase the score.

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tion, due to the large number of highly trained full-strength ready divisions and the concentration of modern weapon systems. Divisions in the Far Eastern TVD opposite China would have the second-highest combat potential, followed by those in the Southwestern, Southeastern, and Northwestern TVDs and the Strategic Reserve. (S)

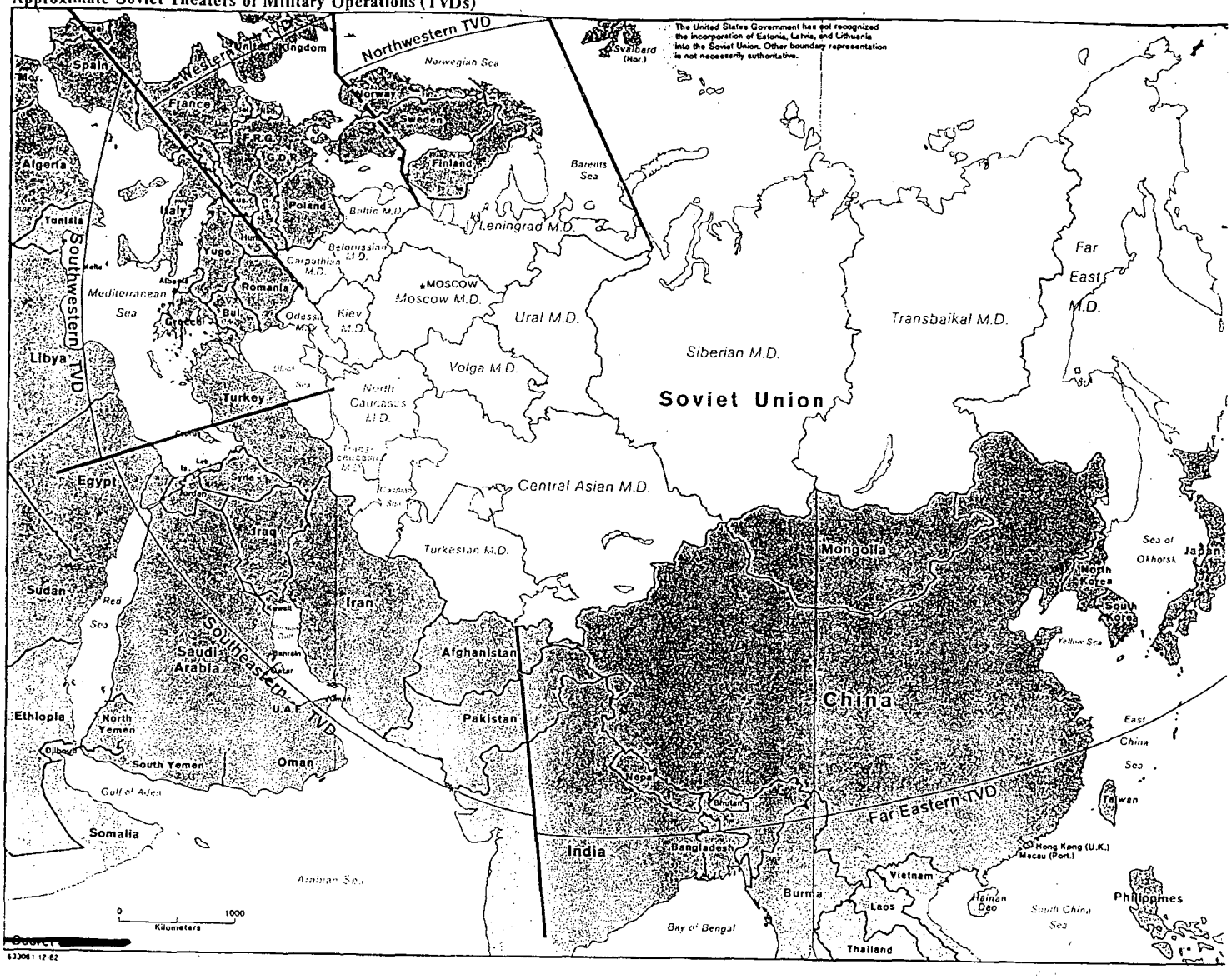
With postmobilization training, overall combat potential could increase anywhere from 30 percent in the Western TVD to more than 100 percent in the Strategic Reserve (see table 2). This gain in combat potential would vary according to the ratio of "ready" to "not ready" divisions in each TVD and would exact a cost in terms of force availability. "Not ready" divisions require from 19 to more than 30 days of training (plus time required for alert and mobilization) to achieve minimum standards for commitment to offensive operations. "Ready" divisions require little or no training to reach this same level of mission proficiency. (S)

Implications

Forcewide Readiness and Combat Potential

The Soviets appear to have systematic and effective procedures for alerting and mobilizing their forces. The completion of the alert and mobilization process, however, does not provide a fully trained, completely combat-ready force. Because of the substantial differences in the combat potential of "ready" and "not ready" divisions after mobilization, we believe that the Soviets would use any additional time available for training prior tocommitting "not ready" units to offensive operations in a mid-to-high-intensity combat environment. (S)

Figure 2
Approximate Soviet Theaters of Military Operations (TVDs)



We believe the Soviets could alert and mobilize all 210 of their divisions within 11 days. Upon completion of alert and mobilization alone, however, many of the 210 divisions would have a greatly limited combat potential. Overall, this force would have less than half of the total combat potential we believe could be generated. Most of this initial force capability would be provided by the 82 "ready" divisions. (S)

Completion of the minimum training we estimate would be necessary to prepare for operations in a mid-to-high-intensity combat would extend the availability time for the 210-division force to 50 days. However, this would be a phased process, and more than 90 percent of the force (194 divisions) should be available 35 days after alert. The additional time taken to train "not ready" divisions theoretically would increase the overall combat potential of the force by 50 percent. (S)

Force Readiness by Theater

The Soviets have structured and deployed their ground forces for theater warfare and would rely primarily on those forces in-theater to defeat any enemy. Specialized forces, such as airborne divisions, and central reserves could reinforce one theater or another, but Soviet forces basically are designed to operate in each TVD independently. Readiness, therefore, is largely a theater problem for the Soviets and is most usefully assessed on that basis. The three Soviet theaters that encompass the bulk of Soviet forces and most of the Soviet frontier are the Western, Southeastern, and Far Eastern. Of these, the Western TVD is unique: it is the only one of the three to which non-Soviet allies contribute forces—well over half of the first-echelon divisions. (S)

The Western TVD. The Soviets believe that a war in Central Europe probably would occur only after a period of heightened tension during which they would take steps to increase the readiness of their forces in the Western TVD. Under such circumstances, we believe the Soviets could phase their preparations, bringing various elements of their forces to full combat readiness sequentially. For an offensive against NATO, the Warsaw Pact, at least initially, could organize its forces in Eastern Europe into three fronts and those in the western USSR into two fronts. Soviet planners could elect to begin hostilities with three fronts before the two reinforcing fronts from the western USSR were in place and available. The Soviet concept of operational and strategic echelonment is designed to provide for the time-phased introduction of fresh forces into battle to sustain an offensive. (S)

Readiness for Operations in the Western TVD. The Soviets have two options in preparing to conduct operations in the Western TVD: they could initiate operations immediately after completion of the alert and mobilization of sufficient units to flesh out the required force; or they could take additional time to conduct training and improve the proficiency of the mobilized force, increasing its combat potential. (S)

If the Soviets were willing to commit units immediately after alert and mobilization, they could generate the Soviet component of a three-front force in the forward area within three to five days. The two Soviet fronts in the western USSR could be readied in 10 to 11 days, excluding movement time (see table 3 and figure 3). If the Soviets chose to train "not ready" units to achieve a higher level of mission proficiency (consistent with minimum requirements for offensive operations against NATO), the preparation time for the Soviet portion of a five-front force would be phased over a considerably longer period of about 45 days. The training undertaken by "not ready" divisions would increase the overall combat potential of the 62-division Soviet force by about 30 percent. (S)

Ultimately, the readiness and combat potential of the three fronts in the first echelon would be heavily dependent on the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) forces that would make up more than half of the divisions in the first echelon. Polish and Czechoslovak divisions would be particularly important because they would provide the bulk of the forces on the northern and southern flanks. Although we have not assessed NSWP readiness in detail, we believe that some NSWP divisions (six East German divisions and a few Polish and Czechoslovak divisions) probably could be mobilized as quickly as the Soviet divisions. We do not believe that all non-Soviet forces could be as fully prepared in as short a time as their Soviet counterparts in the groups of forces. (S)

The Southeastern TVD. Soviet planning for operations in Southwest Asia differs substantially from that for war in Central Europe, but the Soviets probably would not accept the risk of committing a hastily assembled, poorly prepared force. For operations in this region, the Soviets could mount a limited invasion of Iran to seize Azarbayjan with a combined-arms army (three to five divisions) and support elements. Large-scale operations, to seize control of Iran and the northern littoral of the Persian Gulf, would require 20 or more divisions and would probably be accomplished in two phases: secure northwestern, central, and northeastern Iran, including Tehran, and consolidate, resupply, and redeploy tactical aircraft to captured airfields; then seize the Khuzestan oilfield region and secure control of the Strait of Hormuz. The phased

Table 3

Peacetime Readiness Posture of Soviet Divisions in the Western TVD [a]

Readiness Status	Number of Divisions
"Ready"	
Full-strength ready	26
Reduced-strength ready I	7
Reduced-strength ready II	1
"Not Ready"	
High-strength cadre	11
Low-strength cadre	12
Mobilization base	5
Total	62

[a] Excludes two airborne divisions—a full-strength ready and a high-strength cadre (training) division—that could be employed in this or other theaters.

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approach could also be combined with an early "grab" of the strait by heliborne or airborne forces, although they would be at risk until reinforcements arrived over land. (S)

Readiness for Operations in the Southeastern TVD. The Soviets could generate the number of divisions required for a limited operation against Azarbayjan within about 60 to 80 hours after alert, and the forces required for large-scale operations within five to six days (see table 4 and figure 4). Without training, however, the combat potential of these forces would be extremely low, and the most combat-ready divisions would be those currently located in Afghanistan. Failure to provide training would add to the substantial risks inherent in a campaign in this region. If training were provided the Soviets could almost double the combat potential of the total force in 30 to 40 days after the initial alert. (S)

The Far Eastern TVD. Soviet options in a Sino-Soviet conflict range from large-scale raids with limited objectives to a full-scale invasion of western and northeastern China. We believe that military as well as political considerations probably would discourage the Soviets from pursuing the total defeat and surrender of China or attempting the long-term military occupation of the Chinese heartland. (S)

Soviet ground operations probably would be interspersed with short defensive periods during which enemy incursions would be repelled, followed by offensive operations that would achieve high rates of advance and attain desired military objectives. For offensive opera-

Figure 3
Force Generation Profile for Soviet Divisions: Western TVD

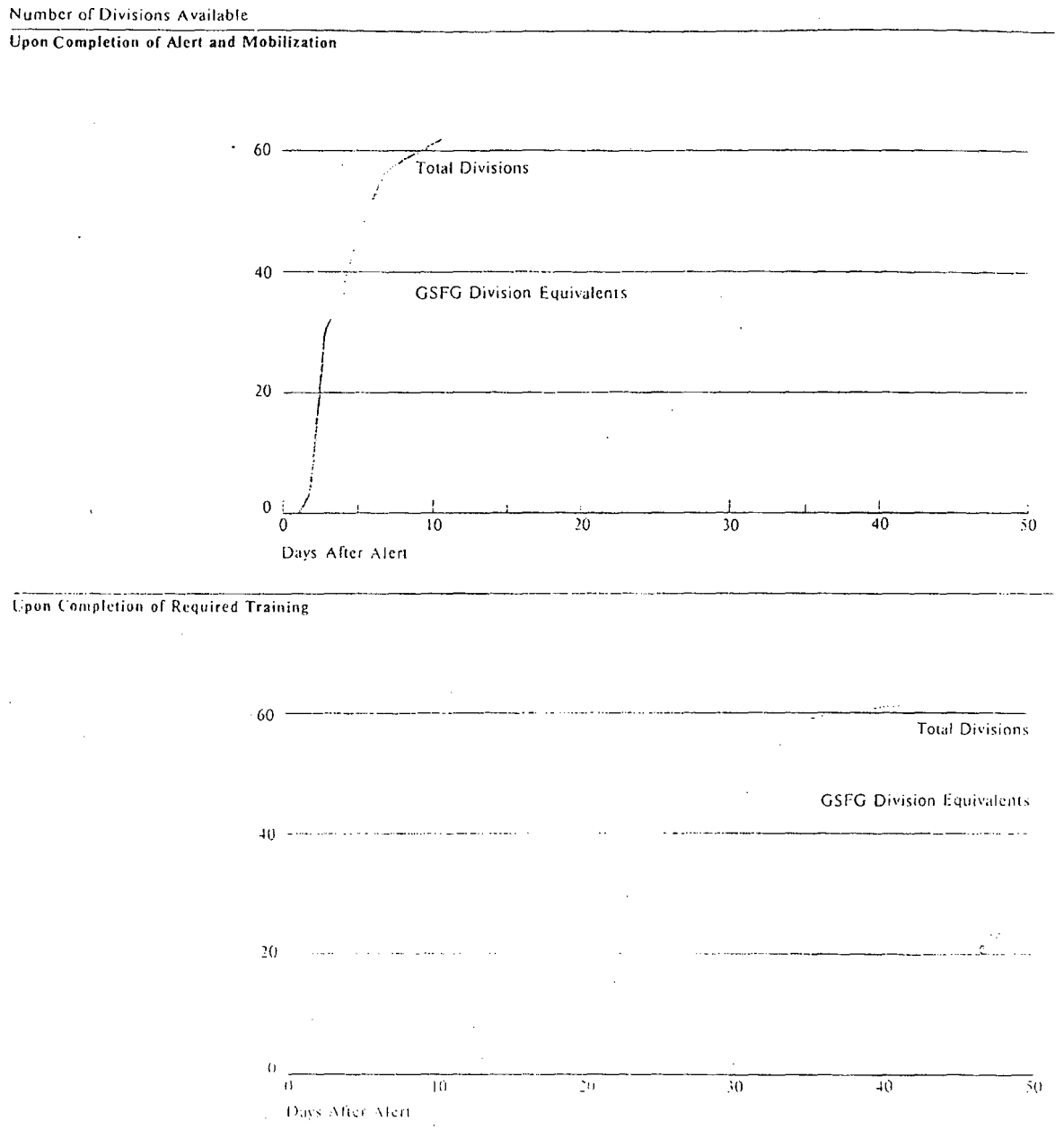

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Table 4

Peacetime Readiness Posture of Soviet Divisions in the Southeastern TVD[a]

Readiness States	Number of Divisions
"Ready"	
Full-strength ready	3
Reduced-strength ready I	0
Reduced-strength ready II	4
"Not Ready"	
High-strength cadre	9
Low-strength cadre	11
Mobilization base	2
Total	29

[a] Excludes two full-strength ready airborne divisions that could be employed in this or another theater.

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tions, Soviet forces probably would be organized into three primary fronts in the Far East, Transbaikal, and Central Asia Military Districts, and possibly a reserve front in the Siberian MD. (S)

Readiness for Operations in the Far Eastern TVD. The Soviets could alert and mobilize 25 "ready" divisions in the Far East within four days (see table 5 and figure 5). Within 11 days after alert, the full 56-division force in the Far East could be mobilized and integrated into the theater command and control structure which exists in peacetime. Once mobilized, however, this force would need additional training to achieve a level of proficiency consistent with offensive operations in a mid-to-high-intensity environment. The "ready" divisions could be prepared for such operations within seven to nine days after alert, but "not ready" divisions would require between three to six weeks for alert, mobilization, and training. (S)

Given the relatively low-combat potential of their forces upon mobilization, the Soviets would be likely to opt to complete training prior to launching a major three-front offensive. In a more limited campaign, however, they could choose to launch initial cross-border operations against relatively thin Chinese forward defenses and count on having sufficient time to prepare follow-on forces for commitment should they be required. (S)

Readiness Trends

While the Soviets have continued a pattern of steady ground forces growth over the past 10 years (some 30 new divisions or mobilization

Figure 4
Force Generation Profile for Soviet Divisions: Southeastern TVD

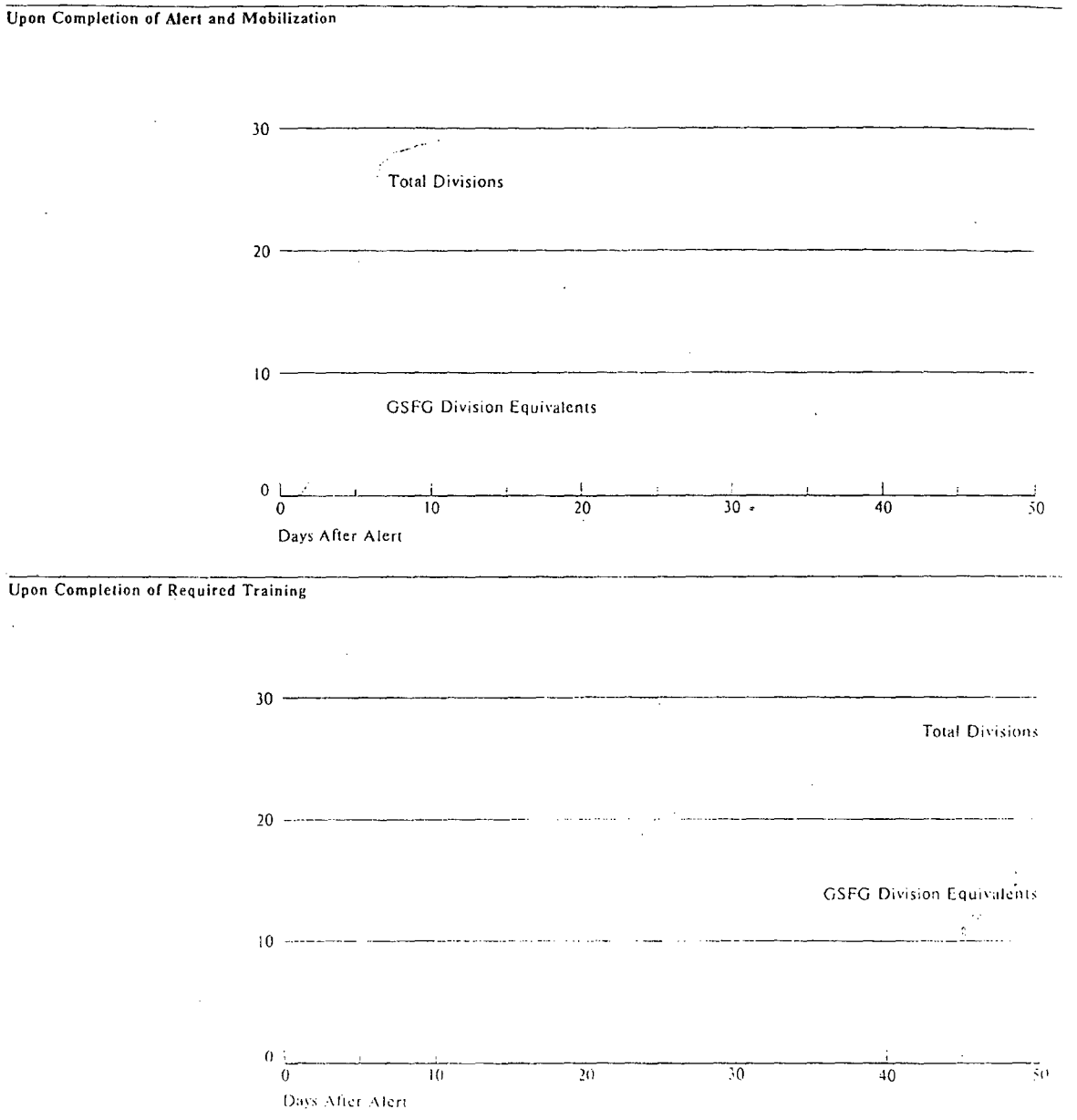

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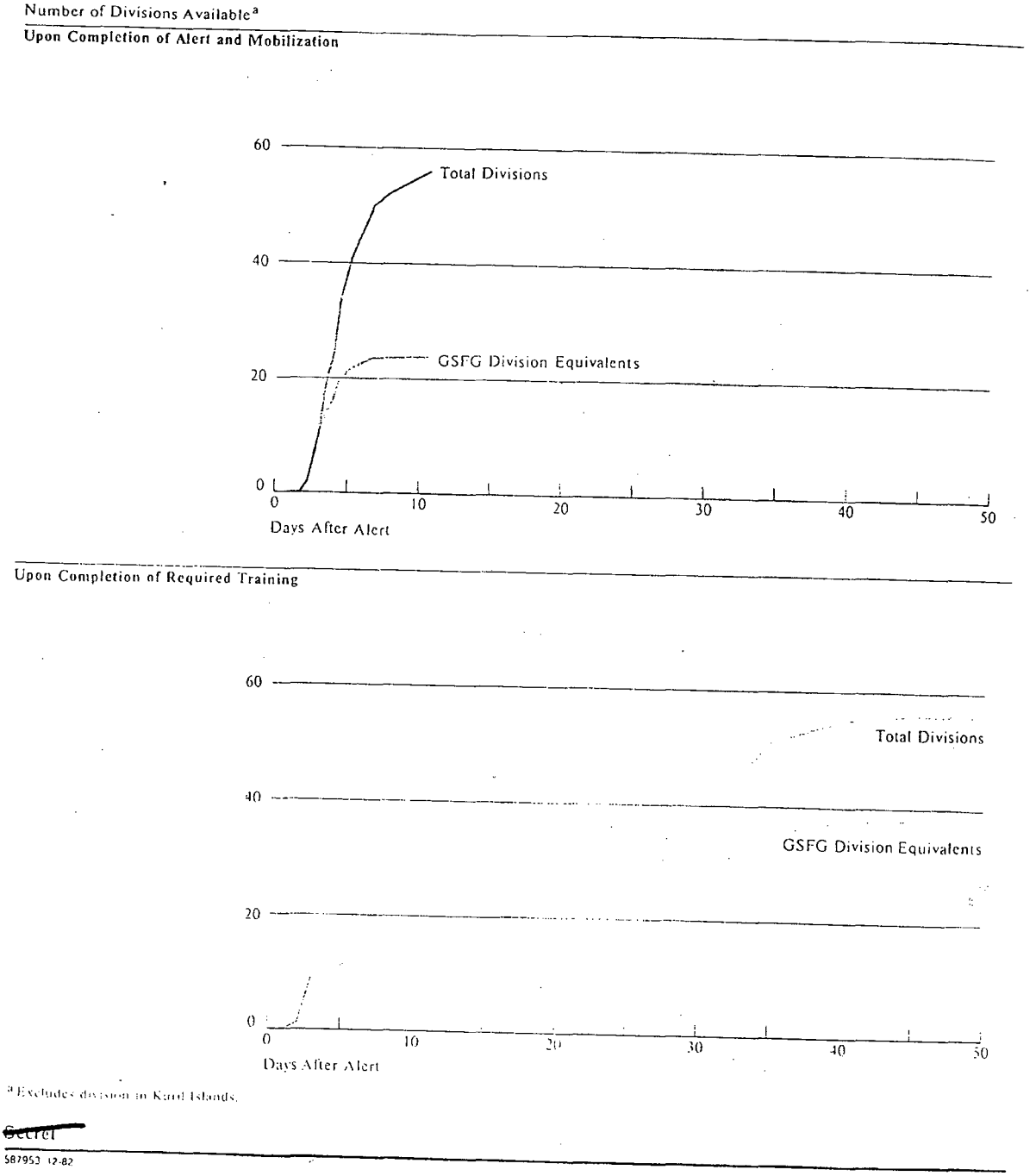
Figure 5
Force Generation Profile for Soviet Divisions: Far Eastern TVD



[a] Excludes division in Kuril Islands.

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Table 5

Peacetime Readiness Posture of Soviet Divisions in the Far Eastern TVD[a]

Readiness States	Number of Divisions
"Ready"	
Full-strength ready	1
Reduced-strength ready I	10
Reduced-strength ready II	13
"Not Ready"	
High-strength cadre	15
Low-strength cadre	11
Mobilization base	6
Total	56

[a] Excludes one reduced-strength ready I coastal defense division that is not deployed or oriented for operations against China.

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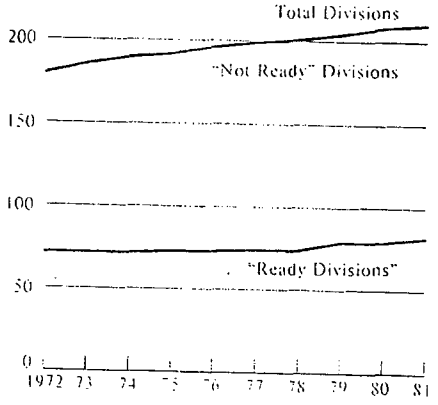
bases have been created), there has been no appreciable change in the overall readiness posture. On the contrary, between 1972 and 1981, there was a drop of about 4 percent in the proportion of "ready" to "not ready" divisions in the forces (see figure 6). Although a few divisions have been upgraded from "not ready" to "ready" status, most new

Figure 6
"Ready" and "Not Ready" Maneuver Divisions in the USSR, 1972-81



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divisions have been either manned at cadre levels or are being maintained as inactive mobilization base divisions. (S)

We do not anticipate a major, permanent change in the readiness posture of the Soviet forces over the next five years unless they perceive a substantial and lasting alteration of the threat in one region or another. Any effort to substantially upgrade their readiness posture would be problematic. The Soviets will continue to face dwindling manpower resources through the end of the decade, and a major increase in peacetime manning (except on an emergency basis by recalling reservists) in one region might require consequent reductions in other regions. (S)

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