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Warning of War in Europe

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WARNING OF WAR IN EUROPE

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PREFACE

The Memorandum summarizes the Intelligence Community's view of how the Warsaw Pact would prepare for war, including political, economic, civil defense, and military preparedness measures that are likely to be implemented as the Pact moved to a wartime posture. It also describes Pact doctrine and readiness for war, the range of force options available to the Pact, and our ability to detect and interpret Pact war preparations. Finally, the Memorandum describes a warning process that would probably be characterized by ambiguity, continuing reassessment, and incremental warnings to policymakers. The critical role played by policymakers in the warning process is addressed.

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SUMMARY AND KEY JUDGMENTS

The Warning Process

The primacy of Europe to the national security interests of the United States and the presence of large Warsaw Pact military forces in Eastern Europe place a premium on warning of Warsaw Pact war preparations and intent to attack NATO. The US warning system seeks to provide early notice of events that might presage Pact offensive operations, however ambiguous such notice might be. As additional events transpire and tensions increase, the system is designed to indicate greater likelihood that war is in the offing. *However, there is no finite point at which the warning system can foretell with certainty that war is imminent.* It can assess potential enemy capabilities; it is less reliable for forecasting hostile intent, which might become apparent only in the act of war itself. This is due partially to the nature of the system, which must rely upon human judgment, and partially to the dynamics of crises in which the reactions of policymakers to early warnings may affect the development of the course of events.

There are frequently differing interpretations of the causes or reasons for observable activities which tend to delay the development of a consensus within the Intelligence Community regarding the likelihood of war. As early and ambiguous warnings are received—most likely without consensus as to the imminence of war—policymakers may or may not be inclined to take prudent actions, either from skepticism of the more pessimistic interpretations of events, or for concern that their actions might intensify the crisis and perhaps precipitate hostilities. Such warnings will continue past any point or points of policy decisionmaking to the actual outbreak of hostilities or other resolution of the crisis. *Accordingly, warning of war should be viewed not as a single event, but as a process of communicating warnings of increased threat.* The warnings may be expected to develop from various sources and with various interpretations before a Community consensus is achieved. *We are confident that the Intelligence Community is capable of detecting and correctly assessing Warsaw Pact capabilities and readiness for war; hence we believe that consensus on these matters would be a continuing strength throughout any period of international tension or crisis. However, Community consensus regarding Pact hostile intent could be a late development.*

It is within the foregoing context that we define "warning of war" as *the communication of intelligence judgments to national policy-*

makers that a state or alliance intends war, or is on a course that substantially increases the risks of war and is taking steps to prepare for war. While concern for attack by a hostile power is the ultimate purpose of the warning process, this Estimate does not focus upon the specifics of "warning of attack": *the communication of an intelligence judgment to national policymakers that an adversary is not only preparing its armed forces for war but also intends to launch an attack in the near future.*

The strength of the warning system for discerning increased capabilities of the Warsaw Pact to initiate hostilities should not be construed as a capacity to foretell with confidence the course of subsequent events. Nor should recipients of warning expect that definitive thresholds at which decisions should be made will necessarily be identified. While the process of information gathering and assessment is continuous, policy decisions to react or not react to the flow of advisories are the principal determinants of the success or failure of the warning process.

The Intelligence Community has never observed the Soviet Union or Warsaw Pact making preparations of the magnitude and duration necessary to go to war with NATO. Our observations give us confidence that, while we might not recognize war preparations in their earliest phases, we would soon detect many indicators that such preparations were under way. Military preparations are the least equivocal events leading to war readiness, and would constitute the principal events upon which our warnings would be based. From these, we believe that we could provide timely notification that the Soviets and their allies were converting to a wartime posture and were risking war by their behavior.

We cannot be absolutely certain that we would be able in every instance to distinguish between preparations for an exercise and similar activities, and preparations for war. However, we believe that the context of Soviet actions and their scope and intensity would provide reasonable insight into the likelihood of war.

Warsaw Pact Perceptions of NATO's Military Capabilities

Pact planners see a serious threat in NATO's ability to rapidly expand its standing forces by mobilization in Europe and by reinforcement from outside Europe.

The NATO theater nuclear capability is perceived as a profound threat and dominates Pact strategic planning for war in Europe. *Pact*

planners are convinced that NATO would be likely to employ nuclear weapons in a NATO–Warsaw Pact conflict. Accumulated evidence reveals considerable Pact anxiety over the formidable difficulties inherent in locating and destroying NATO nuclear warheads and delivery systems. Moscow also recognizes that NATO's planning and capability to implement limited nuclear options could initiate an uncontrollable chain of escalation.

Risks Involved in a War With NATO

NATO has a large, diversified array of tactical nuclear-capable weapons which the Pact believes would probably be employed against it. *The existence of the separately controlled US, British, and French strategic nuclear strike systems increases Moscow's uncertainty about nuclear escalation. The Soviet leadership sees war in Europe, particularly nuclear war, as holding its territory at risk from strategic nuclear strikes.* NATO's nuclear deterrent capability would seem to make nonnuclear war the most rational option for the Pact. The Soviets' dilemma is that successful Pact nonnuclear operations would probably lead to the use of nuclear weapons by NATO.

The Military Reliability of Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Forces

Soviet dependence on its allies, especially in Central Europe, is so great as to make their participation crucial to prospects for success on the battlefield. *We believe the Soviets would be unlikely to initiate hostilities against NATO unless they had reasonable expectation of participation by most Pact forces.*

Soviet control over the East European forces—and Soviet confidence in such control—would be at its highest during preparations for hostilities as Pact forces were being alerted, mobilized, and deployed for combat, and during the initial stages of war as Pact forces were advancing. *We believe that military discipline and established control mechanisms are likely to assure the initial reliable response of most Pact forces.* The military reliability of NSWP forces, however, could be degraded as hostilities progressed; this would be especially likely in the case of a stalemate or significant Pact failures on the battlefield.

Warsaw Pact Military Objectives in a War With NATO

A Warsaw Pact strategy for military victory in Europe almost certainly would have to meet three requirements. First, it would have to result in the destruction or seizure of key military, political, and economic objectives, the loss of which would virtually eliminate the utility of continued resistance by NATO. Second, these objectives would

have to be destroyed or seized quickly, before major NATO reinforcement could occur, and certainly before NATO could divert its considerable productive capacity to wartime purposes. Third, and perhaps most important, these objectives must be accomplished in a way that would minimize damage to the Soviet homeland.

Likelihood of a NATO–Warsaw Pact War

We believe it highly unlikely that the Pact would attack NATO under present circumstances. And despite shrill rhetoric about Washington's militaristic ambitions and US efforts to achieve military superiority, and a general erosion in East-West relations since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it is unlikely that Pact leaders believe that NATO wants war or would seek it as a deliberate policy. *We believe war in Europe would become likely only as a result of profound political, military, economic, or social changes—or a serious miscalculation—and would be preceded by a period of growing tension resulting in a crisis of great severity.*

The Soviets see a costly and—to some extent—more perilous strategic and political struggle over the rest of the decade. *Nevertheless, we do not now foresee in the near term (the next three to five years) development of a trend that would make a NATO–Warsaw Pact war likely.* Differences of view exist in the Politburo and Pact ruling elites with respect to policies toward the West, but these differences are not likely to center around the advisability of war with NATO unless extraordinary changes occur that would threaten the vital interests of the Soviet Union. Changes in the NATO-Pact military balance and alterations in the Pact's perceptions of NATO's strengths and weaknesses could, of course, influence the Pact's assessment of potential gains versus risks in a crisis situation. A perception that NATO's military capability or its unity or resolve to resist had deteriorated would probably encourage Moscow and its allies to try to exercise more influence in Western Europe and would probably result in threats and pressure tactics being applied. *We do not believe, however, that changes in the NATO-Pact military balance in themselves would lead to war as long as Moscow perceived that its losses would be heavy and that the risk to the Soviet homeland would be high. Despite the potentially catastrophic consequences of a NATO-Pact war, the Soviets would consider initiating hostilities if they perceived a situation which threatened the integrity of their security system or other vital interests.*

A scenario for war in Europe might involve an attack to destroy a NATO Alliance which the Soviets sensed had become demoralized and seriously weakened internally. Such an attack might be designed to take

advantage of internal dissent, economic stagnation, or social upheaval in the NATO countries. A possible catalyst for war in Europe could also be the development of a crisis in one or more Pact countries or Yugoslavia. This might take the form of an internal upheaval or some chain of events which threatened a political disintegration of the Pact. An additional possibility is that a future Soviet leadership—faced with an increasingly adverse international environment and grave internal problems—might lash out at the West in a desperate attempt to prevent an eventual collapse of the Soviet regime and the Pact alliance due to extreme international and internal pressures. In this scenario, future Soviet leaders could perceive that time was working against them and they might opt to set a timetable to launch a sudden attack against NATO and/or the United States. We have high confidence, however, that these scenarios have little chance of occurring during the period of this Estimate. We do not foresee NATO becoming seriously weakened as a result of social upheaval in Western Europe or any internal Soviet problems that could develop to the point of threatening the collapse of the Soviet regime. Moreover, even if such events did occur, we do not believe that the Soviet leadership would deliberately initiate a NATO–Warsaw Pact war in response to these events.

Warsaw Pact Doctrine and Readiness

Decisive offensive action is the hallmark of Soviet military doctrine. It provides the impetus behind Soviet emphasis on combat readiness, early seizure of the initiative, preemption and surprise, a combined-arms approach to warfare, and the requirement for force superiority in the main battle areas—backed up by strong reserves to assure the momentum of the attack. Soviet and Pact operational and force developments reflect a systematic effort to meet these doctrinal requirements.

The Warsaw Pact's war-fighting concepts are bold and aggressive, but the execution of these concepts presents several problems. The preparations, coordination, and maneuvers dictated by doctrinal concepts are extremely ambitious and complicated, and would severely test the abilities of both commanders and troops. Likewise, Pact planners realize that there is usually a trade-off between increasing force readiness or superiority and the likelihood of achieving surprise.

Emphasis on combat readiness is a constant theme which supports the Pact's war-fighting doctrine. In particular, Soviet military thinking is still heavily influenced by World War II experience, when the lack of preparedness and initiative resulted in devastating losses. The Soviets intend to fight any future European war on the territory of their enemies. This requires that large, combat-ready forces must be in place at the beginning of hostilities.

Pact planners believe that full military readiness in peacetime is not necessary or realistically feasible. Their perception of the threat includes an assessment that NATO's military forces are not maintained at full readiness for war. They expect that war probably would occur only after a period of heightened tension; the peacetime posture of Pact forces reflects the belief that this period would provide warning, thereby enabling the Pact to increase the readiness of its forces prior to hostilities. *The Soviets' overall readiness philosophy is to maintain sufficient forces in readiness to deter attack; to protect perceived national interests, including the containment of nations in the Soviet sphere of influence; and to defend home territories.*

The Pact national and military readiness systems together provide for the control and coordination necessary to take a country (or the Pact) and its armed forces from routine peacetime readiness conditions to readiness for war. The two systems are extremely flexible and are designed to interact and complement one another, but they are not necessarily intended to be totally consistent. The military readiness system is Pact-wide, while the national readiness system is not. Neither system has been fully tested on a national or Pact-wide basis. *We believe, however, that these systems provide the Pact with the necessary mechanisms to move their nations and military forces to a wartime posture.*

How the Warsaw Pact Would Go to War

Political Preparations and Warsaw Pact Consultations. The decision to prepare for or to initiate war with NATO would be made by the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, probably on the recommendation of the USSR Defense Council. *The decision process probably would involve scores of supporting high-level party, government, and military officials, although the security measures surrounding these deliberations would be extraordinary. The decision process would be difficult, contentious, and probably prolonged.* The reliability of Moscow's allies would almost certainly be among the matters discussed by the Politburo at this time. The initial Politburo/Defense Council decision probably would establish the intent to prepare for war and the degree of urgency required, but it probably would not establish the specific date and time of a Pact attack or irrevocably commit the leadership to war. *We believe the final decision to attack and the timing of the attack might not be made until hours before its execution. Whatever the circumstances of war initiation, the Soviets' military dependence on their allies would be a critical factor.*

Although the Soviets undoubtedly would withhold from their allies certain aspects of their own deliberations and perceptions of the crisis,

actions and decisions affecting the preparation of the Pact's Combined Armed Forces could not be withheld without seriously risking Moscow's war plans.

Military Preparations. The manner in which the Pact prepared its forces for war would depend largely on the speed, urgency, and intensity with which a war-threatening crisis developed. Pact planners have identified two approaches to achieving full combat readiness. *In a slowly developing crisis, we believe the Pact nations would probably take a deliberate, time-phased approach, initiating "increased combat readiness" for portions of their armed forces.* This would accomplish a number of precautionary measures, but would fall far short of placing the Pact's military forces on a full wartime posture. This approach would permit the achievement of full readiness in an orderly and systematic manner, while allowing opportunities to avoid hostilities. If a crisis deepened, the Pact could move to "threat-of-war readiness." *The Pact's final military preparations would be initiated by a decision to implement "full combat readiness."* With this decision, preparations for war would move rapidly and continuously. The "full combat readiness" condition, however, is not a declaration of war and it does not order the commitment of units to combat.

Another approach to achieving full readiness—the compressed approach—would be employed after the unanticipated outbreak of hostilities, or when the Pact believed war was unavoidable and imminent and there was no time for deliberate, time-phased preparations. Under this option, military forces would be readied simultaneously and as rapidly as possible. Under extreme circumstances, units could be ordered to move directly to "full combat readiness" from their normal peacetime posture.

Other Preparations. Assuming a decision to prepare for war, an immediate concern for the Soviets and the Pact would be to maximize internal security and assure the support and stability of the population of the USSR and the East European nations. It is virtually certain that the Soviets and the Pact would develop in their domestic propaganda the theme of a heightened threat from the West and would seek to justify an appropriate military response. Prior to the initiation of hostilities against NATO, the Pact—and the USSR in particular—would seek to exploit to the fullest the potential of public statements and diplomacy as an instrument of policy. Moscow and its allies could not be certain whether such a war would be short or long, nuclear or nonnuclear. As a matter of prudence, the Pact would have to consider a full range of economic preparations. Changes would occur across all economic sectors, and would be pronounced in manufacturing, labor, agriculture, construction, trade and finance, and transportation systems. If these

measures were initiated, they would suggest serious concern over an increasing danger of hostilities. The Soviet Union clearly has the most extensive civil defense program among the Pact nations. The primary purpose of this program is to protect essential enterprises, leaders, and institutions, and, to a lesser degree, the population in general. The USSR's civil defense program is designed to assure the survival of a functioning wartime management system.

Attack Options and Warning

Any Pact decision bearing on when to attack would be influenced by a set of sometimes contradictory military factors, including its own preparedness in relation to its perception of the status of NATO preparations, and the desire to achieve surprise as well as to maximize force superiority. The final decision on an attack option, however, almost certainly would not be based on purely military factors, but rather on a combination of military and political considerations. *The major dilemma facing Pact leaders would be the degree to which they would care to trade off Pact preparedness and the full combat potential stipulated by their doctrine, for a greater degree of surprise which might be achieved by a smaller but quicker attack designed to preempt mobilization, reinforcement, and the establishment of an organized defense by NATO.* In the following evaluation of the risks and benefits of alternative options for the initial attack, we have defined four basic options for the Central Region as well as possible variations. It should be emphasized, however, that these options only represent certain "phase points" during the Pact's force generation process at which Pact planners could choose to launch an attack; variations and other attack options are possible.

Our assessments of the time required for the Pact to complete the military preparations required to execute various attack options, beginning from a peacetime posture, include a minimum time and a more realistic time. The minimum time reflects our assessment of the Pact's ability to accomplish complex preparations under the most time-constrained conditions, with no major problems. The difficulties inherent in coordinating, controlling, and executing these Pact-wide preparations would be enormous, however, with many opportunities for major mishaps, confusion, delays, and even chaos. The more realistic time estimates allow for the human, mechanical, and climatic difficulties which would probably characterize such an undertaking. Neither the minimum time nor the more realistic time includes specific time allocated for the training of freshly mobilized units. Such training would enhance the combat potential of the mobilized units as well as assure a greater degree of preparedness in other important respects, but at

the risk of lessening surprise. Those Pact divisions opposite the Central Region that would benefit the most from postmobilization training would include three Czechoslovak and five Polish low-strength divisions, and almost 30 Soviet divisions in the three western military districts of the USSR. The availability and performance of the Soviet "not ready" divisions would be most critical to the Pact's ability to sustain offensive operations against strong or prolonged NATO resistance. Moreover, many Pact nondivisional units are maintained at low strength in peacetime and would be much better prepared to perform their missions after conducting a period of postmobilization training. *Our assessment of the time required for these low-strength units to train up to a standard we judge to be the minimum proficiency necessary to conduct effective offensive operations in Central Europe would extend their preparation times to about 30 days, plus the time required for movement. In any event, we consider it likely that Warsaw Pact forces would undergo some mobilization before a decision was made to move to a condition of full combat readiness.* This would in all likelihood occur during a period of increasing international tension extending over a number of weeks or months before the Pact decided to initiate hostilities.

Option I—Attack From a Peacetime Posture

There is no evidence that would indicate that the Pact might launch an attack on NATO from a peacetime readiness posture. In fact, Soviet military strategists have explicitly stated that a European war would be improbable without some political warning and a degree of prehostilities mobilization by both sides. The Pact, however, does have some capability to attack NATO on short notice using ground and air units garrisoned near the East-West German border and the West German–Czechoslovak border.

A few divisions might be capable of initiating an attack—possibly directly from their garrisons—within about 24 hours after their commanders received an attack order, depending on specific conditions within individual units. An attack mounted on such short notice, however, could easily result in chaos as unit commanders, their staffs, and troops would have had no forewarning of an attack order and—by definition—made no preparations for an attack. Under normal peacetime conditions, units usually take days, weeks, or even months to prepare for scheduled major exercises (division level and higher). Pact divisional units in East Germany and Czechoslovakia are not fully manned in peacetime, and their higher level communications structure and logistic support systems are not postured to support a standing-start attack. Given 48 hours' notice, Pact divisional units could only marginally increase their ability to mount a coordinated attack, and would still

lack a command, control, and communications, and logistic structure that could effectively support their attacks.

As a means of initiating a large-scale war with NATO, an attack from a peacetime posture would probably give the advantages of operational and tactical surprise to the Pact. By dint of surprise and perhaps local force superiority, Pact planners would expect—and might get—some early ground and air victories. These initial successes would probably be the only advantage that would accrue to such an attack. There are many considerations that would weigh against the Pact opting to initiate a war with NATO from a peacetime posture: loss of mobilization advantage; insufficient time to establish a front-level command, control, and communications structure; insufficient time to mobilize and move forward rear service units; lack of time to permit preparation of the Pact's populace or national economies for war; risk of escalation to nuclear war when Pact forces and installations would be especially vulnerable to nuclear attack; and the risks of unpreparedness and surprising their own troops and commanders. *These arguments lead us to conclude that there is little chance that the Pact would initiate war against NATO from a peacetime posture.*

Such reported activity would provide sufficient information for Allied commanders and policymakers to take precautionary steps. Because of the extremely unlikely eventuality of such an attack, however, interpretation of the purpose of this activity could be ambiguous and contentious, and a final judgment that an attack was imminent might not be reached before hostilities began.

Option II—Attack With Two Fronts

the smallest force the Pact might use to initiate offensive operations in Central Europe would consist of two fronts. This force would consist of Soviet and NSWP ground and tactical air force units in East Germany and Czechoslovakia and possibly Soviet units in Poland—a total of some 40 ground divisions, plus support units.

In the most urgent circumstances, the Pact would need at least five to six days to prepare and position a two-front force—assuming that this force had been maintained in its normal peacetime readiness posture. Initiation of a two-front attack in slightly less time (four to

five days) might be possible, but without several less ready and/or more distant divisions in eastern Czechoslovakia. The complexity and magnitude of the required preparations and the risks involved in insufficient preparation would probably cause or require the Pact to take longer than five to six days to prepare this force, with seven to 10 days being a more realistic time frame. The Pact might elect to rapidly launch a two-front attack in order to minimize warning time to the West, but it is more likely that the Pact would gradually raise the readiness of its forces during a period of tension.

The initiation of hostilities after only five to six days of preparation with a two-front force would entail serious risks for the Pact. The attacking force might lack some front-level elements and its initial combat potential would be less than could be achieved with additional preparation time. Moreover, forward deployed Soviet and East German forces would have to assume responsibility for initial operations in northern West Germany and along the Baltic coast because of the unavailability of forces—primarily Polish—that would normally constitute the Pact's Northern Front. Command and control structures, particularly at the theater and national levels, would remain incomplete. More important, the mobilization and forward deployment of Soviet forces in the western USSR could not be accomplished; these units, therefore, would not be immediately available to reinforce or sustain an attacking two-front force. Furthermore, effective participation in the war by major forces in other areas would be limited, particularly in regard to coordinated naval actions and ground and air offensives on the flanks—due in part to the lower peacetime readiness posture of these Pact forces. *We believe that the Pact would be unlikely to attempt to initiate war from a two-front posture after only five to six days' preparation in other than extraordinarily urgent circumstances.*

We have assessed that the Pact would require a minimum of five to six days to prepare for a two-front attack; US and NATO military commanders and policymakers could expect to have four or more days to make decisions and counterpreparations. These times do not take into account the likelihood that the forces would be raised to higher levels of readiness during any period of tension or crisis that would probably precede a Warsaw Pact decision to move to a full war readiness posture. Assuming that the readiness of the forces had been so raised, the amount of time required to reach full combat readiness could be greatly reduced. In this case, some warnings, however ambiguous,

would already have been given. The Intelligence Community would continue to assess the Pact's war preparations and issue additional judgments regarding the nature and extent of these preparations.

Option III—Attack With Three Fronts

Under this option, Pact planners could elect to prepare for war via a more phased approach and attack when they had prepared a three-front force. *We believe that the Pact would require, at a minimum, about eight to nine days to prepare and position a three-front force for an attack—assuming that this force had been maintained in its normal peacetime readiness posture. A more realistic time frame for these preparations might be 10 to 12 days from a "cold start." However, follow-on forces from the western USSR consisting primarily of "not ready" divisions would not be able to effectively support and sustain such an attack.*

The more complete national and military preparations permitted under the three-front option would assure the availability of a larger and better prepared force and provide for more efficient joint action by all forces. In this option, those ground maneuver units readied for offensive operations would include all forces in the two-front option described above plus Polish forces and possibly a Soviet army (four divisions) from the Baltic or Belorussian Military District: a total of about 60 divisions.

There is evidence that Pact planners would want at least three fronts available for initial operations in Central Europe, with assurance that at least one additional front would be available for reinforcement soon after the initiation of hostilities. This option also is more consistent than shorter preparation options in regard to Pact doctrinal preferences for force superiority, national and Pact-wide preparations, combined-arms operations, and the Pact's appreciable respect for NATO's war-fighting capabilities. Moreover, it would offer better prospects for sustaining Pact forces and allow additional preparations to guard against nuclear escalation. *Accordingly, we judge that except under extraordinarily urgent circumstances the Pact would prefer to prepare at least a three-front force before initiating hostilities.*

We estimate that we could provide warning to national policymakers within 24 hours after such preparations were initiated. The United States and NATO would have seven or more days of decision and preparation time if there had been no previous effort on the part of the Warsaw Pact to raise the readiness of its forces. If the Pact had already gradually raised the level of readiness of its forces during a

period of tension as we would expect, the time required for final preparations would be shorter. In this case, some warnings, however ambiguous, would already have been given. In any case, the Intelligence Community would continue to assess the steps being taken by the Pact to prepare for war and would issue additional judgments regarding the nature and scope of the preparations.

Option IV—Attack With Five Fronts

Circumstances permitting, the Pact could build up even larger forces before initiating hostilities against NATO. *A five-front attack posture would largely fulfill the Pact's conservative doctrinal preferences in regard to force superiority and would take at least 15 days to achieve, including the forward movement of Soviet forces in the western USSR if the Pact were to attempt to achieve it from a "cold start." The difficulties involved in rapidly developing a fully mobilized and deployed force from a peacetime posture are such that these preparations realistically might take up to three weeks.* In this option, Soviet ground forces in the three western military districts of the USSR would be available for early reinforcement of Pact forces in Central Europe. As discussed in Option III—the three-front attack—the Soviets could choose to move limited forces from the western USSR to join Polish forces in forming a Polish-Soviet Front. At least some of the remaining forces in the western military districts—some 30 divisions—would probably be organized into at least two additional fronts—the Belorussian and Carpathian Fronts—and forward deployed in Poland and Czechoslovakia before the attack, thereby substantially adding to the momentum and sustainability of a Pact attack. With these forces, Pact ground forces available for operations against Central Europe would total 85 to 90 active divisions plus support units.

This attack option would reduce the Pact's chances of achieving surprise while maximizing the weight of the attack. This option also would increase the ratio of Soviet to non-Soviet Pact forces. It would offer much better prospects for sustainability; the most complete command, control, and communications network; and would allow for additional measures to prepare the Pact's populace, economies, and transportation systems for war. However, due to insufficient training time, "not ready" divisions would have only a marginal capability to conduct effective offensive operations.

Should the Pact opt for a full five-front attack from a "cold start," we judge that we would be able to provide warning within 24 to 48 hours after preparations began. US and NATO military commanders and policymakers would have at least 13 days of decision and preparation time, provided that they reacted expeditiously to the

initial warnings. If, as we would expect, final preparations were made after Pact forces had already gradually increased their readiness during a period of increasing tension, the large-scale mobilization of Soviet forces in the western USSR and their forward deployment would still provide timely notice that the Soviets were taking steps that would enable them to execute this attack option. During this period the Intelligence Community would continue to assess the steps being taken by the Pact to prepare for war and would issue additional judgments regarding the nature and scope of these preparations.

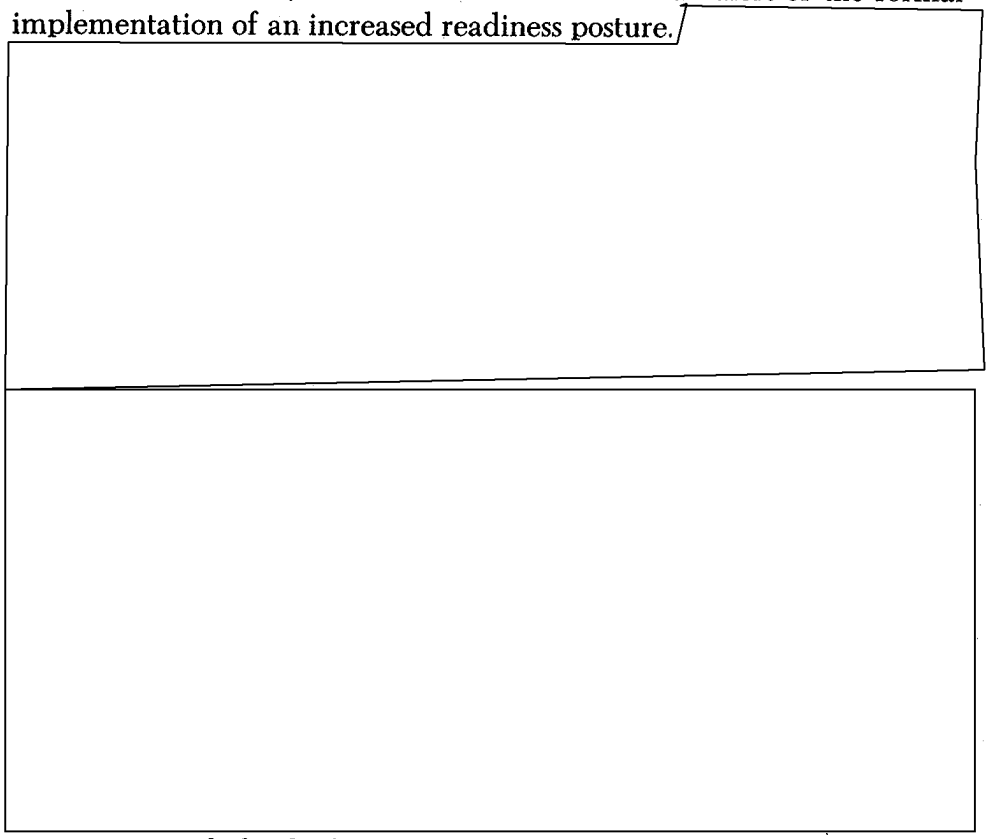
Variations in Attack Options

Forward Deployment of Forces in the Western USSR. The Soviets could choose to mobilize and forward deploy selected "ready" units from the western USSR prior to the complete preparation of the remainder of these forces, most of which are maintained in a peacetime "not ready" posture. While such a forward deployment would provide the Pact with additional early firepower and better prospects for sustaining its attacks, it has the significant disadvantage of possibly providing clear and highly detectable warning indicators to NATO.

Soviet air forces are not maintained at full wartime strength or readiness in peacetime. *We believe offensive forces would require about 48 hours to prepare a command and control structure for front-level operations. Strategic aviation forces probably would require an additional 24 hours to complete more extensive command and control arrangements. Thus, within 72 hours the Pact could mount a large-scale air attack throughout NATO's Central Region. However, we believe it highly unlikely that the Soviets would mount such an air attack against NATO independent of a combined-arms offensive.* Rather, the Soviets would prefer first completing logistic preparations and expanding their rear services, as well as completing mobilization of air combat units. *Such preparations would require seven to 12 days, at which time Soviet air forces would be fully combat ready.*

Gradual Buildup. The Pact could initiate gradual war preparations—implemented over a period of many weeks or months—either in response to a prolonged crisis or as a result of a deliberate decision to secretly prepare for war and launch a sudden attack. *We judge that the gradual approach to achieving full readiness in reaction to a developing crisis would be the most likely course of events if the Pact were to prepare for war against NATO.* Steps to increase the readiness of elements of the Pact's military forces could be taken selectively over a period of many weeks or months—such as the mobilization of certain low-strength units, that is, gradually converting them from a "not ready" to a "ready" posture. Many preparations, which in time-

sensitive circumstances might be initiated by a declaration of a combat alert (an order requiring immediate departure from garrisons) or the declaration of "threat-of-war" or "full" readiness, could be accomplished incrementally without the declaration of an alert or the formal implementation of an increased readiness posture.



Because of the high risks and costs involved—including NATO counterpreparations and the risk of miscalculation—the Pact would probably defer overt and large-scale mobilization, major force deployments, and other highly visible and provocative measures until the final transition to full readiness for war. *We judge that, even after some weeks or months of gradual preparations, there would still be a discernible difference in the nature, scope, and pace of preparedness measures that would enable us to provide warnings that the Pact was initiating the final steps that would enable it to go to war.* Pact deception measures and conditioning, however, could shorten the time available to defuse a crisis or to take countermeasures, particularly if policymakers delayed action while awaiting unambiguous proof of Pact intentions. *Nevertheless, we are confident that we could inform policymakers that the Pact was initiating the final steps that would enable it to go to war within 24 hours after the beginning of the activities associated with the transition to a "full readiness" condition. We would already have issued warnings—probably repeatedly—of the military measures being taken by the Pact, and of a growing danger of hostilities.*

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DISCUSSION

I. BACKGROUND

A. Scope of the Estimate

1. This Memorandum examines how a NATO–Warsaw Pact war in Europe might begin, focusing on the preparations the Pact would make under various attack options, and when US intelligence would probably detect and report such preparations for war. Warsaw Pact perceptions, doctrine, readiness, and objectives during a war with NATO, as well as the likelihood of war under present and near-term circumstances (the next three to five years), are also addressed.

B. Definition: Warning of War

2. For purposes of this Memorandum, we define "warning of war" as *the communication of intelligence judgments to national policymakers that a state or alliance intends war, or is on a course that substantially increases the risks of war and is taking steps to prepare for war.* Our initial warnings may not fulfill all of the elements of this definition, particularly specific judgments regarding enemy intent, but these warnings could be provided to policymakers relatively early and would provide a basis for decisions concerning options and appropriate countermeasures. We would be unlikely in our initial warnings to be able to foretell when or where the enemy will attack, or if an attack will occur at all. The warning process, however, is continuous. The early warnings would be followed by further assessments and warnings as necessary until the outbreak of hostilities or the end of the crisis. While concern for attack by a hostile power is the ultimate purpose of the warning process, this Memorandum does not focus upon the specifics of "warning of attack": *the communication of an intelligence judgment to national policymakers that an adversary is not only preparing its armed forces for war but also intends to launch an attack in the near future.* The information conveyed in warning of attack would be more precise than that communicated in warning of war, including—to the extent possible—when, where, and in what strength the adversary will attack. Under most circumstances, these specifics could be provided only late in a crisis.

C. The Warning Process

3. Warning is the communication of dangers implicit in a wide spectrum of activities by potential opponents, ranging from apparently routine defense measures, to substantial increases in readiness and force preparedness, to acts of political, economic, terrorist, or military aggression. A political or economic crisis is often a precursor of military events. Such a crisis would be reported as it developed, thereby providing the earliest warning that military events may occur.

4. The primacy of Europe to the national security interests of the United States causes the US Intelligence Community to strive for a warning process that trades certainty for time. The US warning system seeks to provide early notice of events that might presage Pact offensive operations. While tentative and ambiguous, early warning would provide time for developing and executing courses of action by policymakers which are low in costs and high in impact on crisis deterrence. As additional events transpire and tensions increase, the US warning system is designed to indicate greater likelihood that war is in the offing. As warning assessments become more certain, policymakers may continue to focus on crisis avoidance or containment, but costs increase and opportunities are lost. However, there is no finite point at which the warning system can foretell with certainty that war is imminent. It can assess potential enemy capabilities, but it is less reliable for forecasting hostile intent, which might become apparent only in the act of war itself. This is due partially to the nature of the system, which must rely upon human judgment, and partially to the dynamics of crises in which the reactions of policymakers to early warnings may affect the development of the course of events. In the most unambiguous warning—an attack is being executed—decisions are limited to a reactive set, and the consequences of mistakes may be extreme.

5. The policymaker is the critical focus of the warning process. This process is oriented toward advising the policymaker that a situation is developing that might require prudent actions to balance the chances that the opposition is on a course that may culminate in an attack on the United States or its Allies. The

policymaker must be aware that action—or inaction—on his part may affect the likelihood of war, that is, the adversary may key his resolve for war in part on actions taken—or not taken—by the United States.

Intelligence Community Warning Vehicles

Within the Intelligence Community, each analyst is responsible for providing warning through the chain of command of individual agencies via current intelligence reporting and briefings, as well as various departmental intelligence products. Moreover, an informal, multilevel "old boy network" operates to provide warning or to present alternative views. The essential point is that there is no single recognized document or method through which the Intelligence Community would be expected to convey its consensus that war was likely with the Soviet Union. Warning of war would probably develop in many ways, through many channels, with various shades of opinion indicating different interpretations of the observable facts and indicators as they became known.

Confidential

6. War preparations could affect the civilian domain before military forces were fully prepared and deployed for war. These early preparations would be reported incrementally, along with any military activity. Intelligence Community judgments regarding the significance of these developments would be tentative, and uncertainties would be relatively high. Community agreement might be slow to develop regarding the purpose of the early preparations. While representatives of the various intelligence agencies would inform their principals regarding the developing situation, it is quite likely that the warning aspects would be delivered with varying interpretations of cogency. Accordingly, warning of war should not be viewed as a single event, but as a process of communicating warnings of increased threat. Only when the predominantly military phases of preparation were well under way would the climate for coordinated warning communications be established.

7. When issued, the initial warnings would provide evidence on the nature of the decisions taken, the extent of measures under way, an estimate of when preparations would be largely completed, and a judgment about when the Pact would be ready for hostilities. The Intelligence Community, however, could not be certain that the Pact would attack as soon as it had taken the requisite steps to do so. The strength of the warning system for discerning increased capabilities of the Warsaw Pact to initiate hostilities should not be construed as a capacity to foretell with confidence the course of subsequent events. Nor should recipients of warning expect that definitive thresholds at which decisions should be made will necessarily be identified. The provision of warning cannot be based on instantaneous assessments. Warning must be grounded in trends, military growth over time, and developments that could possibly forecast intent to act. Even with relatively specific and quantitative force judgments, warning of war would still be an ambiguous, iterative process.

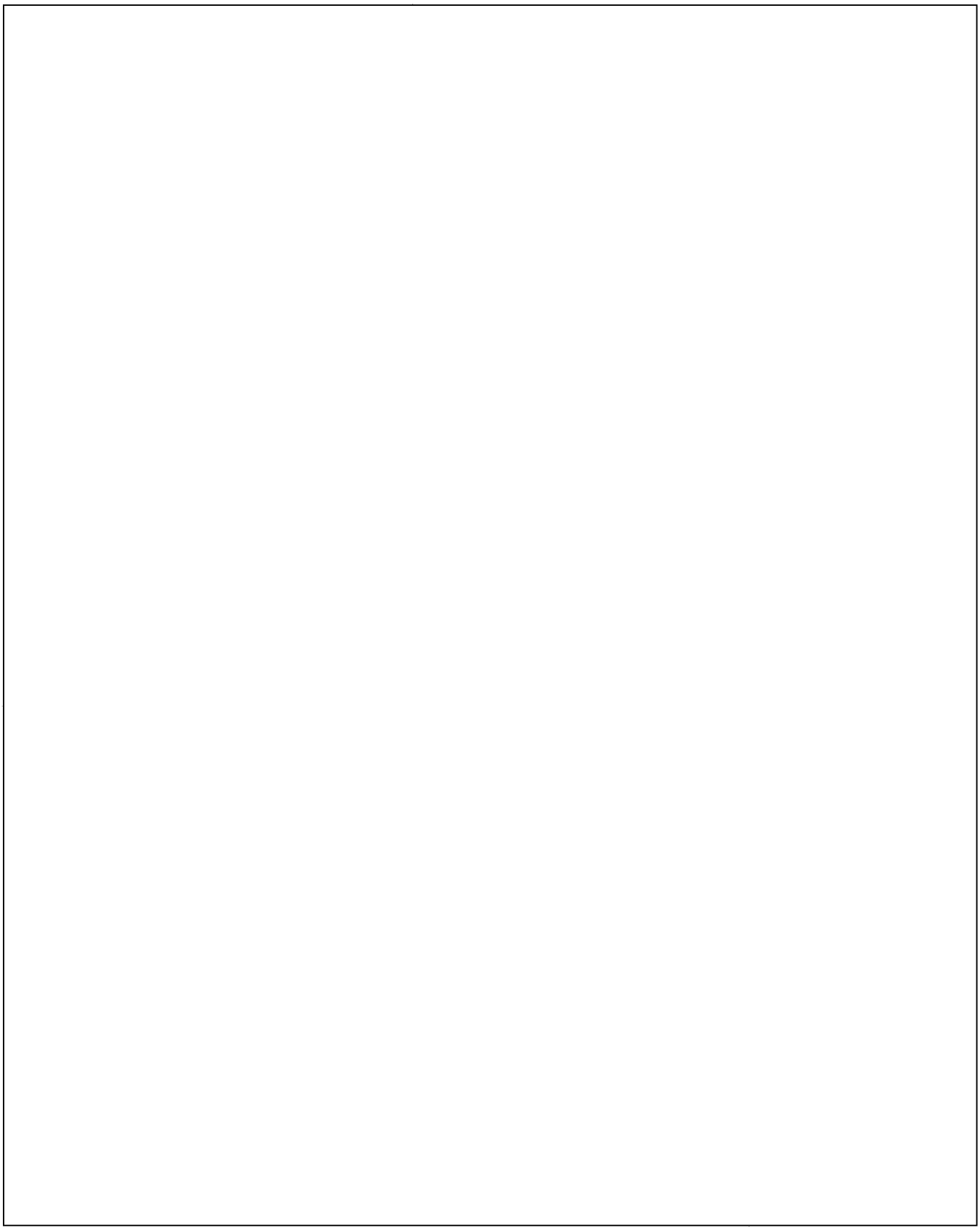
8. The Intelligence Community has never observed the Soviet Union or Warsaw Pact making preparations of the magnitude and duration necessary to go to war with NATO. Nonetheless, activity which we have observed—[redacted]—has given us confidence that, while we might not recognize war preparations in their earliest phases, we could provide timely warnings that the Soviets and the Pact member states were converting to a wartime posture and were risking war by their behavior.

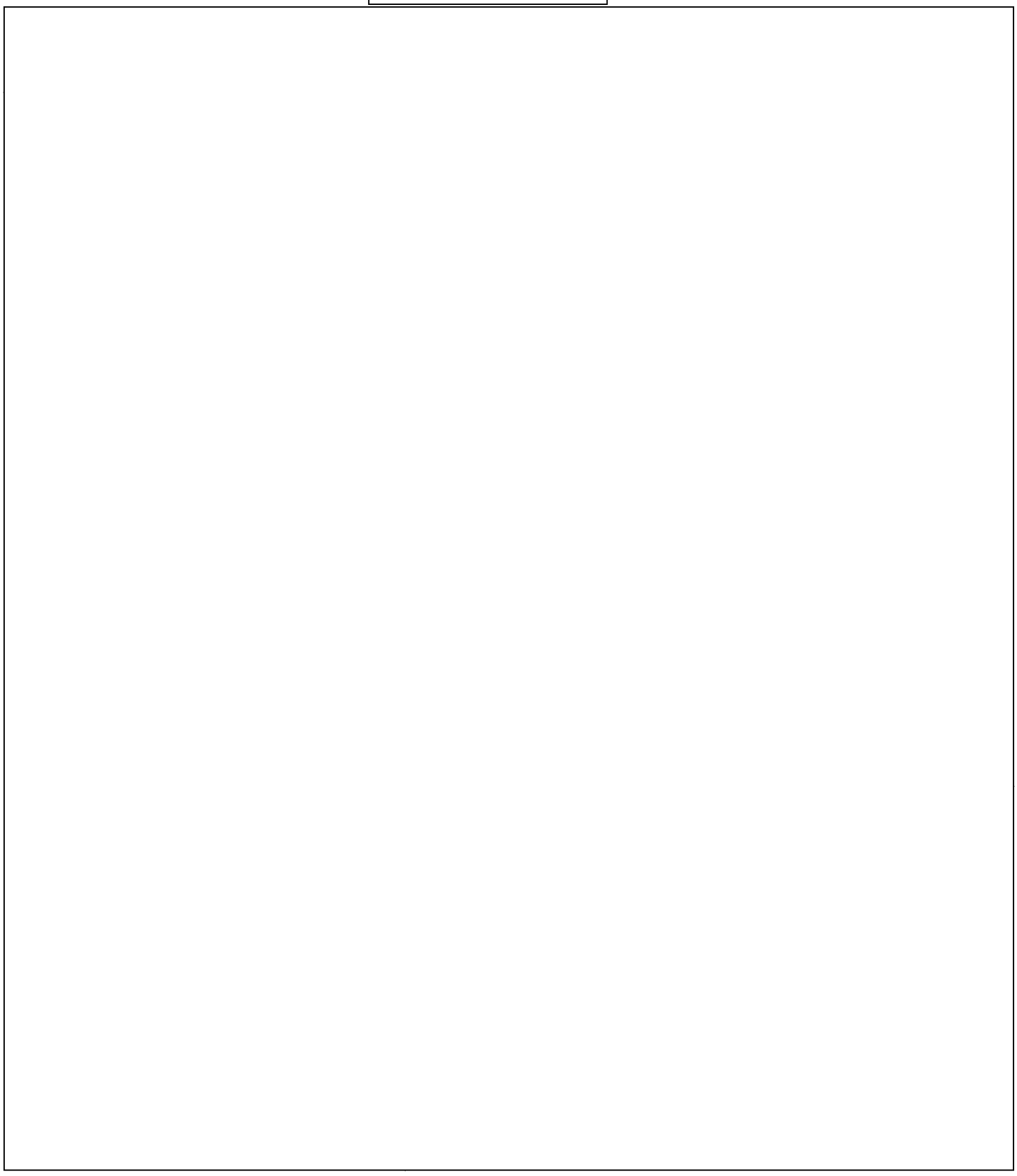
9. A warning that does not approximate the expectations of the recipient would meet with resistance, and pressures to disregard the early and tentative evidence of the possibility or likelihood of war would be great. First, there is the genuine risk of setting in motion precautionary measures that might be misinterpreted as hostile acts and further aggravate the situation or even precipitate the conflict. Second and third are the economic and political costs of ordering the mobilization of military forces and national resources for an event that might not occur or could be long delayed.

10. Acceptance of the warnings that are given is the final step in the process which draws upon the information-gathering machinery of government to develop coherent evidence of the likelihood of an event of great concern to national policymakers. Early warning judgments, while tentative and ambiguous, would become more specific and alarming as a crisis deepened. The process culminates in the mind of the policymaker when he is persuaded that the likelihood of the event is so high that considerations to the contrary should be set aside and action taken to counter or to mitigate its consequences.

D. Significant Events and Developments

11. Recent significant events and developments are discussed in the inset on pages 21-23; some are discussed in more detail in the Memorandum.





II. CONTEXT OF A NATO–WARSAW PACT WAR

A. Warsaw Pact Perceptions of NATO's Military Capabilities

12. Warsaw Pact perceptions of NATO's capability to wage war undoubtedly play a major role in shaping the Pact's strategy for war with NATO. Significant aspects of the Pact's view of NATO's capabilities have been gleaned from a variety of sources. This material indicates that the Pact has substantial and generally accurate knowledge of NATO's organization, force structure, alert procedures and reaction times, equipment, tactics and strategy, and mobilization and reinforcement capabilities.

13. Available evidence indicates that Pact assessments tend to maximize or even exaggerate NATO capabilities. This tendency toward "worst case" analysis may be indicative of uncertainty and/or respect for NATO, but in any case is generally consistent with the prudent manner in which Pact planners assess the military capabilities of potential adversaries and the risks involved in war. Three perceptions in particular illustrate the Pact's respect for NATO's military capabilities and have significant implications for Pact strategic planning.

NATO Mobilization, Reinforcement, and Deployment Capabilities

14. Pact planners see a serious threat in NATO's ability to rapidly expand its standing forces by mobilization in Europe and by reinforcement from outside Europe.

Capability of NATO's Air Forces

15. The Pact recognizes that it would have to use its air and air defense forces to attempt to achieve air superiority early in a war or face the prospect of NATO's use of airpower to offset the Pact's quantitative advantage in ground forces. The Soviets consider NATO's air forces a major military threat to Pact forces in Central Europe. This results from the deployment of the F-15, F-16, F-18, and Tornado.

16. Perceptions by the Soviets of the major problems facing their air defense forces are clear. In the tactical arena, the greatest concern is about aircraft such as the US A-10 and helicopters operating at low altitude under cover of intense electronic countermeasures. The deployment by the United States of long-range cruise missiles and the prospect of advanced penetrating bombers such as the B-1 cause the Soviets much concern as these weapons would be difficult to defend against because of their low flight profiles and small radar cross sections.

NATO Nuclear Capabilities

17. The NATO theater nuclear capability is perceived as a profound threat and dominates Pact strategic planning for war in Europe. Pact planners are convinced that NATO would probably employ nuclear weapons in a NATO–Warsaw Pact war. Accumulated evidence reveals considerable Pact anxiety over the formidable difficulties inherent in locating and destroying NATO nuclear warheads and delivery systems.

18. Moscow also recognizes that NATO's planning and capability to implement limited nuclear options could initiate an uncontrollable chain of escalation. Should NATO initiate the limited use of tactical nuclear weapons, Moscow would be faced with several sobering choices: continue fighting with conventional weapons only, respond in kind, or escalate to massive, theaterwide or even strategic nuclear strikes. The Soviets have described in their literature the concept of "limited" or "selective" use of nuclear weapons. However, the Soviets remain highly skeptical of the chances for controlling escalation at this level. Furthermore, once the nuclear threshold is crossed, the Pact's conventional force superiority would lose much of its significance. From Moscow's standpoint, the NATO deployment of Pershing II ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) makes it even more difficult to control escalation of nuclear war in Europe. NATO deployment of these long-range theater nuclear systems is seen as increasing the risk of strikes on the USSR during theater nuclear exchanges, thus obfuscating the threshold between theater nuclear and strategic (intercontinental) nuclear war. These systems reduce warning time, present new problems and uncertainties for Moscow in assessing the scale and objectives of a NATO nuclear attack, and tend to reinforce the Soviet bias for large-scale nuclear attack planning.

Risks Involved in a War With NATO

19. Pact assessments clearly show a concern for NATO's ability to quickly mobilize and deploy its in-theater forces as well as to bring substantial reinforcements from outside the theater within 30 days. The obvious strategic implication for the Pact is that, even in the short run, NATO could field large and powerful forces. These forces might offer sufficient resistance to prevent the Pact from gaining a quick victory, thereby providing NATO time to bring its larger population, greater industrial base, and superior technology to bear. Emerging Western doctrine and technology for placing Pact follow-on forces at risk might disrupt the momentum of a Pact conventional offensive. Furthermore, NATO has a large, diversified array of tactical nuclear-capable weapons which the Pact believes would probably be employed against it. The existence of the separately controlled US, British, and French strategic nuclear strike systems increases Moscow's uncertainty about nuclear escalation. The Soviet leadership sees war in Europe, particularly nuclear war, as holding its territory at risk from strategic nuclear strikes. NATO's nuclear deterrent capability would seem to make nonnuclear war, in which NATO's theater nuclear capability would be attacked with conventional armaments, the most rational option for the Pact. The Soviets' dilemma is that successful Pact nonnuclear offensive operations would probably lead to the use of nuclear weapons by NATO. In sum, the size and flexibility of use of NATO's nuclear weapons pose extraordinary threats to the Pact's war-fighting capabilities, home territories, and viability.

20. Other factors that Soviet and Pact planners would take into account in assessing the risks of war with NATO include:

— Prospects for external assistance for NATO.

— Possibility that China might attack in the Soviet Far East.

— Confidence by the Soviets in the reliability and war-fighting effectiveness of their Pact allies.

The Pact, while noting NATO's own impressive potential for fighting a protracted war, believes that NATO would probably receive assistance from other European countries—particularly Sweden. The Pact probably sees many non-European nations as favoring NATO and believes that some of these countries would support or join NATO in a prolonged war. Moreover, the Soviets fear that a protracted conflict with NATO could encourage China to attack along the USSR's eastern borders. Finally, any doubts about its allies' willingness or ability to fight NATO would certainly constrain any enthusiasm Moscow might have for war. An attack against NATO must be mounted from East European territory and the lines of communication to support such an attack transit through Eastern Europe. The non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries are largely responsible for operating and maintaining the ground transportation systems linking the USSR and Eastern Europe and for providing critical rear area defenses and security. Moreover, more than half the Pact divisions and aircraft now in Central Europe are East European, and they have been assigned important combat roles in the initial stages of war. The military reliability of the Soviets' Pact allies is summarized below.

B. Military Reliability of Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Forces

21. The Soviet Union is concerned about the military reliability of its Warsaw Pact allies in the event of war with NATO and is apprehensive regarding initiatives NATO might undertake in a crisis or war to decouple Moscow from them. Soviet dependence on its allies, especially in Central Europe, is so great as to make their participation crucial to prospects for success on the battlefield. In fact, we believe that the Soviets would be unlikely to initiate hostilities against NATO unless they had reasonable expectation of participation by most Pact forces. Although the Soviets have taken a number of political and military actions to try to assure their allies' cooperation, the wartime reliability of the non-Soviet members of the Pact would depend in part on developments which the Soviets could not entirely control. These include the circumstances of the outbreak of hostilities; possible NATO actions to try to induce disaffection, nonparticipation, or defections by Pact members; and the outcome of initial battlefield engagements.

22. Prior to a final decision to go to war, East European leaders, whose countries have the most to lose in a war with NATO, are likely to use whatever influence they may have to attempt to moderate Soviet decisions. Moscow's willingness, however, to do whatever is necessary to ensure compliance with its decisions is an accepted fact by its allies, and, once the Soviets decide to go to war, East European leaders are likely to tailor their actions with this in mind. The general outlook of NSWP leadership groups and their political dependency on the Soviets would probably result in most members of these elites assessing their interests during a crisis as congruent with those of the Soviets in most respects. This would not necessarily be true of all members of the various NSWP leadership groups, and the behavior of lower level military officials and populaces in general would be less predictable.

23. Soviet control over the East European forces—and Soviet confidence in such control—would be at its highest during preparations for hostilities as Pact forces were being alerted, mobilized, and deployed for combat, and during the initial stages of war as Pact forces were advancing. We believe that military discipline and established control mechanisms are likely to assure the reliable response of most Pact forces to initial alert, mobilization, and commitment orders. The military reliability of NSWP forces, however, could be degraded as hostilities progressed; this would be especially likely in the case of a stalemate or significant Pact failures on the battlefield.

24. Although not all senior NSWP political and military authorities would necessarily comply with a Soviet order to take their forces to war, Soviet control measures would limit the ability of the NSWP political or military leadership to ignore or countermand alert, mobilization, and deployment orders. We believe the following four factors would affect NSWP reliability:

- Circumstances surrounding initiation of hostilities; from the Soviet perspective, the war would be portrayed as defensive in nature for the Pact.
- Personal motivations and opportunities of NSWP leadership elites; possibilities and inclinations for shirking responsibility, procrastination, or avoidance would vary greatly.
- NATO initiatives, such as declarations of support for abstaining East European countries, targeting policies, and battlefield tactics aimed at inducing neutrality or assistance for NATO.
- Most important, early successes or defeats on the battlefield would probably be the most critical factor for the Pact once hostilities began.

25. The Soviets probably perceive that the military forces of the NSWP countries would be reliable during initial hostilities, albeit in differing degrees and circumstances, in the following order (highest to lowest reliability): Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. In regard to Poland, Soviet confidence in the near-term reliability of the Polish armed forces had been eroded in 1980-81 because of widespread social unrest, disorganization of the Polish Communist Party, and severe economic problems. While the extent of current Soviet confidence in Poland's military forces is in question, the majority view within the Intelligence Community holds that Moscow believes that the Polish armed forces would obey Pact wartime orders. Romania is undoubtedly perceived by the Soviets as their least reliable ally

C. Warsaw Pact Military Objectives in a War With NATO

26. A Warsaw Pact strategy for military victory in Europe almost certainly would have to meet three requirements. First, it would have to result in the destruction or seizure of key military, political, and economic objectives, the loss of which would virtually eliminate the utility of continued resistance by NATO. Second, these objectives would have to be destroyed or seized quickly before major NATO reinforcement

could occur, and certainly before NATO could divert its considerable productive capacity to wartime purposes. Third, and perhaps most important, these objectives must be accomplished in a way that minimizes damage to the Soviet homeland.

27. ***Criticality of the NATO Central Region.*** Western Europe's greatest military, manpower, industrial, and technological resources lie in the Central Region. The rapid and decisive defeat of NATO forces in the Central Region would prevent NATO from realizing its long-term potential for war. Warsaw Pact military literature and exercises clearly indicate that the primary objective of Pact military operations against NATO would be a rapid and total victory in Central Europe.

28. ***Limited Operations for Limited Objectives.*** Pact military literature and exercises ignore planning for limited operations, and we consider it extremely unlikely that the Pact would attack NATO with limited forces to achieve limited objectives. Nevertheless, the Pact has the capability to initiate military operations in Europe on a limited scale to attempt to quickly seize a strategically important territory or city. Such an attack could be a first step in going to war with NATO or an attempt to settle a crisis on Pact terms while avoiding large-scale war with NATO.

29. We see no advantage for the Pact in beginning a large-scale war with a limited-objective attack. By definition, such an attack would have little or no military value in destroying NATO's short-term war-fighting capability or seriously interrupting the development of its long-term combat potential. In fact, it would sacrifice strategic surprise and ensure that NATO mobilization would not lag far behind the Pact.

30. As a stratagem to secure an important political objective—such as control of West Berlin or Hamburg—while attempting to avoid a wider war with NATO, a limited-objective attack would have serious flaws from the Pact perspective. Theoretically, such an attack would attempt to present the United States, West Germany, or NATO with a military fait accompli by seizing the objective quickly with minimum resistance while less ready elements of the Pact force structure mobilized. The Pact could then seek a negotiated settlement while deterring further NATO military action by threatening to unleash a fully prepared force. The Pact's perception of NATO's military capabilities and Moscow's overall assessment of the "correlation of forces," however, indicate that the risks of limited-objective attack far outweigh any potential short-term gains. The most serious risk for the Pact would be the expansion of armed resistance and its escalation to large-scale war. In short, the Pact could not be confident that a limited-objective attack would succeed quickly without expansion of the conflict, including the use of tactical nuclear weapons by NATO. The grave consequences of miscalculation and first use of NATO nuclear weapons in response to such an attack, however slight the chances, would seem to far outweigh any potential gains. Moreover, even in the absence of an initial forceful NATO military response, such an attack would inevitably cause NATO to begin serious preparations for war. Pact planners, given their respect for NATO's short-term mobilization and war-fighting capabilities and the prospect of activating NATO's much greater industrial, manpower, and economic potential in the longer run, could foresee an increasingly adverse balance of forces. The risks perceived by Moscow of beginning a war with NATO without accomplishing the military preparations it deems necessary to sustain the attack, achieve theater objectives, and guard against nuclear escalation all make a Pact attack to gain limited objectives very unlikely.

31. ***The Key: Decisive Defeat of NATO Forces in the Central Region.*** If the Pact decides to go to war with NATO, for whatever reason, its principal military objective would be the rapid and decisive defeat of all NATO forces in Central Europe. Whether or to what extent Pact military operations would be directed against France, Spain, and Portugal would be determined largely by the role these countries played in the conflict. The requirement to rapidly engage and destroy all NATO military forces in Central Europe and to occupy NATO territory is driven by the Pact's high regard for NATO's great long-term war potential. The Pact clearly expects Central Europe to be the decisive arena in a war with NATO: Pact military writings and exercises focus on operations designed to achieve a rapid, total victory over NATO forces in this area, and the Pact assigns the highest priority to the allocation of resources to its military forces opposite Central Europe.

Warsaw Pact Military Objectives on NATO's Flanks

32. [redacted] military operations are likely on NATO's northern and southern flanks. Although Pact military initiatives on NATO's flanks would have significant strategic and operational implications, the success or failure of such operations would not be immediately critical to the outcome of hostilities in the Central Region. We judge, however, that the Pact would be unlikely to go to war in Central Europe without also conducting operations on the flanks.

33. ***The Northern Flank.*** The most important military operations in Scandinavia would be Soviet naval and air actions to gain control over the Barents and northern Norwegian Seas in order to protect their ballistic missile submarines and prevent NATO from using the area to conduct attacks against the USSR. Any Soviet ground, amphibious, airborne, and air actions would be mounted from the Leningrad Military District to seize or neutralize NATO installations in northern Norway that could threaten Soviet naval and air defense operations. Soviet military actions directed against northern Norway would probably involve ground operations through northern Finnish territory. Attacks into southern Finland toward Helsinki might also be undertaken to prevent NATO from attacking the Leningrad area. If Soviet forces moved into southern Finland in strength, they could then move north to support attacks into northern Norway.

34. The Soviets probably would not attempt major ground offensives into central or southern Norway during the initial stages of war due to restrictions that terrain places on the employment of forces, the potentially strong NATO resistance south of Finnmark, and extended lines of communication. Moreover, the better defended—and more defensible—Norwegian territory south of Finnmark is at the extreme limits of Soviet home-based tactical aircraft.

35. ***The Southern Flank.*** Pact contingency plans provide for military operations against Austria, northern Italy, Turkey, and Greece. Initial Pact military operations would probably focus on the Turkish Straits, Austria, and possibly eastern Turkey. In addition, air and naval attacks almost certainly would be mounted against NATO forces in these areas and against carrier battle groups in the Mediterranean.

36. It is likely that Hungarian and Soviet forces in Hungary (organized into a Soviet-Hungarian Front) would attack through Austria into southern West Germany or northern Italy. Any move into northern Italy would be designed to prevent Italian forces from putting pressure on the Pact's flanks in Austria. This operation, however, would not be essential to the success of the initial campaign in Central Europe.

37. The Soviets view the early seizure of the Turkish Straits and securing the northern Aegean Sea as very important to the success of their maritime strategy in this region. Control of the area would be vital in order to block access to the Black Sea by NATO forces and to allow for the passage of Black Sea Fleet elements to and from the Mediterranean. Before initiating an assault on the Straits, the Soviets would probably move ground and air forces from the Odessa Military District through Romania into Bulgaria. These forces could be augmented by some Bulgarian forces to form a front. The front's objectives would be to defeat NATO forces in eastern Thrace, break through the fortifications protecting the land approaches to the Straits, and seize the strategic waterway. Amphibious and airborne operations would be conducted to support a forced crossing or lateral attack at the Bosporus. Soviet forces in the Kiev Military District could have a contingency role as second-echelon forces or they could be committed to operations against the Central Region.

38. Bulgarian forces—perhaps with some Romanian participation—would form a Bulgarian Front for operations against Greece. The mission of this front would be to engage Greek and Turkish forces in Thrace, secure the western flank of the Odessa Front, and advance to the Aegean Sea and into the Greek heartland. Elements of this front would probably also assist in efforts to capture the Dardanelles. However, considering the relatively small size of the force structure likely to be committed, the difficult terrain in Greece, and the questionable commitment of Romanian forces to the offensive, it seems likely that the front might confine its actual operations to engaging Greek and Turkish forces in Thrace and, by seeking to reach the Aegean, secure the western flank of the Odessa Front.

39. The Soviets could opt to conduct limited operations into eastern Turkey from the Caucasus region in conjunction with the military initiatives described above. The primary objective of such operations probably would be to tie down sizable Turkish forces to prevent them from being used in western Turkey;

D. Likelihood of a NATO–Warsaw Pact War

Chances of War Under Present Circumstances

40. In light of Warsaw Pact assessments of the risks involved in a NATO–Warsaw Pact war (see paragraphs 19-20), we believe it highly unlikely that the Pact would deliberately decide to attack NATO under present circumstances. And, despite shrill rhetoric about Washington's militaristic ambitions and US efforts to achieve military superiority, and a general erosion in East-West relations since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, it is unlikely that Pact leaders believe that NATO wants war or would seek it as a deliberate policy. War in Europe would become

likely only as a result of profound political, military, economic, or social changes—or a serious miscalculation during a crisis.

41. We believe that a war in Europe would be preceded by a period of growing tension resulting in a crisis of great severity. Moscow and its allies also anticipate a period of increasing tension prior to war in Europe. In view of the dangers of a war with NATO, Moscow would pursue alternate solutions to a crisis which threatened war.

42. During a period of extreme tension when neither side wanted war, there would probably be moves and countermoves in which cause and effect became ambiguous, with each side believing that time and developments were working against it. Under such circumstances there would be considerable uncertainty in predicting Soviet behavior. We believe it unlikely, however, that Moscow would allow minor hostilities to evolve into large-scale war. We judge that any Soviet decision to go to war would probably be preceded by some sequence of events including military preparations and possibly miscalculations in crisis management by both sides.

Likelihood of War Under Near-Term Circumstances

43. The Soviets see a costly and—to some extent—more perilous strategic and political struggle over the rest of the decade. Nevertheless, we do not now foresee in the near term (the next three to five years) development of a trend that would make a NATO–Warsaw Pact war likely. Differences of view exist in the Politburo and Pact ruling elites with respect to policies toward the West, but these differences are not likely to center around the advisability of war with NATO unless extraordinary changes occur that would threaten the vital interests of the Soviet Union. Changes in the NATO-Pact military balance and alterations in the Pact's perceptions of NATO's strengths and weaknesses could, of course, influence the Pact's assessment of potential gains versus risks in a crisis situation. A perception that NATO's military capability or its unity or resolve to resist had deteriorated would probably encourage Moscow and its allies to try to exercise more influence in Western Europe and would probably result in threats and pressure tactics being applied. We do not believe, however, that changes in the NATO-Pact military balance in themselves would lead to war as long as Moscow perceived that its losses would be heavy and that the risk to the Soviet homeland would be high. Despite the potentially catastrophic consequences of a NATO-Pact war, the Soviets would consider initiating hostilities if they perceived a situation which threatened the integrity of their security system or other vital interests.

44. A scenario for war in Europe might involve an attack to destroy a NATO Alliance which the Soviets sensed had become demoralized and seriously weakened internally. Such an attack might be designed to take advantage of internal dissent, economic stagnation, or social upheaval in the NATO countries. A possible catalyst for war in Europe could also be the development of a crisis in one or more Pact countries or Yugoslavia. This might take the form of an internal upheaval or some chain of events which threatened a political disintegration of the Pact. An additional possibility is that a future Soviet leadership—faced with an increasingly adverse international environment and grave internal problems—might lash out at the West in a desperate attempt to prevent an eventual collapse of the Soviet regime and the Pact alliance due to extreme international and internal pressures. In this scenario, future Soviet leaders could perceive that time was working against them, and they might opt to set a timetable to launch a sudden attack against NATO and/or the United States. We have high confidence, however, that these scenarios have little chance of occurring during the period of this Estimate. We do not foresee NATO becoming seriously weakened as a result of social upheaval in Western Europe or any internal Soviet problems that could develop to the point of threatening the collapse of the Soviet regime. Moreover, even if such events did occur, we do not believe that the Soviet leadership would deliberately initiate a NATO–Warsaw Pact war in response to these events.

III. WARSAW PACT DOCTRINE AND READINESS

A. Doctrinal Precepts

45. Decisive offensive action is the hallmark of Soviet military doctrine. The Soviet war-fighting strategy that supports this doctrine dictates that the East European countries provide a buffer to protect the Soviet homeland so that an offensive or counteroffensive could be successfully mounted and prosecuted. This philosophy provides the impetus behind Soviet emphasis on combat readiness, early seizure of the initiative, preemption and surprise, a combined-arms approach to warfare, and the requirement for force superiority in the main battle areas—backed up by strong reserves to assure the momentum of the attack. Soviet and Warsaw Pact operational concepts and force developments reflect a systematic effort to meet these doctrinal requirements. The reorganizations of

Soviet air, air defense, and ground forces since the late 1970s are indicative of continuing efforts to achieve doctrinal goals. (See inset.)

46. Apart from the purely military aspects of doctrine, the Soviets have long emphasized the importance of "moral-political" preparation or "stability of the rear" during a war. The Soviets view such preparation—not only of troops but the population as a whole—as very important, if not essential, to the conduct of war, and they put equal emphasis on the effective functioning of political and economic institutions. They believe that weapons of modern warfare would blur any distinction between front and rear in a future war. Although the Soviets do not profess to have the ability to guarantee high morale, particularly during nuclear attack, they do recognize the need to attempt to increase the psychological preparedness of the general population and their military forces. In particular, they believe the effectiveness of their civil defense system in a nuclear war would depend heavily on the courage, determination, and stamina of the Soviet population. In regard to their economy, they believe that production facilities may be subjected to large-scale destruction at the beginning of hostilities. This means that it may not be possible to rely on the mobilization of economic resources as the war progresses; for this reason, supplies of weapons, ammunition, equipment, and food must be stockpiled before war begins. The Soviets have in place the required mechanisms to transform the economy from a peacetime to a wartime posture. These mechanisms include provisions for the withdrawal of manpower and equipment (especially vehicles) from the economy to support the military and conversion to military control of large elements of the USSR's transportation and communications systems.

47. The Warsaw Pact's war-fighting concepts are bold and aggressive, but the execution of these concepts presents several problems. The preparations, coordination, and maneuvers dictated by doctrinal concepts are extremely ambitious and complicated, and would severely test the abilities of both commanders and troops. The complexities and uncertainties involved in executing these concepts on the battlefield would leave many opportunities for miscalculation, indecisiveness, errors in judgment, delays, and confusion. Moreover, the Pact's doctrinal concepts are not totally compatible. If Pact planners, for example, adopt an attack plan which puts top priority on speed in mobilizing, deploying, and committing their forces to seize the initiative and achieve tactical and operational force superiority, they presumably could accomplish this only at the expense of failing to achieve full readiness of their forces, populations, and economies for war. Likewise, Pact planners seem to realize that the readiness or size of their military forces could only be increased at the risk of lessening or losing some degree of surprise. Force superiority is tangible, can be measured quantitatively, and affords advantages that are more certain than those offered by surprise, which could be compromised or lost at any time. The Soviets accept the likelihood that under modern conditions strategic surprise may not always be attainable. However, they believe that extensive camouflage, concealment, and deception can enhance tactical or operational surprise under most circumstances, even while striving for force superiority.

Warsaw Pact Doctrinal Concepts

Seizing the Initiative and the Offense: The Only Way To Win a War. The predominant tenet of Soviet doctrine is that decisive defeat of the enemy can only be achieved by seizing and maintaining the initiative through offensive operations.

Preparedness To Fight Nuclear War. The Soviets believe that nuclear weapons will have a decisive impact in any future war. This attitude is based on the notion that the existence of nuclear weapons shapes how a war must be fought regardless of whether such weapons would actually be used.

Force Superiority and Massed Firepower. For the Pact, this translates into selecting the principal enemy objectives to be seized or destroyed, determining the most critical direction(s) along which to attack these objectives, and making a decisive concentration of essential forces at the critical time on the direction(s) selected. The Soviets stress the need to mass fires (nonnuclear and nuclear) rather than troops and equipment.

Combined Arms. The Soviets believe that successful military operations require closely coordinated joint action by all components of their armed forces.

Surprise. The Soviet concept of the offensive is based on the attainment of at least tactical surprise. The Soviets believe that technology has increased the importance of surprise in modern warfare and that under present conditions the achievement of surprise may greatly influence not only the outcome of initial engagements, but also the course of military operations in the initial phase of a war.

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B. Readiness Philosophy

48. Emphasis on combat readiness is a constant theme which supports the Pact's war-fighting doctrine. It is a logical result of Russian and Soviet historical

experience characterized by numerous invasions and defeats by hostile neighbors. In particular, Soviet military thinking is still heavily influenced by World War II experience, when the lack of preparedness and initiative resulted in devastating territorial, human, equipment, and economic losses. The Soviets intend to fight any future European war on the territory of their enemies. This requires that large, combat-ready forces must be in place at the outset of hostilities. Each component of the armed forces is considered to have a role—if only a peripheral or contingent one—in any major operation. An increase in readiness by ground and tactical air units, for example, might be paralleled by naval and strategic attack and defense forces, even if the direct participation of these forces was not anticipated.[1] From the Soviet perspective, forcewide or regional readiness could be extremely important since any conflict has the potential for expanding unexpectedly, particularly in regard to the use of nuclear weapons.

49. In the Soviet view, readiness is measured in two parameters. First, there is a need for powerful military forces in being: a large, well-equipped and well-trained military establishment backed up by strong reserves. Second, the armed forces must be prepared to accomplish their missions regardless of the conditions under which war begins or is conducted. Theoretically, full military combat readiness in peacetime requires all units to be completely manned, equipped, and thoroughly trained. Pact planners, however, believe that this degree of readiness is not necessary or realistically feasible. They expect that war probably would occur after a period of heightened tension called the "period of threat." The peacetime readiness posture of Pact forces reflects the belief that this period would provide warning, thereby enabling the Pact to increase the readiness of its forces before hostilities begin.[2] Moreover, Pact leaders recognize that the economic cost of maintaining their military forces on a war footing is prohibitively high. The Soviets' overall readiness philosophy, therefore, is to maintain forces in sufficient readiness to deter aggression; to protect perceived national interests, including the containment of nations in the Soviet sphere of influence; and to defend home territories.

50. In general, Pact units opposite perceived high-threat areas (such as Central Europe), as well as highly technical or critical forces (such as certain missile and signal units), are kept relatively highly manned, equipped, and trained in peacetime, but they are usually not manned at full strength. Most Soviet forces in the USSR, however, are maintained at lower levels of manning, equipment, and training. These units are the peacetime nucleus of large wartime forces that would be mobilized in an emergency. Provided below is a brief description of the readiness posture of Pact general purpose forces.

51. ***Warsaw Pact Ground Maneuver Formations.*** The Soviets make a clear distinction between "ready" and "not ready" portions of their ground maneuver forces. "Ready" units are the most highly manned and the best equipped and trained, and are at least minimally prepared for combat with little or no mobilization. The most combat-ready Soviet forces are airborne divisions and units in Eastern Europe where Soviet interests are critical and a large Soviet population base is unavailable for mobilization.[3] "Not ready" units require extensive mobilization and probably would not be available for immediate combat operations. These units are found exclusively within the USSR. In the western USSR, a mixed readiness posture is maintained around a small nucleus of "ready" units and a far larger number of cadre or "not ready" units. In general, Soviet divisions in the western USSR are equipped with older models of equipment and may lack major items of equipment such as trucks and armored personnel carriers. Further, they are unable in peacetime to maintain a high level of combat capability due to their lower level of peacetime manning and training. Overall, more than one-half of all Soviet divisions as well as many nondivisional support units are maintained in a "not ready" posture in peacetime. This large, skeletal element of the force would require substantial preparation to overcome deficiencies in peacetime manning, equipment, and training. Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) military planners use their own national classification schemes that differ in terminology and detail, though not in

[1] The Soviets and the Pact nations, however, would not necessarily raise the readiness of all of their forces to the same level during a crisis. Pact leaders have the means to control the tempo and scope of force readiness by selectively instituting readiness conditions locally, regionally, nationally, or Pact-wide.

[2] Although some warning time is expected, Pact planners are uncertain about how much time would be available to make war preparations. They recognize that an enemy could conceivably launch an attack with little warning. Their perception of the threat, however, includes an assessment that NATO's military forces are not maintained at full readiness for war.

[3] Recent Intelligence Community assessments indicate that Soviet maneuver divisions in Eastern Europe are manned at lower levels than previously estimated. Soviet motorized rifle divisions are now assessed to be manned between 80 and 85 percent of war-authorized strength, while tank divisions are assessed to be manned between 85 and 90 percent of wartime authorizations. These divisions are still assessed to be capable of initiating and conducting offensive operations against NATO.

principle, from that of the Soviet Union. The NSWP ground forces would constitute important elements of the Pact's first-echelon forces earmarked for early commitment against NATO. For this reason, the NSWP nations maintain the bulk of their maneuver forces as "ready" units comparable to Soviet forward-deployed forces.

52. ***Warsaw Pact Air Forces.*** Pact military planners expect their air forces to be ready to launch a massive, coordinated air campaign at the beginning of hostilities. Soviet air defense interceptor units are maintained at a high level of readiness and could mount air defense operations within a few minutes of alert. Soviet offensive air forces would require about 48 hours to prepare a command and control structure for front-level operations and 72 hours for theater-level operations. We estimate that Soviet air forces, including their logistic systems, could be fully combat ready within seven to 12 days after a decision to mobilize. Although some coordinated combat operations would be possible before completion of mobilization, the Soviets would prefer not to begin major air operations without full preparations. We judge that the NSWP air forces are maintained in a somewhat lower readiness posture than Soviet air forces. Aircraft and crews drawn from the Soviet and NSWP training establishments would need at least 30 days to mobilize and might still have limited combat effectiveness without additional refresher training.

53. ***Warsaw Pact Naval Forces.***[4] Generally speaking, the Soviet naval readiness philosophy stresses readiness to deploy for combat on relatively short notice rather than routine deployment of large forces. To achieve a maximum force generation capability in times of crisis, the Soviet Navy emphasizes maintenance and in-port/in-area training rather than extended at-sea operations. Even Soviet naval units deployed out of area spend much of their time at anchor or in port. From the Soviet perspective, it is apparently more important to be ready to go to sea than to be at sea. Under this system, operational experience and some degree of crew proficiency are sacrificed to achieve high materiel availability.

54. ***Warsaw Pact Rear Services.*** Soviet logistics doctrine generally requires that rear service elements must be as combat ready as the forces they support, and that logistic preparations for war be accomplished prior to or soon after the beginning of hostilities. During the past decade the Soviets have methodically improved their capability to support forces in East Germany. A buildup of logistic stocks, which once might have been a key indicator of impending military operations, now probably has little potential to provide such warning. Many rear service units are manned at reduced strength in peacetime, however, and would require mobilization. Some rear service units do not exist in the military peacetime force structure. Certain elements of the rear services structure, such as medical and transport units, would be mobilized from the Pact's civil economies. The Pact nations have stockpiled large quantities of ammunition, POL, spare parts, and other supplies that could be used by existing rear service units in the initial period of war until the rear services structure was fully mobilized. The Pact nations would also institute military control over key transportation lines in order to have responsive transportation systems and assure that supplies from rear areas could be moved when and where needed. Though GSFG elements have substantial nondivisional motor transport capability, other fronts would require a large influx of national transportation assets to meet wartime requirements. Finally, the Soviet and Pact practice of limiting the use of most equipment in peacetime means that they would enter combat with a relatively "new" and reliable fleet of combat and support vehicles.[5]

55. ***Warsaw Pact Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence.*** The transition of the Pact's command, control, and communications structure from a peacetime to a wartime posture would involve the formation of national- and theater-level commands and the activation of additional command, control, and communications facilities that do not exist on a permanent basis in peacetime. Moreover, this conversion process would be accompanied by intensified intelligence collection to determine the activity, location, and status of enemy forces and installations. Among the measures required to bring the Pact's command, control, and communications structure to a wartime posture are:

- Assumption of direct operational command and control of Pact military forces by the Soviet Supreme High Command.
- Establishment of extensive communications and data transmission networks.
- Exchange of operations groups and liaison personnel between major Soviet and NSWP commands.

[4] The Baltic Fleet in wartime would become a combined Warsaw Pact fleet consisting of Soviet, Polish, and East German forces. The Black Sea Fleet would become a wartime combined fleet consisting of Soviet, Bulgarian, and possibly Romanian forces.

[5] This practice, called "conservation" *(konservatsiya)*, is designed to permit the fielding of the maximum quantity of combat-ready equipment and reduce replacement and repair parts requirements and POL consumption in peacetime.

— Review and update of war plans and issuance of combat orders.

The actual time required for the transition from a peacetime to a wartime Pact command, control, communications, and intelligence system is not known.

C. Readiness Control Systems

56. All Pact nations have national defense laws which define the powers of the state in an emergency and the legal procedures for conversion to a wartime posture. Among the measures which these laws empower the state to accomplish are:

— Proclamation of a state of emergency or "special period" in the event of a threatened attack or in fulfillment of Pact treaty obligations.

— The suspension of normal constitutional rights of citizens.

— Compulsory military or civil defense service for adults.

— Requisition of privately owned property (especially vehicles).

— Suspension of normal rights of workers and enforced labor.

— Resubordination of paramilitary forces to the armed forces.

— Restriction of travel, closure of public institutions, banning of public meetings, censorship, banning the use of radios, restriction on all forms of communication, confiscation of firearms, evacuation of specified danger zones.

— The granting of extraordinary powers to National Defense Councils.

57. The Pact nations have established dual national and military readiness control systems to facilitate the implementation of their defense laws and to manage the transition from peacetime to wartime readiness. These control systems are designed to assure appropriate reaction to international or other situations while minimizing, to the extent possible, disruption of normal activity. The Pact countries have defined several stages characterizing the international environment: normal peacetime conditions; a "period of threat" involving two phases (increased tension or threat, and increased tension with immediate threat of war); and war. Pact leaders believe a period of increased tension or threat could last for several weeks or months, while a period of increased tension with immediate threat of war would probably be a much shorter period—perhaps several hours to several days. Specific readiness measures and procedures have been established generally corresponding to these stages for military and security forces, the economy, and civil defense.

National Readiness Control System

58. The national control system is called the "National Defense Readiness Plan (or System)." It provides for the mobilization readiness of each nation's population, economy, and government institutions, including the mobilization of reservists and equipment required for military purposes (see inset on page 33). Unlike the military counterpart system, which is frequently partially tested in exercises, there has been little testing of civil economic/administrative readiness procedures and comparatively little is known about them. They apparently parallel military readiness procedures and conditions, although there is some variation in terminology among the Pact countries. The procedures and preparations cited in national readiness plans would ultimately culminate in a nation achieving a wartime posture with production, manpower, materiel, and transport resources organized to support the armed forces. Preparatory measures associated with the various national readiness conditions could be initiated immediately on a large or national scale, or gradually and selectively as the situation may dictate. Some precautionary measures—particularly those initiated during "increased national defense readiness"—could be accomplished covertly, especially if initiated gradually. Preparatory measures associated with "threat-of-war national defense readiness" and "full national defense readiness" would be highly disruptive, difficult to conceal; and would be a strong indication that the Pact nations believed war was likely or imminent, respectively.

Military Readiness Control System

59. The military control system is the Pact-wide "System of Combat Readiness" which stipulates readiness, alert, and mobilization requirements and procedures for the armed forces (see inset on page 34). The four readiness conditions provide for an orderly, manageable transition from a normal peacetime posture to full mobilization and preparation for war. Commanders have detailed instructions outlining the steps and procedures that must be accomplished to move through the four levels, and these measures are frequently practiced by staffs and units in peacetime. The system is extremely flexible. Should international tension rise or regional disturbances occur, the readiness posture of an appropriate portion of the Pact's

Warsaw Pact National Defense Readiness Plan (or System)

Peacetime

The economy satisfies routine requirements for the armed forces and creates the necessary stockpiles of supplies required during mobilization and the initial stages of war. Party and government officials perform normal duties. The nation is maintained in "constant national defense readiness," while the equivalent military readiness condition is "constant combat readiness."

Period of Threat

Increased international tension would initiate an evaluation of the situation. If it is determined that a significant threat exists, measures would be taken to increase readiness to rapidly convert to a war posture. These measures could range from a limited callup of men and equipment to a full mobilization of the population, economy, armed forces, and civil defense establishment. These measures would be designed to assure the mobilization and availability of required resources prior to the outbreak of hostilities. During a period of gradually increasing or fluctuating tension, preparations could be divided into a number of phases to appropriately respond with each stage of the developing situation, while avoiding unnecessary disruption. Although the actual number of phases would probably vary with particular circumstances, preparations generally would fall into three subdivisions:

— ***Increased National Defense Readiness:*** Characterized by measures intended to assure the ability of various components to mobilize rapidly if required and to increase the likely efficiency of the components once mobilized. These measures would not result in major changes in the national economy. Equipment and supplies held in national reserves, together with limited numbers of reservists, might be called up. Movement restrictions would be placed on vehicles in use in the economy that have mobilization assignments. The duration of the period of "increased readiness" would be determined more by the nature of the crisis than by the time necessary to complete preparatory measures. Measures associated with this readiness condition could be implemented nationwide or selectively, immediately or on a gradual basis. The counterpart military readiness condition is "increased combat readiness."

— ***Threat-of-War National Defense Readiness:*** Includes measures leading to a definite transition of the population, economy, and civil defense organs to a war posture. Government ministries and state administrative organs begin to assume their full wartime organizations and provide additional mobilization support to the armed forces. More intense, but still selective mobilization occurs. The corresponding military readiness condition is "threat-of-war combat readiness."

— ***Full National Defense Readiness:*** Final and full-scale preparations for war, including large-scale (or national) mobilization, conversion of industry to wartime production schedules, and assumption of a full wartime posture by government agencies and administrative organs. Ideally, measures associated with this readiness condition would be implemented prior to hostilities. The counterpart military readiness condition is "full combat readiness."

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armed forces could be selectively altered without initiating disruptive and expensive forcewide measures. Depending on the political and military situation, the various readiness conditions could be applied to all military forces in a single country or all Pact nations, one branch of service, one or more military districts, or even one tactical formation. Based on the threat, various measures associated with readiness conditions could be initiated rapidly or gradually. The readiness conditions are designed to provide a deliberate and sequential approach to achieving full readiness for war. Under extreme circumstances, however, one or both intermediate levels of readiness could be skipped, that is, forces could move to full combat readiness directly from their normal peacetime posture or "increased combat readiness."

Critique

60. The Pact national and military readiness systems together provide for the control and coordination necessary to take a country (or the Pact) and its armed forces from routine peacetime readiness conditions to readiness for war. The two systems are extremely flexible and are designed to interact and complement one another, but they are not necessarily intended to be totally consistent; for example, the readiness posture of the armed forces of a nation may be higher than the readiness of the nation (or the Pact nations) as a whole. Moreover, the military readiness system is Pact-wide, while the national readiness system is not. Neither system has been fully tested on a national or Pact-wide basis, but we believe these systems provide

Warsaw Pact Armed Forces Readiness System

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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Pact leaders with the necessary mechanisms to move their nations and military forces to a wartime posture.

IV. HOW THE WARSAW PACT WOULD GO TO WAR

61. We believe hostilities in Europe would more likely result from an escalating political crisis than from a sudden decision to go to war. Understanding the great risks involved in a war with NATO, Moscow probably would make a major effort to resolve such a crisis peacefully, and might exercise some care to attempt to assure that its actions were not mistaken for hostile intent. On the other hand, Moscow would actively pursue almost any means short of war to secure an advantage in a crisis, including diplomacy, pressure tactics, and threats involving genuine military preparations.

62 Under all foreseeable circumstances, the Soviets and the Pact would recognize that war with NATO in Central Europe would require an enormous coalition effort that entailed great risks, both of uncontrolled escalation and destruction, as well as serious adverse repercussions elsewhere. The following discussion describes how the Warsaw Pact might prepare for war with NATO from its current political, economic, and military posture. If over a period of months or years relations between Western and Pact nations deteriorated badly, the political, economic, and military posture of both alliances would probably change. If this were to occur, the judgments in this Estimate might no longer be valid. Nevertheless, the contingencies described in this chapter could possibly result from a severe crisis developing from an extraordinary event, such as a confrontation over Berlin, Yugoslavia, the Middle East, or a nuclear accident. Pact war preparations—although interrelated—have been categorized into four separate processes for discussion purposes: political, economic, civil defense, and military.

A. Political Preparations

The Decisionmaking Process

63. The decision to prepare for or initiate war with NATO would be made by the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, probably on the recommendation of the USSR Defense Council. The Soviet Defense Minister and other Soviet military leaders, including at least the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact Combined Armed Forces, probably would participate in the deliberations that would precede the Politburo's decision. The decision process probably would involve scores of supporting high-level party, government, and military officials, although the security measures surrounding these deliberations would be extraordinary. The decision process would be difficult, contentious, and probably prolonged. The reliability of Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies would almost certainly be among the matters discussed by the Politburo/Defense Council at this time. The decision probably would establish the intent to prepare for war with NATO and the degree of urgency required, but it probably would not establish the specific date and time of an attack or irrevocably commit the leadership to war. The final decision to attack and the timing of the attack might not be made until hours before its execution.

Warsaw Pact Consultations

64. The point in the decisionmaking process at which the Soviets would begin discussions with their Pact allies might depend largely on the circumstances of war initiation. In their military exercises and propaganda, the Pact generally assumes a NATO attack and that a "period of threat" would precede hostilities. Intra-Pact consultations would have to occur during

this period, given the degree to which Soviet planning depends on a coalition approach to fighting a war with NATO.

65. The Soviets express concern about the possibility of a "bolt from the blue" attack by NATO. They believe, however, that the escalation of some regional crisis would be the most likely circumstance for war initiation following a period of political warning, heightened tension, and prewar mobilization. In any event, the standard Pact exercise scenario, which generally involves reaction to a NATO attack, is intended by commanders to test their organizations under less than ideal conditions, and does not necessarily reflect actual Soviet or Pact perceptions of war initiation. Whatever the circumstances of war initiation, however, the Soviets' military dependence on their allies would be a critical factor. Although the Soviets undoubtedly would withhold from their allies certain aspects of their own deliberations and perceptions of the crisis, actions and decisions affecting the preparation of the Pact's Combined Armed Forces could not be withheld without seriously risking Moscow's war plans. The Soviets, however, would certainly seek to ensure the tactical surprise and integrity of their attack plans by maintaining tight security over certain operational aspects of their planning.

66. The peacetime process of decisionmaking and implementation in the Pact is closely controlled by the Soviet Union through ostensibly multinational bodies such as the Staff of the Combined Armed Forces. East Europeans assigned to the Staff do not hold positions of real authority and are denied knowledge of any forces other than their own. The personal intervention of the Commander in Chief of the Combined Armed Forces is often decisive in the pursuit of Soviet objectives during peacetime, and we believe the Soviet political and military leadership would likewise dominate decisionmaking during a crisis with NATO. In sum, although we cannot judge to what extent the counsel of East European leaders would be sought in the process of making the initial decision to prepare for or initiate war, the anticipated reactions of the principal Pact political leaders would almost certainly weigh heavily in the decision. Sooner or later, the commitment or at least acquiescence of the principal East European leaders would be required for the Soviets to effectively execute their war plans against NATO.

Psychological Preparation of the Population

67. Assuming a decision to prepare for war, an immediate concern for the Soviets would be to maximize internal security and assure the support and stability of the populations of the USSR and the East European nations. If the Soviet leadership seriously contemplated war with NATO, it is virtually certain that the Soviets would develop in their domestic propaganda the theme of a heightened threat from the West and would seek to justify an appropriate military response. The East European leaders, should they believe that war was likely to occur, would begin to take steps on their own to prepare their populations for war. Measures to suppress and control potential dissident elements would almost certainly be taken in most or all Pact nations. Circumstances permitting, Soviet and Pact leaders might take weeks or months to orchestrate a massive propaganda campaign to motivate the Pact populace to support a decision to go to war. In the event of a decision to go to war only after a short period of preparation, the Soviets would have to accept the risks of uncertain support for their action, particularly from the NSWP nations. They might, however, be able to gain cooperation initially through information control and portraying the Pact as the threatened party.

International Propaganda and Diplomatic Initiatives

68. Prior to initiation of hostilities against NATO, the Warsaw Pact—and the USSR in particular—would seek to exploit to the fullest extent the potential of public statements and diplomacy as an instrument of policy. The Pact would avoid conveying specific information regarding an attack, but presenting a public rationale for it would be essential to the Pact's efforts to convey to NATO its concerns, to seek a solution short of war if possible, and to prepare its population for the possibility of major hostilities. Depending on their own perceptions of the situation and the threat, some East European leaders might well make public statements independent of the Soviets to clarify NATO intentions, verify the nature of the threat, and seek assurances from the Soviets and other Pact leaders that a decision to prepare for or initiate hostilities was a proper and necessary response. Pact public and private pronouncements and diplomatic initiatives would be designed to accomplish the following:

- Inform the NATO governments of the nature and extent of Pact concern and exert pressure for a suitable solution short of war.
- Exploit any differences among NATO member states.
- Isolate the United States from China and Japan.

— Attempt to keep neutral nations out of a war (particularly Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia).

— If possible, gain active or passive assistance of neutral nations.

— Inform and convince the Pact leadership elites and populace of the threat and prepare them for possible hostilities.

— Convince the world community of the validity of Pact concerns, justify Pact military measures, and warn of the dangers of support for NATO.

— Secure support from non-European Communist countries and the Third World.

The Pact's propaganda campaign would probably intensify over time as Moscow grew impatient for a satisfactory solution short of war or saw the situation worsening. This media blitz, however, would not necessarily show a steady progression in form or substance. Temporary lulls in militant statements are possible, perhaps related to new diplomatic efforts, but would not necessarily indicate any fundamental change in the Pact's contemplation of a military solution.

B. Economic Preparations

69. All Pact nations have plans that provide for the conversion of their economies to a wartime posture (refer to paragraphs 57 and 58 and inset referenced therein). In preparing for war with NATO, Moscow and its allies could not be certain whether such a war would be short or long, nuclear or nonnuclear. As a matter of prudence, Pact leaders would have to consider a full range of economic preparations. They have already stockpiled large quantities of critical commodities and would consider additional stockpiling. The process of converting transportation, industrial, and agricultural systems to a full wartime posture would be disruptive, time-consuming, and observable. Changes would occur across all economic sectors, and would be observable in manufacturing, labor, agriculture, construction, trade and finance, and distribution systems. Such a process would require months to complete in its entirety, though it need not be completed prior to war initiation. At some point, the Soviets would probably halt the flow of their oil and gas resources to West European countries. Some measures would require early implementation, such as military control over transportation systems. The readying of transportation facilities to support Pact military operations would be one of the most essential, as well as disruptive and observable Pact war preparations. The priority availability of these systems—railroads, civil aviation, merchant fleets, highways, inland waterway transport—is an integral part of Pact military logistic plans, and military control would be implemented at least selectively prior to, during, or soon after the initiation of military mobilization. Considerable time (probably weeks) would be required to reorganize transportation systems to meet both military requirements and changed economic priorities. Provisions also have been made for civil enterprises to rapidly deliver vehicles to the military during an emergency. The drivers of these vehicles are reservists who, along with their vehicles, are organized into quasi-military units called *avtokolonny*. In peacetime these units are periodically called up to support military exercises, and they would be mobilized on a much larger scale to support wartime military requirements.

70. The Soviets have made provisions for virtually all segments of their industry to support wartime military operations. Comprehensive planning, detailed mobilization plans, the maintenance of excess production capacity, and reserve stocks of raw materials and components are among the extensive preparations and measures designed to accomplish the conversion of industrial facilities from peacetime to wartime production. In peacetime, most defense plants produce both civilian and military goods. Mobilization plans for these plants call for increasing military production by curtailing civilian production, consolidating military production lines, relaxing quality standards for certain products, increasing work shift schedules, exploiting excess production capacity, and using machinery more intensively. Many plants are scheduled to convert to military production in wartime, for example, civil producers of precision instruments, electronics, aircraft, and ships. At least some of these plants maintain mobilization stockpiles—equipment and tooling, raw materials, and other supplies necessary to convert to production of military goods. Most NSWP defense plants and many civilian enterprises appear to have wartime conversion plans that are similar in scope and content to Soviet plans.

71. The Soviets apparently expect to accomplish essential conversion to wartime production over a period of three to six months. Surge production in existing defense plants could be accomplished within a few days to several weeks. Conversion of civilian plants to military production could be accomplished within several weeks if the necessary equipment is stored or installed at the plants. Modest retooling, if required, could take up to several months. Major retooling and construction to extend production of goods to new plants could take from several

months to well over a year for complex products. Relocation of selected plants required by civil defense plans could extend the conversion process by several weeks to several months.

72. The Soviets have made considerable preparation for converting economic sectors to a wartime posture. Despite these preparations, however, conversion would require extensive and expensive changes in priorities, resource allocation, production, and foreign trade and therefore could not readily be fully accomplished in the short term. If these conversions were initiated, however, they would suggest serious concern over an increasing danger of hostilities over the long run, or perhaps deliberate planning to initiate war at some time in the future.

C. Civil Defense Preparations

73. The Soviet Union clearly has the most extensive and effective civil defense program among the Pact nations. The Soviets believe that a future war with NATO would place extreme demands on their homeland. Civil defense measures are designed to counter the destruction and disruption associated with the worst eventuality—general nuclear war. Civil defense measures could be initiated in the early stages of a crisis and integrated with political, economic, and military preparations. The primary purpose of these measures would be to protect key party, government, military, and economic leaders; institutions; and, to a lesser degree, the population in general. Soviet civil defense measures, however, encompass far more than humanitarian considerations; they are designed to provide for the survival of a functioning wartime management system.

74. With adequate warning time, the USSR's top military and civilian leadership would be relocated in hardened, exurban fixed facilities or mobile command posts (CPs). Most party and government agencies and many industrial enterprises have one or more exurban CPs and/or relocation facilities. Military district commanders would assume direct control of local civil defense activities through their deputies for civil defense. The Soviets plan to employ a combination of sheltering and evacuation to protect the general population of cities they consider likely targets during a nuclear attack. Civil defense measures would be initiated according to military and national readiness conditions, as the situation may dictate.

D. Military Preparations

Employment of Warsaw Pact Forces

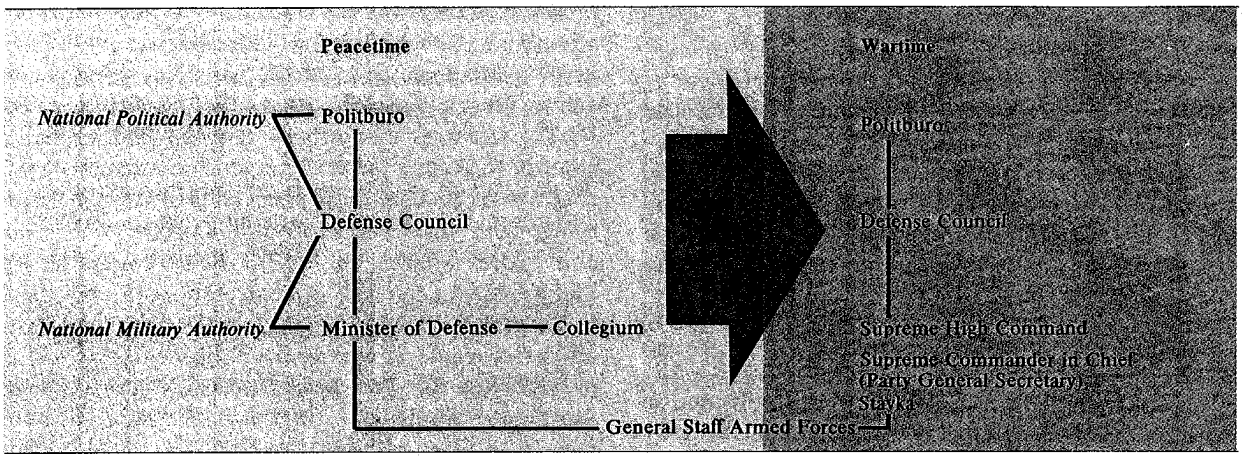
75. The Warsaw Pact has developed contingency plans for military operations on all of its land and maritime frontiers. Pact planners clearly expect Central Europe to be the decisive arena in a war with NATO, but they also have plans for offensive action on the NATO regions flanking Central Europe. We have little direct evidence on the Pact's view of the timing of attacks on NATO's flanks in relation to an offensive in Central Europe. The need for unhindered naval operations from their Northern Fleet bases would almost certainly cause the Soviets to strike NATO facilities in northern Norway and probably attempt to occupy territory there. The urgency of this need would probably lead them to take action concurrently with an attack in Central Europe. We would also expect attacks on NATO naval forces in the Mediterranean to occur concurrently with operations in Central Europe. None of the other potential flank offensives would appear to have this degree of urgency, although the Pact would probably move against the Turkish Straits early in a war. We judge that the Pact would be unlikely to initiate war by mounting major ground offensives against all NATO sectors simultaneously, but the Pact almost certainly would conduct secondary offensives or holding actions to keep NATO from shifting forces from the flanks to Central Europe, to compel commitment of NATO reserves, and to weaken NATO forces on the flanks in anticipation of further operations.

76. The Soviets believe one of the critical factors in a war with NATO is the attainment of air superiority and the early neutralization of NATO's theater nuclear forces. The Pact would probably attempt to achieve these objectives in a nonnuclear offensive by means of a massive air operation. Aircraft involved in the air operation would attempt to establish three or more corridors through NATO's forward air defenses by saturating and destroying the air defenses in and around the air corridors. The primary targets of attack would be NATO's Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) bases; airbases where nuclear-capable aircraft are located; nuclear weapons depots; other tactical nuclear weapons delivery systems; and key command, control, and communications and logistics facilities and interceptor bases.

Warsaw Pact Wartime Military Control Structure

77. Moscow's success in achieving its wartime objectives would depend largely on the Soviets' ability to control and coordinate multinational, combined-arms operations of great scope and complexity. A headquarters of the Warsaw Pact Combined Armed Forces operates in Moscow in peacetime but does not control the armed forces of member states. Each country exercises such control through its national command

Figure 1
Soviet Command Authorities: Transition to Wartime



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authority. Overall defense planning is coordinated among the Pact nations, but the process is driven by Soviet decisionmakers. The Commander in Chief and Chief of Staff of the Pact's Combined Armed Forces have always been Soviet general officers. The ultimate authority for the direction of the Soviet military rests with the Politburo, but the wartime role of the Politburo would probably be limited to only the most crucial military decisions. The Defense Council, a group made up of selected members of the Politburo, establishes military policy and provides broad guidelines for the employment of military forces. In wartime, we believe the Defense Council would form the nucleus of the national defense command organization (see figure 1).

78. The General Secretary of the Communist Party would be designated Supreme Commander in Chief (CINC) in wartime and would head the Supreme High Command (*Verkhovnoye Glavnokomandovaniye*—VGK) of the Armed Forces of the USSR. The VGK may be controlled, as it was in World War II, by a senior internal command group called the *Stavka*. In addition to the party General Secretary, VGK membership probably would include the Minister of Defense (as the Deputy Supreme CINC), the three first deputy ministers of defense (the Chief of the General Staff, the First Deputy Minister for General Affairs, the CINC of the Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact), and the CINCs of the five services of the Soviet armed forces—who also are deputy ministers of defense. The Soviets make no allowance for East European participation in the VGK.

Warsaw Pact High Commands of Forces

79. Should war between the Warsaw Pact and NATO appear likely, intermediate commands would probably be established between the Soviet General Staff in Moscow and field forces earmarked for commitment against NATO. These commands would exercise direct operational control over Soviet and NSWP general purpose forces and at least coordinate the operations of those strategic forces allocated to support a European campaign against NATO.

80. Pact strategists apparently envision the need for at least five TVDs to control operations against NATO (see inset on page 39 and figure 2 on page 40). Although commands would almost certainly be established in these theaters in the event of a NATO–Warsaw Pact war, they could also be activated in other circumstances such as during exercises or in a period of extreme international tension. Soviet officers assigned to the peacetime headquarters of Warsaw Pact military forces, along with officers from the Main Operations Directorate of the Soviet General Staff, would be reassigned to staff positions in the high

Soviet Theater Concepts

The Soviets define a theater of war (*teatr voyny*—TV) as the territory of any one continent, together with the sea areas adjoining it and the airspace above it, on which hostilities may develop—for example, the European Theater of War. The Soviets have not established any TV-level command authorities.

A TV usually includes several theaters of military operations (*teatr voyennykh deystviy*—TVD). A TVD is defined as a particular territory, together with the associated airspace and sea areas, including islands (archipelagos), within whose limits the armed forces of the country (or coalition) operate in wartime as a military organization engaged in strategic missions which ensue from national or Pact war plans. A TVD may be ground, maritime, or intercontinental. According to their military-political and economic importance, TVDs are classified as main or secondary.

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commands. NSWP officers assigned to the Pact's peacetime military headquarters would be reassigned to high commands in TVDs and possibly to positions in their national forces. Soviet General Staff elements operating from hardened, fixed communications centers and mobile command posts would support the high commands of TVDs.

Command and Control Enhancements

81. Since the late 1970s, the Soviets have been implementing extensive command and control changes that are designed to provide in peacetime the infrastructure for the wartime formation and control of high commands in TVDs. The changes have increased the day-to-day responsibility and authority of Soviet military district commanders. The establishment of the positions of Commanding General, Air Forces of the Military District; Commanding General, Air Defense of the Military District; and Commanding General, Rocket Troops and Artillery of the Military District—as well as their appointments as Deputy Military District Commanders—have streamlined command relationships and eliminated unnecessary staff functions. Tactical air armies of Frontal Aviation have been disestablished, with most of these assets being integrated into "Air Forces of the Military District (or Group of Forces)," along with interceptor regiments which were previously subordinated to the National Air Defense Forces (*PVO Strany*). Some aircraft formerly in Frontal Aviation—primarily Fencer—have been integrated into "Air Armies of the Supreme High Command" (VGK), along with strategic bombers which were formerly organized in a separate command—Long Range Aviation. Similarly, a new

Potential European Theaters of Military Operation

The Western TVD. This TVD would include Soviet and NSWP forces in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia and Soviet forces in the western USSR. Pact forces, including the Combined Baltic Fleet, would be under the direct control of the High Command of Forces in the Western TVD.

The Southwestern TVD. This TVD would include Soviet forces in Hungary and in the southwestern USSR, plus Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian forces. It would also include forces of the Combined Black Sea Fleet in the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Forces in the TVD would be under the direct control of the High Command of Forces in the Southwestern TVD.

The Northwestern TVD. In wartime the forces of the Leningrad Front and elements of the Northern Fleet, under the direct control of the Soviet General Staff, would operate in this TVD. The TVD would encompass Finland and the Scandinavian Peninsula and its immediately adjacent waters.

The Atlantic and Arctic TVDs. The Soviets also expect major naval operations against NATO in the North Atlantic, particularly in the Norwegian Sea, to occur in conjunction with a conflict in Europe. Maritime TVDs for the Arctic—all sea areas north of the Greenland–Iceland–United Kingdom (G-I-UK) gap—and the Atlantic would constitute the operating areas of forces of the Soviet Northern Fleet.

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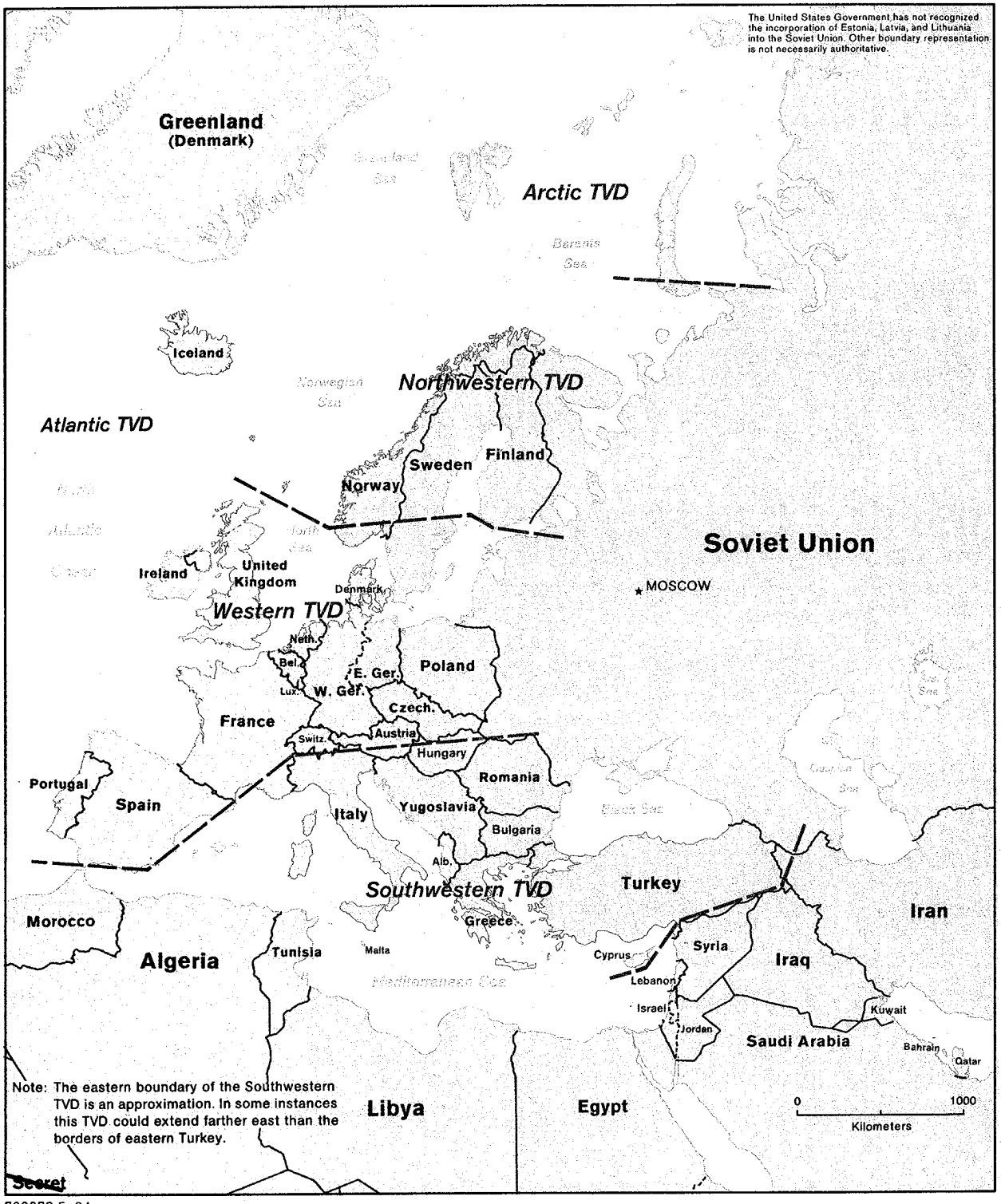
command structure called "Air Defense of the Military District (or Group of Forces)" has been created, encompassing strategic surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and associated radars as well as the SAMs, antiaircraft artillery (AAA), and radars subordinate to ground maneuver formations. These changes, resulting in the merger of strategic and tactical air and air defense assets, provide greater operational flexibility to commanders through centralized control at both the military district/group of forces and TVD levels while facilitating a rapid transition to a wartime organization.

Warsaw Pact Fronts

82. A front would be the largest field force within a land TVD. Although not directly comparable to any Western military organization, a front would be similar to a NATO army group and its associated allied tactical air force in size, level of command, and function. A front is a wartime structure for which there is no standard organization. It usually would be composed of three to five tank or combined-arms armies, each consisting of three to five tank or motorized rifle divisions, and air forces with as many as

Figure 2
Possible Warsaw Pact Theaters of Military Operations (TVDs) in Europe



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several hundred tactical aircraft. The forces of a front would also include numerous separate combat elements such as artillery, missile, helicopter, and air defense units. A front could also have an airborne division resubordinated from VGK control. Most fronts would have an air assault brigade capable of conducting airborne, airmobile, and airlanding operations. Combat support and combat service elements would be attached to a front as necessary and provide transport, maintenance, engineer, supply, and medical support. A front operating in a maritime sector might also include naval elements. The size of a front would depend on the mission assigned, but could range between 300,000 to 400,000 men. The Soviet–East German Front, which would be formed opposite the NATO Central Region, however, could total some 700,000 men after full mobilization.

Warsaw Pact Force Generation

83. The manner in which the Warsaw Pact prepared its forces for war would depend largely on the speed, urgency, and intensity with which a war-threatening crisis developed. Pact planners have identified two basic approaches to achieving "full combat readiness." In a slowly developing crisis, the Pact nations would probably take a deliberate, time-phased approach, initiating "increased combat readiness" for portions of their armed forces (see inset mentioned in paragraph 59). This would permit the accomplishment of a number of precautionary measures, but would fall far short of placing the Pact's military forces on a full wartime posture. This approach would permit the achievement of full readiness in an orderly and systematic manner, bringing various force elements to full readiness sequentially, while allowing opportunities to avoid hostilities. If a crisis deepened, the Pact could move to "threat-of-war readiness." The Pact's final military preparations would be initiated by a decision to implement "full combat readiness." With this decision, preparations for war would move rapidly and continuously. The "full combat readiness" condition, however, is not a declaration of war, and it does not order the commitment of units to combat.

84. The gradual conversion from a peacetime to a wartime posture need not be continuous or sequential. The process could be interrupted at any time depending on the Pact's perception of the threat or other factors. The Pact's four-tiered readiness control system allows for a deliberate approach to increasing readiness and war preparations as well as the holding of units at interim levels of readiness short of "full readiness." Moreover, readiness conditions could be relaxed or returned to normal at any time.

85. Another approach to achieving full readiness—the compressed approach—would be employed after the unanticipated outbreak of hostilities, or when the Pact believed war was unavoidable and imminent and there was no time for deliberate, time-phased preparations. Under this option, military forces would be readied simultaneously and as rapidly as possible. Under extreme circumstances, units could be ordered to move directly to "full combat readiness" from their normal peacetime posture.

86. The process of mobilizing and deploying Pact ground formations consists of six basic steps, as described below:

- **Alert and dispersal:** the alerting of units and personnel, recalling personnel, returning units to garrison from training sites, making preparations within garrison, and moving to dispersal areas. Activities include removing equipment from storage; loading of supplies; preparing for calling up and receiving reservists and mobilized transport vehicles (if required); receiving, reviewing, and/or updating operational and movement plans; and, in some cases, selective small-scale mobilization of reservists with specialized skills.
- **Mobilization:** the process of calling up, receiving, and integrating reservists and equipment to achieve wartime manning and equipment authorizations. In an emergency, this process could be accomplished rapidly and overtly after units had vacated their garrisons and moved to field dispersal locations. In a situation in which the Pact had some control of events, however, incremental or phased mobilization could occur within garrison over a period of weeks or months. Reservists called up for training and subsequently released would be subject to immediate recall. Mobilization might or might not be readily discernible, depending in part on its scale, location, and whether it was accomplished rapidly or incrementally. The Pact would probably attempt to accomplish large-scale mobilization covertly in the guise of routine reservist training and exercises.
- **Training and preparation:** the process of training mobilized personnel and preparing units to conduct combat operations. Time allocated for this process would depend on circumstances. If deemed necessary, some units would be committed immediately, while other units might have weeks or months to prepare for combat.

— **Movement:** the process of moving units from alert dispersal areas to concentration or assembly areas in a theater of operations, including the loading and unloading of units as well as transit time.

— **Final preparation for combat:** includes replenishment of ammunition and fuel consumed during movement; replacement of equipment and personnel losses suffered during movement; maintenance; and the integration of units into the command structure of the theater, front, and army in which they are to serve.

— **Deployment to combat:** includes movement of units from concentration or assembly areas to attack positions.

87. The principal discretionary activity for Warsaw Pact planners and commanders would be training, particularly postmobilization training. The Pact has two basic options in preparing its forces for combat. Between these lie a range of potential trade-offs between combat proficiency and force availability:

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

— Alternatively, the Pact could take a more deliberate, phased approach, allowing time to more fully prepare and train its forces, thus increasing their combat potential.

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

88. Training, however, would extend the time required for the buildup process and could provide additional warning indicators to NATO, thereby jeopardizing the Pact's ability to maximize surprise. Pact leaders would vary the scope and duration of any training in accordance with the situation, their plans and perceptions, and the peacetime readiness posture of individual units and formations. If Pact planners chose this option, they would probably sequence their preparation activities and almost certainly implement deception measures designed to confuse NATO intelligence organizations as to the scope, duration, and purpose of the activity.

E. Attack Options

89. As Pact leaders considered the preparation of their forces for war, they would be faced with deciding the location, timing, and size of the initial attack on NATO. This decision would be made against the background of those factors addressed in chapters II and III of the Estimate: Pact perceptions of NATO's military capabilities; an assessment of the risks involved in a war with NATO; the reliability of the NSWP military forces; and the Pact's military objectives and concepts for employment of forces, doctrinal concepts, and peacetime readiness posture. The major dilemma facing Pact leaders would be the degree to which they would care to trade off Pact preparedness and the full combat potential stipulated by their doctrine, for a greater degree of surprise which might be achieved by a smaller, but quicker attack designed to preempt mobilization, reinforcement, and the establishment of an organized defense by NATO.

90. Any Pact decision bearing on when to attack would be influenced by a set of sometimes contradictory military factors, including its own preparedness in relation to its perception of the status of NATO preparations, and the desire to achieve surprise as well as to maximize force superiority. The final decision on an attack option, however, almost certainly would not be based on purely military factors, but rather on a combination of military and political considerations.

91. In the following evaluation of the risks and benefits of alternative Pact options for the initial attack, we have defined four basic options as well as possible variations. The first—attack from a peacetime posture—is not reflected in Pact doctrine or exercises but is included to present a more complete range of Pact capabilities. The other options have been selected on the basis of evidence from Soviet and Pact military writings, exercises, and other reporting. It should be emphasized, however, that these options only represent certain "phase points" during the Pact's force generation process at which Pact planners could choose to launch an attack; variations and other attack options are possible. Pact contingency plans for war in Europe appear to envision the establishment of a first echelon consisting of three fronts in the Central Region with at least two additional fronts moved forward from the western USSR to form a second echelon. The Pact probably would begin to organize at least five fronts for use in Central Europe regardless of what forces would be committed in the initial attack. Three fronts would be formed from Soviet and NSWP forces already in Central Europe and two or more fronts would be formed from forces garrisoned in the

Baltic, Belorussian, Carpathian, and possibly Kiev Military Districts. Forces in the western military districts of the USSR are primarily intended for commitment to combat at various time intervals after the initiation of hostilities, but some may be assigned to first-echelon fronts prior to commitment.

92. ***Preparation Time.*** Our assessments of the time required for the Pact to complete the military preparations required to execute each attack option, beginning from a peacetime posture, include a minimum time and a more realistic time. The minimum time reflects our assessment of the Pact's ability to accomplish the preparations under the most time-constrained conditions with no major problems in planning and execution. The difficulties inherent in coordinating, controlling, and executing these complex and Pact-wide preparations would be enormous, however, with many opportunities for major mishaps, confusion, delays, and even chaos. The realistic time estimates allow for human, mechanical, and climatic difficulties that would be likely to characterize such an undertaking. Neither the minimum time nor the more realistic time includes specific time allocated for the training of freshly mobilized units. Such training would enhance the combat potential of the mobilized units as well as assure a greater degree of preparedness in other important respects, even at the risk of lessening surprise and allowing NATO additional time for counter-preparations. Those Pact divisions that would benefit most from postmobilization training are "not ready" forces including three Czechoslovak and five Polish low-strength divisions, and almost 30 Soviet divisions in the three western military districts of the USSR. The availability and performance of the Soviet "not ready" divisions would be most critical to the Pact's ability to sustain offensive operations against strong or prolonged NATO resistance. Most of the Soviet "not ready" forces are probably planned for commitment at various time intervals after D-day as follow-on forces to maintain the momentum of the attack. As a result, some postmobilization training could be accomplished after initiation of hostilities. In addition, many Pact nondivisional units are maintained at low strength in peacetime and would be much better prepared to perform their missions after conducting a period of postmobilization training. Our assessment of the time required for these low-strength units to train up to a standard we judge to be the minimum necessary to conduct proficient offensive operations in Central Europe could extend their preparation times to about 30 days, plus the time required for movement.

93. We assess that within 72 hours the Pact could mount a large-scale air attack throughout NATO's Central Region. However, we believe it highly unlikely that the Pact would mount such an air attack against NATO independent of a combined-arms offensive. Rather, the Soviets would prefer first completing logistic preparations and expanding their rear services, as well as completing mobilization of air combat units. Such preparations would require seven to 12 days, at which time Soviet air forces would be fully combat ready.

Option I—Attack From a Peacetime Posture

94. There is no evidence from Soviet or Pact military literature, doctrine, or exercises that would indicate that the Pact might launch an attack on NATO from a peacetime readiness posture. In fact, Soviet military strategists have explicitly stated that a European war would be improbable without some political warning and a degree of prehostilities mobilization by both sides. The Pact, however, does have some capability to attack NATO on short notice using ground and air units garrisoned near the East-West German border and the West German–Czechoslovak border, as well as short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs). Less than a dozen Soviet and East German divisions in East Germany (within 50 to 60 kilometers of the West German border)—plus several hundred tactical aircraft—as well as a few Czechoslovak divisions near the West German border could mount a largely uncoordinated and fragmented attack on short notice. A few divisions might be capable of initiating an attack—possibly directly from their garrisons—within about 24 hours after their commanders received an attack order, depending on specific conditions within individual units (time of day, weather conditions, and a host of factors determined primarily by the cyclic nature of the six-month training cycle). An attack mounted on such short notice, however, could easily result in chaos as unit commanders, their staffs, and troops would have had no forewarning of an attack order and—by definition—made no preparations for an attack. Under normal peacetime conditions, units usually take days, weeks, or even months to prepare for scheduled major exercises (division level and higher). Pact divisional units in East Germany and Czechoslovakia are not fully manned in peacetime, and their higher level communications structure and logistic support systems are not postured to support a standing-start attack. Given 48 hours' notice, Pact divisional units could only marginally increase their ability to mount a coordinated attack, and would still lack a

command, control, and communications, and logistic structure which could effectively command, control, and support their attacks.

95. As a means of initiating a large-scale war with NATO, an attack from a peacetime posture would probably give the advantages of operational and tactical surprise to the Pact. By dint of surprise and perhaps local force superiority, the Pact might gain some early ground and air victories. These initial successes would probably be the only advantage which would accrue to such an attack. Many considerations would weigh against the Pact opting to initiate a war with NATO from a peacetime readiness posture:

— **Loss of Mobilization Advantage.** The Pact would have to anticipate that an attack from a peacetime readiness posture would cause NATO to initiate rapid and large-scale mobilization almost simultaneously with the Pact. The possible local force superiority gained by such an attack might not be maintained if NATO forces responded effectively. Pact planners, considering their great appreciation of NATO's rapid deployment and mobilization capability, might well conclude that their attacking forces could face an adverse force ratio before substantial Pact reinforcements could be committed.

— **Command, Control, and Communications.** The Pact would not have time to establish a front-level command, control, and communications structure before hostilities commenced. The Soviets consider a functioning and effective command, control, and communications system a critical factor in successfully controlling their armed forces on the battlefield and managing the use of nuclear weapons.

— **Rear Service Support.** Forward-deployed divisions have three to five days of supplies on hand; however, many nondivisional rear service support units are manned at reduced strength or do not exist in the military peacetime force structure. An attack from peacetime posture would not allow time to mobilize and move rear service units forward. Moreover, the military would not have time to gain full control over critical lines of communication—especially highways in the forward area—as well as railroads for the movement of reinforcements forward.

— **Political, Economic, and Civil Defense Preparations.** An attack from peacetime posture would not permit the preparation of the Pact's populace, national economies, and civil defense organizations for war, as stipulated by doctrine. Moscow would be forced into heavier initial reliance on NSWP forces, and would be denied sufficient time to psychologically condition its troops for war.

— **Vulnerability and Risk of Escalation.** An attack from peacetime posture would leave other Pact forces unprepared for hostilities. In particular, the Pact would have to accept the risk of NATO escalation to nuclear war at a time when Pact depots, transportation facilities, industrial enterprises, and uncommitted forces would be especially vulnerable to nuclear attack.

— **Surprise: A Two-Edged Sword.** Soviet planners and commanders have been conditioned to leave little to chance in preparing for military operations. By temperament, inclination, and doctrine, the Soviets are conservative in assessing force requirements and thorough in planning. Although an attack from peacetime posture might offer the advantage of operational and tactical surprise to the Pact, other options requiring longer preparation times would almost certainly offer a measure of tactical surprise as long as the Pact had the initiative. In ordering an attack from a peacetime posture, Pact leaders would have to accept the risks of unpreparedness and surprising their own commanders and troops.

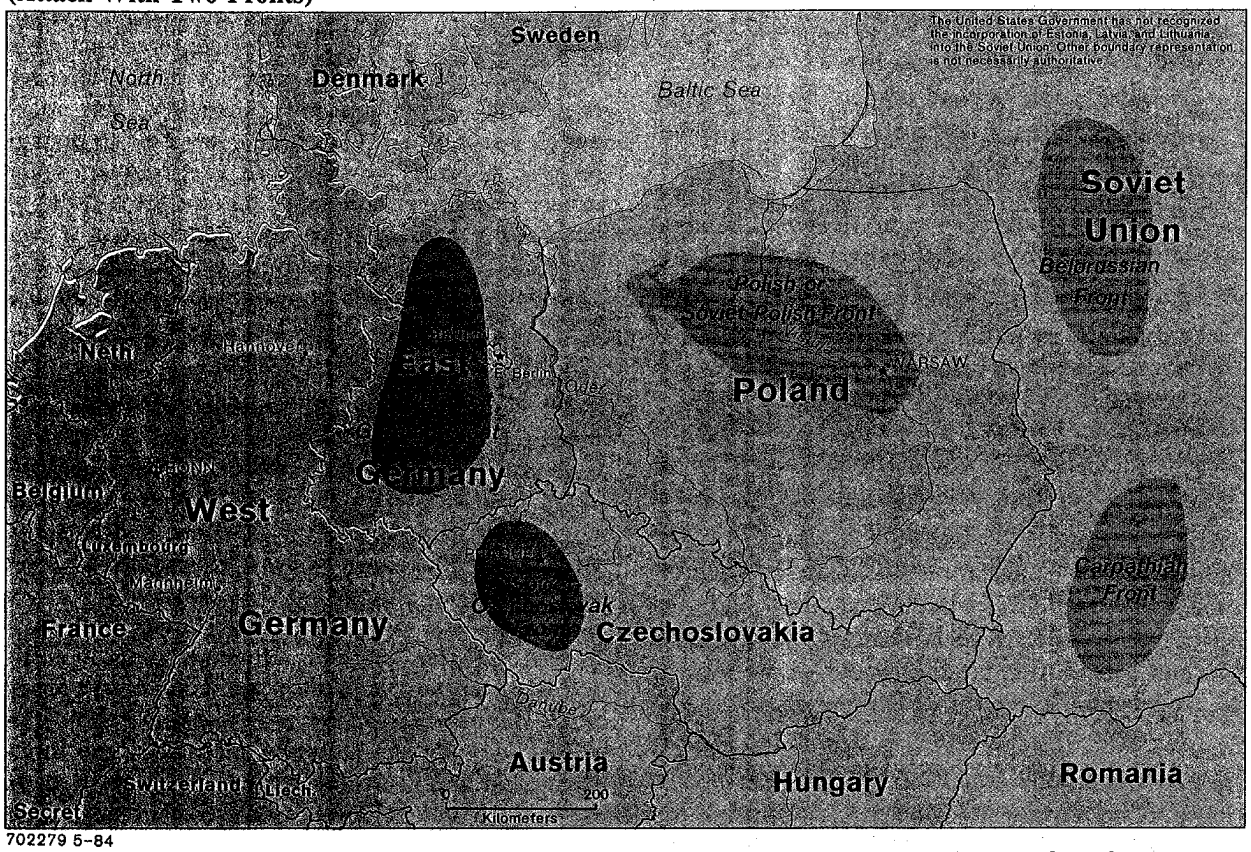
These arguments lead us to conclude that there is little chance that the Pact would initiate war against NATO from a peacetime readiness posture.

Option II—Attack With Two Fronts

96. [redacted] the smallest force the Pact might use to initiate offensive operations in Central Europe would consist of two fronts. This force would consist of Soviet and NSWP ground and tactical air force units in East Germany and Czechoslovakia and possibly Soviet units in Poland—a total of some 40 active ground divisions, plus support units (see figure 3). While organizing the initial two-front force, the Pact would probably begin the preparation of other general purpose and strategic forces, as well as the Pact's populace and national economies for general war and the risks of nuclear escalation.

97. [redacted] Key to our judgments is our

Figure 3
Warsaw Pact Options for Initial Attack Force in the Central Region (Attack With Two Fronts)



The smallest force the Pact might use to initiate theater offensive operations probably would consist of two fronts—a total of some 40 divisions plus support and tactical air units.

assessment of the peacetime readiness posture of the Pact's armed forces. We believe that, in the most urgent circumstances, the Pact would need at least five to six days to prepare and position a full two-front force—assuming that this force had been maintained in its normal peacetime readiness posture. Units comprising this force would require some personnel augmentation to achieve war-authorized strength. Initiation of a two-front attack in slightly less time (four to five days) might be possible, but without several less ready and/or more distant divisions in eastern Czechoslovakia. The complexity and magnitude of the required preparations and the risks involved in insufficient preparation would probably cause or require the Pact to take longer than five to six days to prepare this force, with seven to 10 days being a more realistic time frame if the Pact attempted to rapidly launch a two-front attack from a normal peacetime readiness posture. Preparations for a two-front attack within five to six days would require employing a compressed time schedule which would exacerbate the confusion and disruption inherent in a rapid transition to a wartime posture and the requirement to move some large military formations several hundred kilometers on short notice. Preparations would occur simultaneously rather than in a phased or sequential pattern. This compressed approach to force generation would yield units, especially nondivisional units, which—at least initially—would lack their full potential to undertake or sustain combat operations. Before attacking, the Pact would probably take the following actions:

— Declare a state of "full national defense readiness" for the Pact nations, possibly without the declaration of intermediate levels of readiness. (Such a declaration could be overt or secret, but the war preparations which it would initiate could not be concealed.)

— Declare a state of "full combat readiness" for Pact forces, with or without the declaration of intermediate levels of readiness. (This could be open or secret, but the preparations could not be concealed.)

— Mobilize, assemble, and prepare for combat the attacking force—a multinational force of almost 1 million men, about 40 divisions, and several hundred thousand major items of equipment. Some units would have to move several hundred kilometers to their initial combat positions.

— Begin to mobilize and prepare other general purpose forces in the theater for commitment as second-echelon or follow-on forces.

— Establish control over key transportation systems and transport means required to move units.

— Establish at least minimal national systems of logistics, particularly supply lines, that could provide some reinforcements and resupply the attacking forces.

— Deploy and establish a theater-level command and control structure that would enable Moscow to adequately control a two-front offensive. This structure would include at least some links to supporting strategic forces and to forces in other areas.

— Prepare the Pact's tactical aviation units to execute large-scale offensive operations at the beginning of hostilities.

— Prepare air armies of the VGK to conduct theaterwide operations.

— Prepare and deploy strategic offensive and defensive forces to support the attack, defend home territories, and guard against the possibility of rapid escalation to nuclear war, including strategic nuclear exchanges.

— Prepare and disperse as many submarines and naval surface vessels as possible to prevent them from being destroyed in port and enable them to perform their assigned missions.

— Begin civil defense preparations and the process of converting national economies from a peacetime to a wartime posture.

— Psychologically prepare the Pact's populace and armed forces for war.

98. By waiting to establish a two-front attacking force, the Pact would diminish many of the critical deficiencies inherent in mounting an attack from a peacetime readiness posture. The Pact's war-fighting capability would be improved in all respects, but particularly in regard to naval capabilities and the establishment of at least the essentials of a functioning front-level command and control system. Moreover, even with no preliminary preparations, this attack option might give NATO only a few days to prepare for war. Although we assess that Pact planners would expect to achieve more advantageous force ratios by building up a larger force, the suddenness of a two-front attack could reasonably be expected to provide advantages by creating confusion and limiting NATO's preparation time. The Pact's supply system could support at least early successes.

99. Notwithstanding the provision of some advantages, the initiation of hostilities after only five to six days of preparation with a two-front force would still entail serious risks for the Pact. The attacking force might lack some front-level elements, and its initial combat potential would be less than could be achieved with additional preparation time. Moreover, forward deployed Soviet and East German forces would have to assume responsibility for initial operations in northern West Germany and along the Baltic coast because of the unavailability of forces—primarily Polish—that would normally constitute the Pact's Northern Front. Command and control structures, particularly at the theater and national levels, would remain incomplete. More important, the mobilization and forward deployment of Soviet forces in the western USSR could not be accomplished; these units, therefore, would not be immediately available to reinforce or sustain an attacking two-front force. Furthermore, effective participation in the war by major forces in other areas would be limited, particularly in regard to coordinated naval actions and ground and air offensives on the flanks—due in part to the lower peacetime readiness posture of these Pact forces.

100. We believe that the Pact would not be likely to attempt to engage in hostilities from a two-front posture after only five to six days' preparation in other than extraordinary time-urgent circumstances. One possible reason for the Pact opting to engage in hostilities under these circumstances could be a perception that a NATO attack was imminent. Although NATO mobilization would be viewed as a serious threat and almost certainly would cause the Pact to make counterpreparations, the Pact would not conduct hostilities with a force not fully prepared against NATO forces that enjoyed some advantages of prior preparation or mobilization *unless* the threat of imminent NATO attack were clear. Another urgent contin-

gency could occur during a serious East-West political dispute, when the NATO countries—particularly the United States and West Germany—might undertake a degree of mobilization and other military preparations to improve their defensive posture and to demonstrate resolve in support of diplomatic negotiations. Moscow might see this as weakening its own bargaining position, especially by threatening to upset the political advantage afforded the Pact by superiority in forces-in-being in Central Europe. In such a contingency, and, if it perceived truly vital interests at risk, Moscow might set in motion the rapid buildup and early attack option offered by the two-front force. Such an attack action would be designed to preempt NATO defensive and diplomatic preparations rather than an immediate threat of NATO attack.

Option III—Attack With Three Fronts

101. Under this option, Pact planners could elect to prepare for war via a more phased approach and attack when they had prepared a three-front or larger force. [redacted] leads us to believe that the Pact would require, at a minimum, about eight to nine days to prepare and position a three-front force for an attack—assuming that this force had been maintained in its normal peacetime readiness posture. A more realistic time frame for these preparations might be 10 to 12 days, assuming a "cold start." However, follow-on forces from the western USSR consisting primarily of "not ready" divisions would not be able to effectively support and sustain such an attack.

102. The more complete national and military preparations permitted under this option would assure the availability of a larger and better prepared force, provide for more efficient joint action by all forces, enhance command and control capabilities, provide a better ability to sustain the attack, and permit additional measures to guard against escalation to nuclear war. In this option:

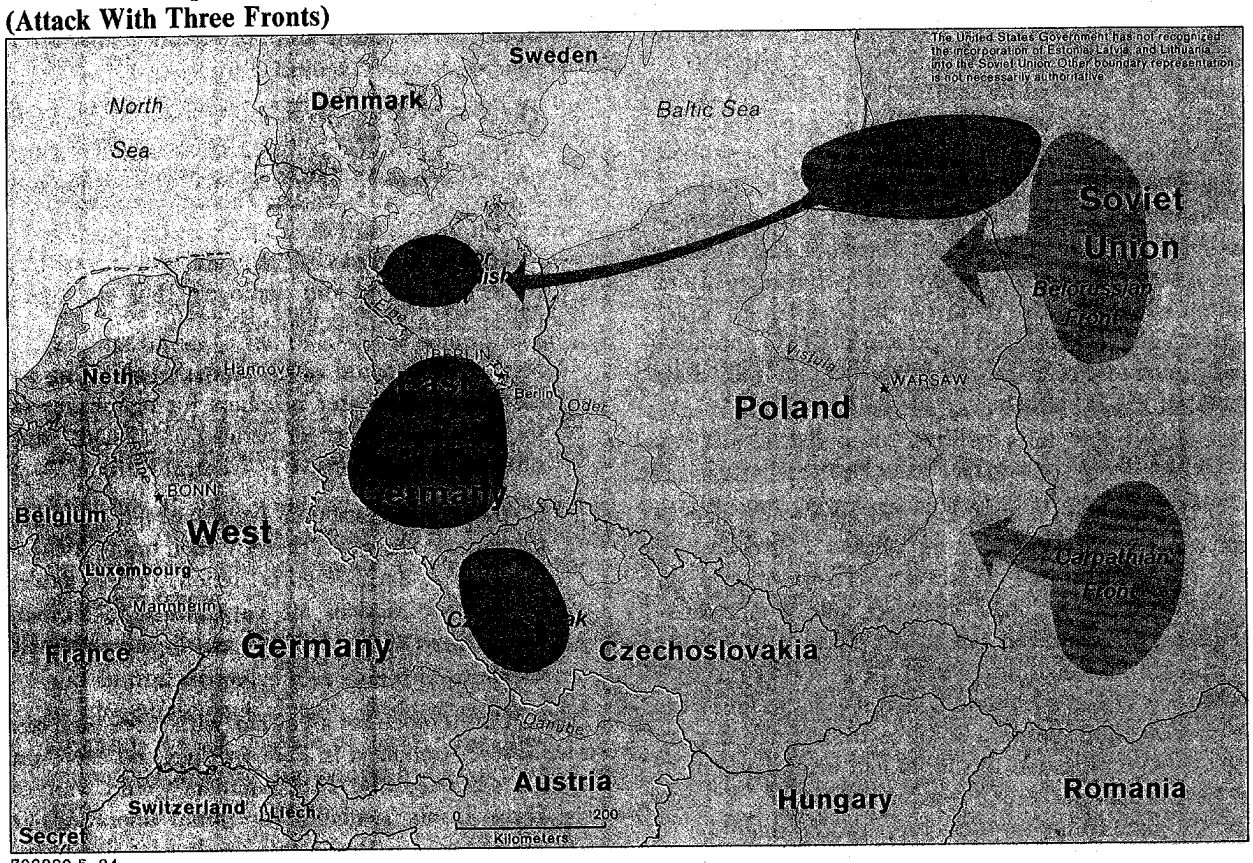
- Those ground units readied for offensive operations would include all forces in the two-front option described above plus Polish forces and possibly a Soviet army (four divisions) from the Baltic or Belorussian Military District: a total of about 60 divisions (see figure 4).
- Additional tactical aircraft could be prepared, perhaps including deployment of some aircraft from the western USSR, and the overall capability to mount and sustain large-scale offensive air operations would be improved.
- A more extensive Pact command and control system would be established at the front, theater, and national levels. Communications capacity would be increased and redundant channels developed to guard against disruption.
- The ability of Pact civil and military defenses to withstand NATO counterattacks would be improved, as would the transition of the economy to a war posture.
- Additional Soviet ballistic missile submarines could be readied and deployed, thus enhancing preparations for nuclear war.
- Naval forces could reach wartime operating areas in much greater numbers for operations on the flanks, support of strategic missions, and support of the offensive in Central Europe.
- Preparation of ground forces would continue throughout the Pact, thereby facilitating a capability to undertake early action on the flanks, while Pact tactical air capabilities to support flank operations also would substantially increase.

103. A preference for an attack with more than two fronts is well supported in Pact writings and exercises. There is evidence that Pact planners would want at least three fronts available for initial operations in Central Europe, with assurance that at least one additional front would be available for reinforcement soon after the initiation of hostilities. This option is more consistent than shorter preparation options in regard to Pact doctrinal preferences for force superiority, national and Pact-wide preparations, combined-arms operations, and the Pact's appreciable respect for NATO's war-fighting capabilities. Moreover, it would offer better prospects for sustaining Pact forces and allow additional preparations to guard against nuclear escalation. Accordingly, we judge that, except under extraordinarily urgent circumstances (as described in paragraph 100), the Pact would prefer to prepare at least a three-front force before initiating hostilities.

Option IV—Attack With Five Fronts

104. Circumstances permitting, the Pact could build up even larger forces before initiating hostilities against NATO. A five-front attack posture would largely fulfill the Pact's conservative doctrinal preferences in regard to force superiority and would take at least 15 days to prepare, including the forward movement of Soviet forces in the western USSR—assuming that all of these forces had been maintained in their

Figure 4
Warsaw Pact Options for Initial Attack Force in the Central Region (Attack With Three Fronts)



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There is evidence that Pact planners would want at least three fronts available for initial operations in Central Europe, with assurance that at least one additional front would be available for reinforcement soon after the initiation of hostilities.

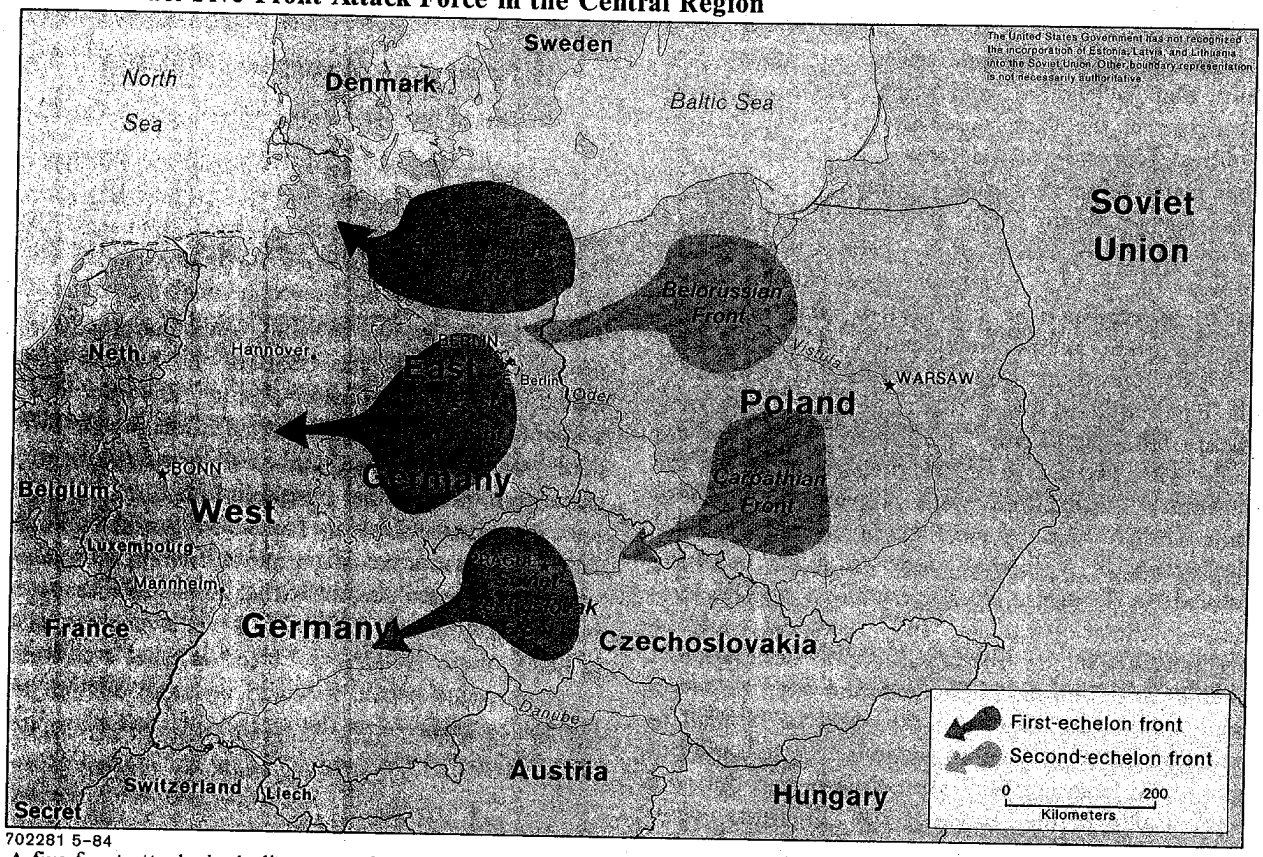
normal peacetime readiness posture. More realistically, these preparations might take up to three weeks if initiated from a "cold start." In either case, due to insufficient training time, "not ready" divisions would still have only a marginal capability to conduct effective offensive operations. In this option:

— Soviet ground forces in the three western military districts of the USSR would be available for early reinforcement of Pact forces in Central Europe. As discussed in Option III (the three-front attack), the Soviets could choose to move limited forces from the western USSR to join Polish forces in forming a Polish-Soviet Front. At least some of the remaining forces in the western military districts (some 30 divisions) would probably be organized into at least two additional fronts (the Belorussian and Carpathian Fronts) and forward deployed in Poland and Czechoslovakia before the attack, thereby substantially adding to the momentum and sustainability of a Pact attack (see figure 5). With these forces, Pact ground forces available for operations against Central Europe would total 85 to 90 active divisions plus support units.

— Additional general purpose naval, strategic, and national defense preparations could be undertaken prior to a Pact attack. The increase in Pact strength would be continuous, and the Pact would maintain its capability to attack at any time.

105. This attack option would reduce the Pact's chances of achieving surprise while maximizing the weight of the attack. This option also would increase the ratio of Soviet to non-Soviet Pact forces in the Western Theater of Military Operations. It would offer much better prospects for sustainability; the most complete command, control, and communications network; and allow for additional measures to prepare the Pact's populace, economies, and transportation systems for war.

Figure 5
Warsaw Pact Five-Front Attack Force in the Central Region



A five-front attack—including some 85 to 90 divisions and support units—would largely fulfill the Pact's conservative doctrinal preferences in regard to force superiority.

F. Variations in Attack Options

106. A number of variations in the attack options discussed above are possible, particularly in regard to the possible forward deployment of some forces in the western USSR prior to the initiation of hostilities, as well as the amount of time the Pact might require or allow for war preparations. Several of these variations are discussed below.

Forward Deployment of Forces in the Western USSR

107. It is not clear to what extent, if any, the Soviets might forward deploy selected ground maneuver formations from the western USSR prior to the initiation of hostilities, such as an army from the Baltic or Belorussian Military District, as described under Option III.

108. The Soviets could choose to mobilize and forward deploy the six "ready" motorized rifle and tank divisions or the reorganized division from the western USSR prior to the complete preparation of the remainder of these forces, most of which are maintained in a peacetime "not ready" posture. The principal maneuver units of the reorganized division are four (possibly five) tank and mechanized brigades. This division probably would be used as an operational maneuver group to execute rapid exploitation deep in the enemy's rear very early in an offensive. This would probably require that this unit mobilize and begin moving forward prior to the initiation of hostilities and well in advance of the forward deployment of the bulk of the Belorussian MD forces. While such an action would provide the Pact with additional early firepower and better prospects for sustaining its attacks, it has the significant disadvantage of possibly providing clear and highly detectable warning indicators to NATO.

Gradual Buildup

109. As a modification to the options previously discussed, the Pact could make gradual preparations

for war over an extended period. The estimated preparation times associated with each of the attack options discussed above assumes that the preparations commence from a normal peacetime readiness posture, that is, from a "cold start." There are many changes that the Pact countries could make in their political, economic, civil defense, and military posture that could be accomplished gradually or piecemeal. The changes might occur in response to a crisis, a series of crises, or as a result of a deliberate decision to prepare for war for whatever reason. Steps could be taken selectively over a period of many weeks or months (such as the mobilization of certain low-strength units) to increase the readiness of elements of the Pact's military forces, that is, gradually converting them from a "not ready" to a "ready" posture as was done with two Soviet cadre divisions prior to the invasion of Afghanistan. Many preparations, which in time-sensitive circumstances might be initiated by a declaration of a combat alert (an order requiring immediate departure from garrisons) or the declaration of "threat-of-war" or "full" readiness, could be accomplished incrementally without the declaration of an alert or the formal implementation of an increased readiness posture. Certain units could be brought to readiness for war over an extended period without movement from garrison normally required during a combat alert or the "threat-of-war" readiness condition. Such deviations from normal peacetime patterns, however, would be detected by US and NATO intelligence, particularly if implemented on a large scale, and would be interpreted as a modification of the Pact's military posture. Such activity would certainly intensify US and NATO intelligence collection efforts and might also initiate similar preparatory actions by NATO. Although the Pact's efforts to gradually increase preparations for war might reduce the time necessary to make final preparations for war discussed in Options II, III, and IV, they would be taken at the risk of detection and NATO counterpreparations.

110. Some measures which the USSR alone or possibly in concert with its allies might gradually undertake could include less provocative civil and military measures such as the following:

- Staffing of wartime headquarters.
- Intensified planning and rehearsal of mobilization plans.
- Partial takeover, or preparation for takeover, of transportation facilities by the military.
- Increased civil defense planning, construction, and training.
- Increased production of military equipment; cutback of production of goods for the civil economy.
- Increased recalls of reservists for training.
- Increased intelligence collection.
- Significant increases in the military portion of the national budget.
- Buildup of strategic reserves of essential commodities.

These types of measures would only marginally improve the ability of the USSR or the Pact to move quickly to a "full readiness" posture. The Pact would probably defer large-scale mobilization, major force deployments, and other highly visible and provocative measures until the final transition to full readiness for war. A particular problem for the Soviets, should they desire similar gradual preparations by their Pact allies, would be to convince them that such measures were necessary, especially in the absence of some expression of hostile intent by NATO. Moreover, once a multinational dialogue began, it would be more difficult for the Soviets to preserve the secrecy of their plans and preparations.

V. WARNING OF WAR

111. A warning should communicate an enemy's intention to go to war, the enemy's capabilities and resolve, and opportunities for the application of the enemy's capabilities—all in sufficient time to avert war or at least frustrate the enemy's intentions. It should also define the nature of the conflict the enemy is planning, the size and mix of enemy forces, the probability of attack, and the direction and timing of the attack.

A. Indicators of War Preparations

112. Soviet and East European behavior in peacetime serves as the reference point for detecting and recognizing deviations from established patterns that might signal the Pact's assumption of a warlike posture. In its progression to war the Pact would almost certainly make major changes in its pattern of political deliberations, in industrial and other economic activities, in internal security and disaster control procedures, and in the tempo and scale of military activity. Although improvements in national abilities to prepare for and sustain war would be detected, recognized, and reported quite early, the perceptions which

prompted the decisions to prepare for war and the ultimate intentions of Pact leaders would remain elusive and most likely controversial within the Intelligence Community.

The Decision To Go to War

113. Before issuing the final order to go to war, Soviet and Pact leaders probably would have completed a large number of incremental decisions to prepare their nations and armed forces. These decisions would constitute the determinations and actions enabling the final decision to begin hostilities. These decisions could and probably would remain contingent and thus reversible until very late, even after military preparations had become alarming.

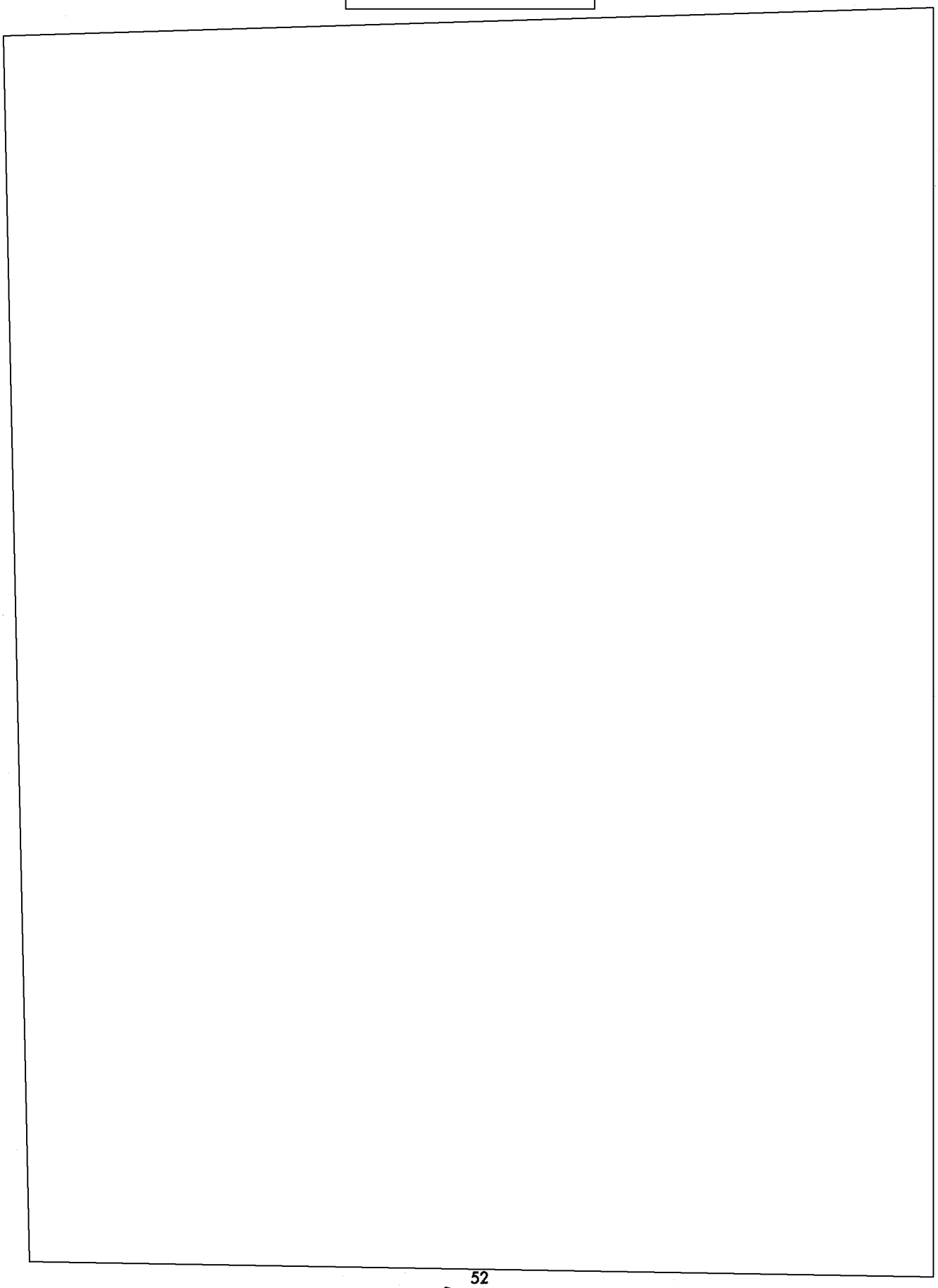
114. Although we know the general structure of Pact decisionmaking for war, the content and timing of the deliberations would probably be secure from timely detection. Consequently, our assessments of the nature of decisions reached and the risks Pact leaders were willing to accept would be based primarily on inferences from the observed actions resulting from these decisions.

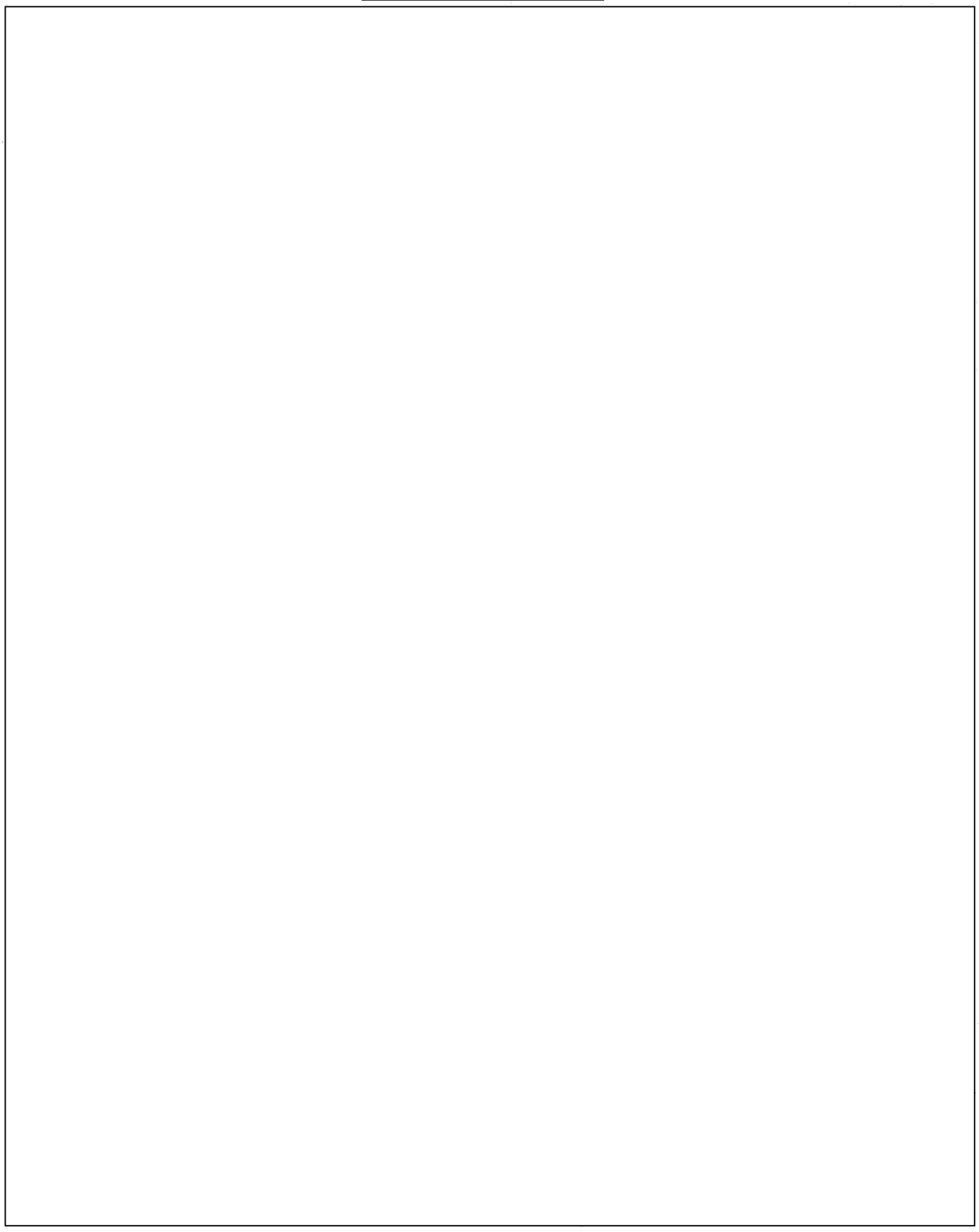
115. We judge it extremely unlikely that the Soviets would initiate an attack against NATO without the cooperation of their allies, whether volunteered, elicited, or forced. Evidence that critical decisions were being made or approved, including an agreement on the conditions for going to war, could be suggested by anomalous activities such as:

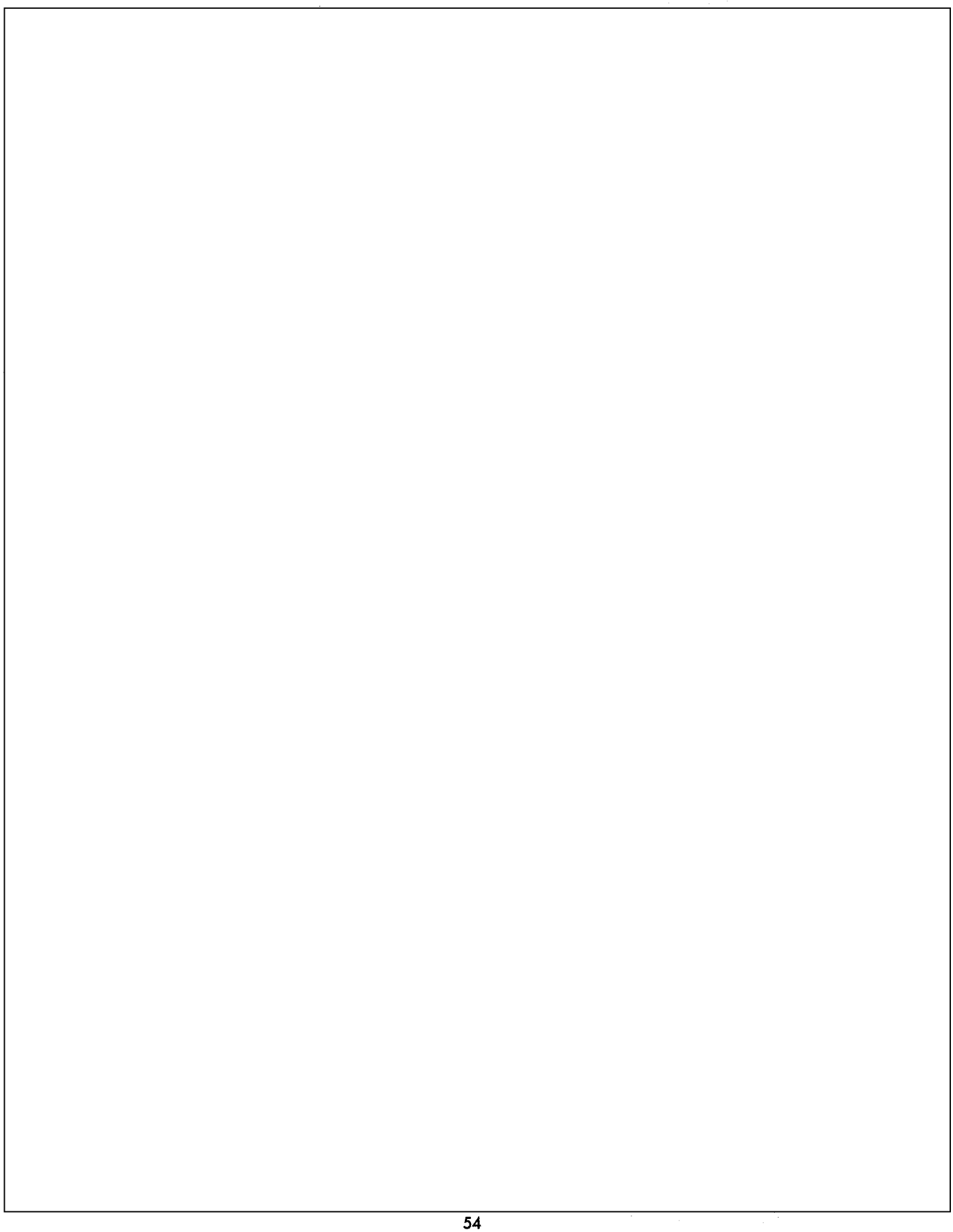
— An increase in high-level meetings or unusual timing of meetings between Pact leaders, among the leaders within a Pact country, and between Soviet and East European political and military leaders.

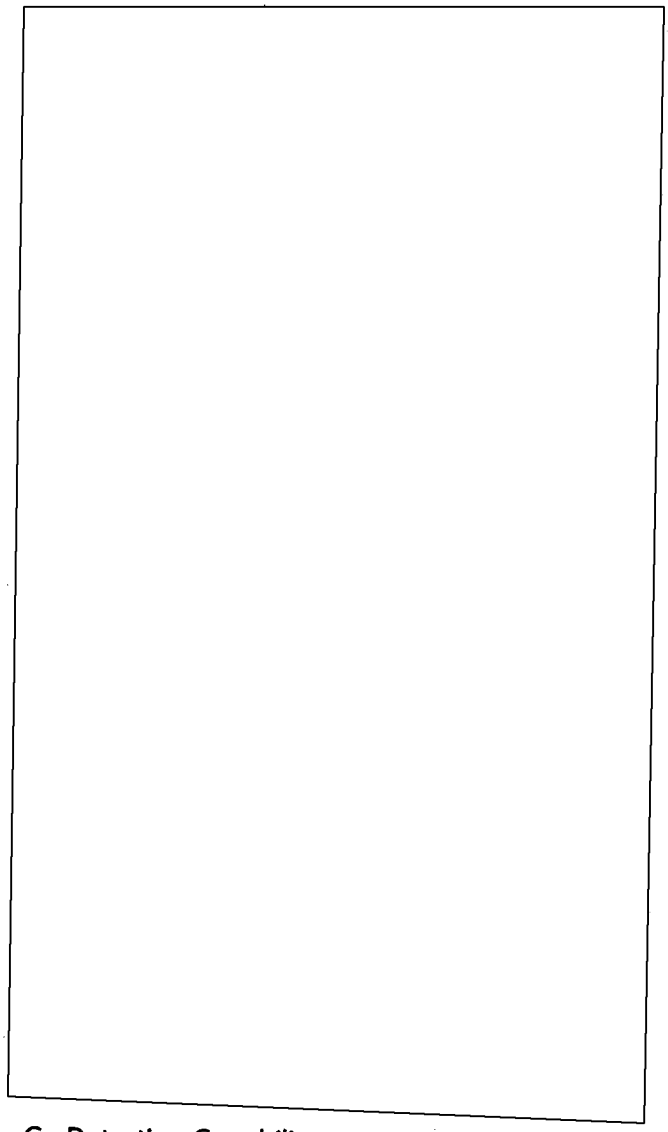
— Cancellation of announced schedules for senior party and government functionaries.

— Changes in Soviet and Pact intelligence collection.









C. Detection Capability

133. We are confident of the ability of US and NATO intelligence organizations to detect a large number of indicators if the Warsaw Pact prepared for a large-scale war with NATO. While we believe that the scale of such indicators would be such as to clearly indicate an intent on the Soviets' part to enhance their readiness for war, we cannot be confident that we would have a consensus within the Intelligence Community regarding Soviet intentions to initiate hostilities. It is likely that many indicators might be attributable to the precautionary actions of the Soviet leadership in time of great international stress or crisis. To the extent that such precautionary actions engendered counterprecautionary actions on the NATO side, the Soviets might feel driven to take further preparatory measures which would be detected and possibly construed as additional evidence of hostile intent toward NATO. Nevertheless, confidence in our ability to detect the indicators of Soviet preparations is strong. This confidence is based on our ability to provide reliable and timely information derived from intelligence on a broad spectrum of Soviet and East European political, military, and economic activities.

134. Discussed below are assessments of our ability to detect and interpret the preparations necessary for the Pact to initiate the various attack options discussed in chapter IV. The warning assessments for a standing-start attack as well as the two-, three-, and five-front attacks are keyed to the minimum time we assess would be required for the Pact to complete the necessary preparations in a time-constrained (that is, "crash") effort. It should be recognized that such a "crash" effort is unlikely under any of the options discussed below, except possibly in regard to the final preparations necessary to achieve full readiness for war. It is more likely that the Pact would gradually increase its readiness and capabilities for war as it perceived the development of a crisis. These increases in readiness and capabilities would be duly reported, affording US and NATO policymakers time to take precautions as they saw fit. As Warsaw Pact capabilities grew, the potentl remaining warning and decision-making time would diminish. The times indicated below are the minimums that might be expected for US and NATO commanders and policymakers under the unlikely circumstances of a Soviet decision to go to war from a "cold start," having taken no special military preparations prior to the initiation of mobilization plans. These times would be operative only if timely decisions were made by US policymakers to react appropriately to the rapidly developing or imminent threat. If decisions were postponed and Warsaw Pact preparations were to continue, the preparation time available to NATO would be reduced. Recipients of warning should understand that while it is the principal function of the warning system to keep policymakers informed of potentially explosive situations and changes in the capabilities of hostile forces, the system is not designed, and should not be expected, to notify recipients when prudent measures should be initiated. The timing of such decisions, like the decisions themselves, are policy matters, not intelligence responsibilities.

135. Warning recipients should also be aware that, if possible, the Warsaw Pact would probably take more time to prepare to execute an attack option than indicated below—anywhere from one or more days up to many weeks. If this were to be the case, the potential for additional US and NATO decision and

counterpreparation time would exist, provided policymakers reacted expeditiously to the initial and continuing warnings provided by the Intelligence Community.

Option I—Attack From a Peacetime Posture

136. As a theoretical construct, a Pact attack on NATO from a peacetime readiness posture would be planned to provide as little warning to NATO as possible. In initiating such an attack, the Pact would forgo lengthy political and economic as well as extensive military preparations for war which would warn NATO.

Option II—Attack With Two Fronts

139. It is not likely that the Pact would prepare a two-front attack force on a "crash" basis from a peacetime readiness posture. It is more likely that during a period of tension it would gradually raise the readiness of its forces through the implementation of the "increased" and "threat-of-war" readiness conditions. If, in the process, regional or global conditions escalated to the crisis level, the Soviets would probably bring the Warsaw Pact forces to "full combat readiness" rapidly.

Option III—Attack With Three Fronts

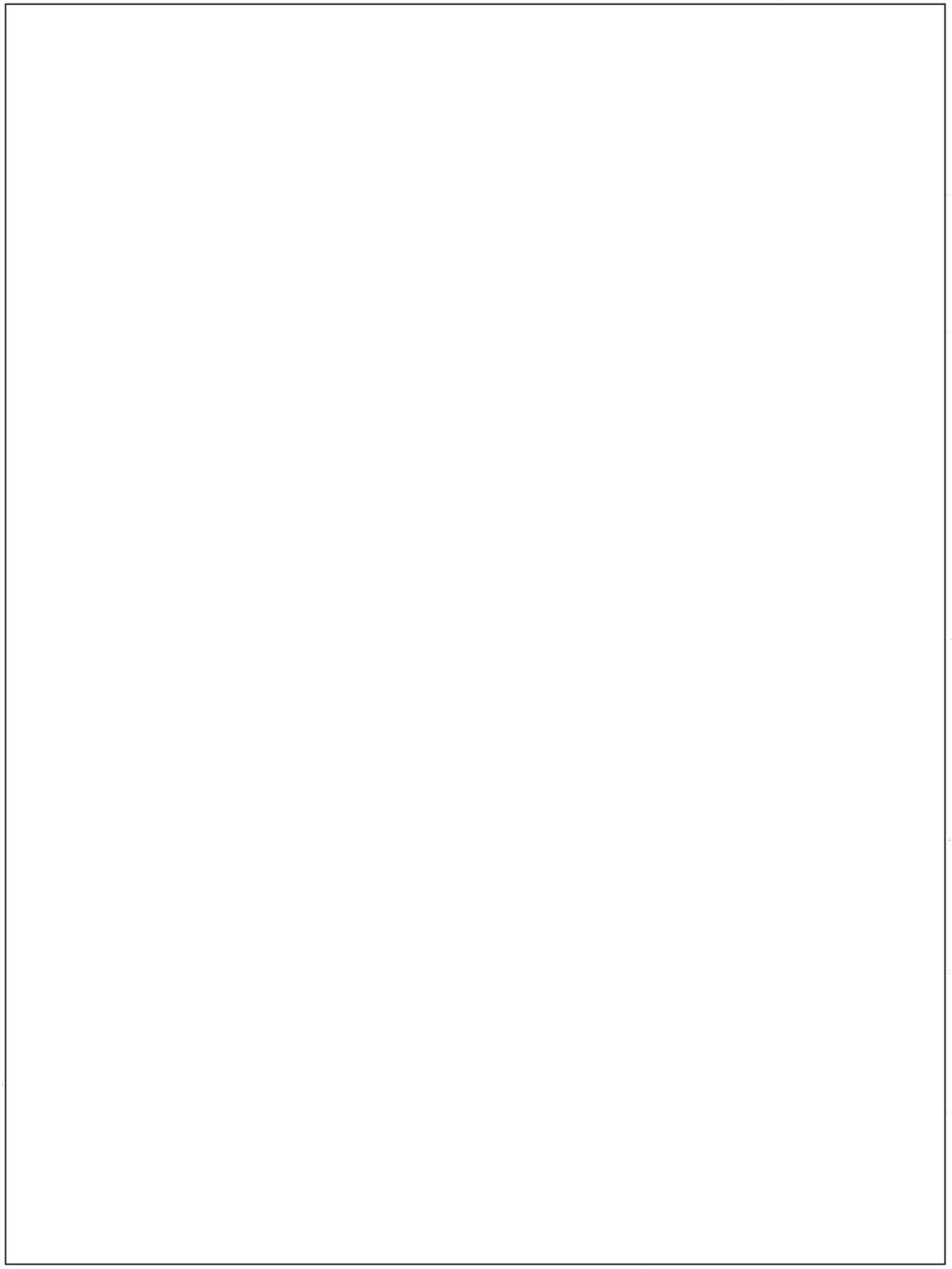
140. If the Warsaw Pact had taken no previous measures in time of crisis to improve its readiness over normal peacetime conditions, we assess that it would require a minimum of eight to nine days, and more realistically 10 to 12 days, to make preparations for a three-front attack. These preparations could be initiated by a sequential declaration of the various readiness conditions, or one or both of the intermediate levels of readiness for the armed forces and the Pact nations could be skipped. Preparations would have to be accomplished using a compressed-buildup approach, and a prodigious effort would be required to complete these preparations within eight to nine days. This would include the mobilization of over 300,000 reservists in East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia to bring understrength divisions and nondivisional units to war-authorized strength; the forward movement of forces; the activation of wartime command, control, and communication networks; the psychological preparation of the Pact populace by domestic propaganda broadcasts; and the establishment of logistic lines of communication. Moreover, the Pact would of necessity begin the simultaneous preparation of other forces—both strategic and general purpose—to allow for nuclear escalation and timely reinforcement of first-echelon attacking forces. The mobilization of well over 400,000 troops would be required, for example, to bring Soviet ground formations in the Baltic, Belorussian, and Carpathian Military Districts to war-authorized manning levels.

Option IV—Attack With Five Fronts

142. The pattern of urgent and widespread activity involved in preparing a full five-front Pact attacking force would be similar to that of a three-front force, but the scope and complexity of the preparations would be much greater. While we do not believe that the Warsaw Pact would be likely to seek to achieve a five-front attack posture without gradually implementing some readiness measures during a period of tension, we assess that a minimum of about 15 days would be required to alert, mobilize, move, and otherwise prepare the forces—assuming the transition to full readiness was initiated from a normal peacetime readiness posture. More realistically, such an effort might require up to three weeks if initiated from a normal peacetime readiness posture.

D. A Gradual Buildup

145. The Pact could initiate gradual war preparations—implemented over a period of many weeks or months—either in response to a prolonged crisis or as a result of a deliberate decision to secretly prepare for war and launch a sudden attack. We judge that the gradual approach to achieving full readiness in reaction to a developing crisis would be the most likely course of events if the Warsaw Pact were to prepare for war against NATO. Such an incremental and slow-paced approach in preparing for war would present more difficult analytical problems for US and NATO intelligence than would the rapid, urgent, and widespread implementation of war preparations. A gradual implementation of war preparations would provide more time to detect these preparations, interpret them, corroborate our information, and issue warnings. The early preparations, however, would probably be difficult to distinguish from routine force improvements or exercises. The incremental approach to preparing for war would also provide the Pact with greater opportunities for implementing deception measures, but their effectiveness would depend on the timing and scope of the preparations as well as the resourcefulness and innovativeness of the measures taken.



VI. LOOKING AHEAD

154. The evolution of technology and its application to military activities will result in continuing improvements in Soviet and Warsaw Pact military capabilities and command and control systems. One of the major consequences of this trend is that some traditional military indicators of war preparations are becoming more ambiguous (see the inset on pages 21-23). Increased Soviet application of computer technologies and more rapid and capable communications and transportation systems will also make the warning process more complex.

155. This trend will place greater pressure than ever on the analytical components of the warning system, compelling accelerated efforts to develop new methods and tools, especially new warning indicators. Some new methods and tools are already beginning to be available, and they demonstrate that the context of decisionmaking in its widest and most integrated sense is an essential ingredient in assessing intent and the meaning of acts that carry it into effect. Even with technological advances in collection, we believe that some of the most significant improvements in our warning posture will come in the analytical sphere during the period of this Memorandum.

156. In addition to the above, a number of developments in the USSR and the Pact could influence our ability to warn (see inset for some examples). While none of these developments would alter the warning judgments of this Memorandum, they could influence the context in which warning judgments might be made in the future.