

22549

MICRO ONLY

~~SECRET~~

18 February 1977

MICROFILMED

CIA Contribution to PRM/NSC-6

Follow-on Study

CIA/SR/100024-77.M

The Warsaw Pact's military posture has undergone only evolutionary change since the US approach to MBFR was developed some 5 years ago. The Pact's military capabilities have continued to grow--substantially in some functions--but the pace has been slower than in the late sixties and has been in the form of qualitative rather than quantitative improvements. These technological advances have had only fractional deployment as yet, but they are substantially affecting the Warsaw Pact posture because of the Pact's existing numerical advantages. The Pact's force improvements continue a trend that dates from the mid-sixties and that was identified in documents used in developing the US approach to the MBFR negotiations.

The changes in Pact forces have occurred against a background of important constants.

-- The USSR continues to support the maintenance of large Warsaw Pact forces as protection against a perceived threat from NATO, as a means of enhancing control of its East European allies, and as an instrument of political pressure on Western Europe.

-- The Soviets expect that Central Europe would be the decisive theater of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict and that combat on the flanks would be secondary if not diversionary.

MICRO ONLY

SR M 77-10024

Classified by <u>3</u>
Exempt from general declassification schedule of E. O. 11652, exemption category
20 (1) <input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) or (3) (circle one or more)
Exempt from automatic declassification on
DATE AND AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE
(unless impossible, insert date or event)

~~SECRET~~

(9)

~~SECRET~~

-- Soviet doctrine is offensive-oriented. Plans call for quickly achieving favorable local force ratios, for using large numbers of tanks, mechanized infantry, and artillery to break through, and for then pushing rapid drives deep into NATO territory.

-- These offensive plans depend critically upon the forces of East European satellites of doubtful enthusiasm for involvement in an expeditionary campaign, especially one risking nuclear retaliation. More than half (31 of 58) of the Pact divisions in the NGA are East European.

Still, changes since 1972 have continued to advance Pact capabilities for such an offensive. The forces have remained basically static in size but have been improved qualitatively.

-- For conventional war, the Pact has been enhancing the mobility, firepower, air defense, and capacity for protracted combat of its ground forces, as well as the range, payload, and ordnance of its tactical air forces. The gains have been achieved chiefly by replacing obsolescent equipment with improved weaponry --some of it equal or superior to NATO's--and have been sought to complete the changeover of the force from one intended merely to mop up after nuclear exchanges to one equipped to fight a conventional, more protracted war. Ground-force improvements in Soviet forces include the T-72 tank, self-propelled artillery, greater numbers of tanks and towed artillery, better and more

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

numerous APCs, and more and bigger trucks. Deployment is gradual and has far to go. About half of Soviet motorized rifle regiments in the area now have the new APCs, but T-72s and SP guns still comprise only some 10 percent of their weapons inventories. The additional trucks, however, have perhaps doubled Soviet transport capabilities and have effectively removed the logistical weakness noted 5 years ago.

East European ground forces also have profited from a gradual modernization, though less extensive than that of the Soviets. Replacement weapons have included some new APCs, antitank guided missiles, and self-propelled artillery.

Of all Pact theater force elements, air and air defense forces have made the greatest technological gains. The continuing-- since the late-sixties--acquisition of a new generation of aircraft and weapons is enabling the Pact to change the traditional air-defense orientation of its tactical air forces toward a spectrum of both offensive and defensive missions. The effect has been enhanced by further improvement in firepower and mobility of the ground-based air defense systems. The number of such modern aircraft as the Fitter C/D, Flogger B/D, and improved Fishbeds has increased from about 25 percent of Soviet air forces in the NGA in 1972 to about 80 percent today. The SA-6, a mobile, low-to-medium altitude SAM system, had just been introduced in 1972 and has now spread to about half of the Soviet force. Deployment of an alternative weapon, the SA-8, has now started. Deployment

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

of the SA-4 as a replacement of the SA-2 with Soviet forces has slowly grown from 7 brigades in 1972 to 9 brigades today. Modernization and expansion of AAA holdings has continued at a gradual pace.

Perhaps the changes of most ominous portent have been the USSR's improvement of its capability for theater nuclear war.

-- Evidence has accumulated that the Soviets have increased the allocation of warheads to tactical missions, are storing them in Eastern Europe, have now or expect soon to have large-tube nuclear artillery rounds, and--consistent with the improved capabilities of their tactical aircraft and availability of the Backfire bomber--have shifted to greater reliance on air delivery vice less accurate and shorter-ranged SSMs.

-- Deployment of the mobile, MIRV'ed SS-20 IRBM, now beginning to replace those SS-4s and SS-5s targeted on Western Europe from the USSR, has a profound potential impact because of the weapons' greater striking power and--above all--the launcher's enhanced survivability.

Perceptual Changes

Two other seemingly important alterations in Pact posture since 1972 apparently have been changes of perception, not of reality.

-- NATO estimated Eastern manpower in the NGA at 946,000 men in 1972, but the estimate has since been increased 6 times

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

to 1,163,000 men. In fact, the true manpower, which probably lies in the vicinity of 1,100,000 men, almost certainly has increased no more than 50,000 men. Early estimates were too low because manpower is both acutely difficult to count and of doubtful value as a measure of military capability. Before MBFR, the intelligence community had preferred to focus its sources and methods on such more valid measures as equipment counts. Early changes incrementally corrected the initial error, whereas the smaller recent increases emerged from a NATO estimating mechanism dominated by "intelligence" organizations who view threat estimates principally as influences on defense budgets.

--We have come to recognize that, contrary to our assessment in 1972, the Soviets do not regard prior reinforcement from the USSR as a prerequisite to a general Warsaw Pact offensive in Central Europe. In other words, Soviet planners apparently regard the 58 divisions in the NGA as capable not only of containing a NATO attack but also of mounting a general offensive before any of the 30 additional divisions the Soviets intend to commit arrive from the western USSR. Still, assessors of the so-called "standing-start attack" must take account of several potent inhibitions to Pact capability for a sudden onslaught. These constraints include:

-- peacetime undermanning of East European
and Soviet units,

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- the need to set up the command and control apparatus to control the buildup and deployment of the forces,
- the need for the Pact countries to conduct a general mobilization involving the callup of millions of reservists and tens of thousands of trucks, and
- the Soviets' concern with preparing the USSR for the likely consequences of their setting off World War III, e.g., getting the Soviet Navy out to sea, alerting and securing other forces not directly involved in the attack, and taking civil defense measures in anticipation of nuclear war.

We judge that such considerations would extend Warsaw Pact buildup time well beyond 48 hours. Even in a situation of high tension where the Soviets saw a threat of hostilities breaking out as a consequence of events not entirely in their control, we estimate the Pact would need at least 4 days to field a force of 35 divisions. In circumstances where the Soviets could determine the time and manner of beginning a war, we judge they would take more time to reach a war footing.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Pact Projection

Current Pact force trends are unlikely to change substantially between now and the early eighties. The military burden bears heavily on the economies of the Pact countries, especially in Poland, and there is strong pressure for more consumer orientation in all of the Pact societies. There are hints that the East's "doves" are gaining heart and hope. But these signs have long been visible, and the contrary signs of a continuing dominance by the military leadership have proved to remain the more accurate indicators to date. Thus, the repressive Eastern regimes probably will continue with the momentum of military modernization now under way, at least until the current suite of improved weaponry has substantially filled the tables of equipment.

Continuation of the current momentum is likely to bring the following results by the early eighties:

-- Ground forces - T-72 deployment comprising perhaps half of the Soviet tank inventory in the NGA, but possibly little if any with East European forces.

Classified by	[redacted]
Exempt from automatic declassification schedule of E. O. 11652	
SI (U, S, S, R, etc.) (if any)	
Action	
DATE	
(unless impossible, insert date or date)	

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Self-propelled artillery deployed in at least regimental strength in most Soviet divisions in the NGA. In addition, an increase of about 10 percent in the number of artillery pieces in Soviet units.

-- Air and air defense forces - Complete replacement of such older aircraft as the Fresco and early model Fishbed and Fitter with the modern aircraft now entering the force and probably with some of the next generation. Substantially complete deployment with Soviet forces of the current package of improved air defense weapons and some penetration of these into the East European inventories as well.

-- Theater nuclear forces - Deployment of 200 to 300 SS-20 launchers equipped with more than 1,000 missiles. Quite possibly, a large Soviet park of nuclear artillery, achieved through development of a nuclear round for the widely deployed 152-mm howitzer.

If the trend were in fact to continue, its most significant impact almost certainly would be felt in the nuclear sphere. As noted earlier, the

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

survivability of the SS-20 would have profound effect were the weapon deployed in large numbers. This survivability would act to decouple Soviet-based systems from what--should a conventional conflict go nuclear--might then remain a strictly theater nuclear war fought with tactical weapons within the NGA. That is, the SS-20's capability, with warning, to move to an unidentified launch site would lessen both any US propensity to hit these weapons with a pre-emptive strike when initiating theater nuclear war and any Soviet propensity to fire first out of a concern to "shoot them or lose them."

The growing acceptance of strategic nuclear parity, the above-mentioned decoupling, and the apparently increasing Soviet readiness for theater nuclear war all will act to lower the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent to a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict and thus to focus attention on the conventional deterrent. MBFR, with its potential for lessening the conventional threat, will of course also be spotlighted.

~~SECRET~~