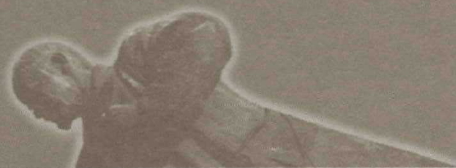


The Military Balance I

Conventional Forces in Europe



16. NIE 11-14-89, February 1989, *Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces and Doctrine Through the 1990s*



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces and Doctrine Through the 1990s

National Intelligence Estimate

Key Judgments and Executive Summary

*These Key Judgments and Executive Summary
represent the views of the Director of Central
Intelligence with the advice and assistance of the
US Intelligence Community.*

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NIE 11-14-89
February 1989

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Central
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NIE 11-14-89

Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces and Doctrine Through the 1990s (U)

*Information available as of 1 March 1989 was used
in the preparation of this National Intelligence Estimate.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
The Bureau of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State

also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
The Director of Naval Intelligence,
Department of the Navy
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force

*This Estimate was approved for publication by the
National Foreign Intelligence Board.*

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February 1989

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~~NOFORN NOCONTRACT~~

Key Judgments

We judge that the Soviet leadership's security policies will produce, during the period of this Estimate, the most significant changes in Soviet general purpose forces since Khrushchev's drastic force reductions. We further assess these policies are designed primarily to help the Soviet leadership revitalize the Soviet economy by shifting resources from defense to civilian sectors. We also believe decisions already undertaken signal a sharp divergence from existing force development trends, and they have necessitated a dramatic alteration in our forecast of future Soviet general purpose forces. ~~(S NF NC)~~

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he inherited a technologically backward economy that had experienced a decade of slowing growth characterized by industrial bottlenecks, labor and energy shortages, low and declining labor productivity, and decreasing efficiency of capital investment. Almost immediately after becoming General Secretary, he began to establish the political and ideological foundation for imposing his own priorities for resource allocations, clearly signaling a more intense competition between civilian and military needs. In doing so, he:

- Reaffirmed the traditional party authority for formulating military doctrine, which the Brezhnev regime had allowed to become dominated by the professional military hierarchy.
- Promoted a debate carried out in doctrinal terms over "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive sufficiency," but which reflects a more fundamental examination of "How much is enough?" for defense.
- Attempted to dampen demand for defense spending by using arms control forums and foreign policy initiatives to reduce external threats.
- Broadened the Soviet concept of national security as part of the "new thinking" policy to give greater weight to its economic and political components.
- Embraced vigorously the position adopted by previous Soviet leaders that the impossibility of victory in nuclear war is basic to the political dimension of Soviet military doctrine, and that the pursuit of capabilities associated with achieving victory is too elusive and costly. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Gorbachev's initial "ground-laying" objectives were largely achieved during his first few years in office. The regime did not order cutbacks in military programs immediately, however, preferring instead to reduce the

¹ See Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, alternative key judgment on page ix. (S NF NC)

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NIE 11-14-89

16. (Continued)

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burden by attempting to increase the efficiency of the defense sector. Despite these efforts to alleviate what Soviet officials describe as a "crisis" in the economy, after four years Gorbachev has failed to bring about a rebound in economic growth. Determined to succeed in his revitalization campaign and recognizing that the defense industrial sector offers an important source of additional help for his modernization program, Gorbachev, in 1988, decided to take stronger action to invest more in consumer-oriented projects. He evidently decided to act at that point because, in addition to the obvious lack of progress on economic programs and the rise in consumer dissatisfaction, the regime was faced with some key deadlines in the preparation of the 1991-95 Five-Year Plan. The results have become most vividly evident with announced policy initiatives designed primarily to help the Soviet leadership reinvigorate the economy by shifting resources from defense to the civil sector:

- Unilateral reductions and restructuring of Soviet general purpose forces that will cut 500,000 personnel from peacetime forces by January 1991, including 240,000 personnel from Soviet forces west of the Urals and 50,000 personnel from those in Central Europe. Forces remaining opposite NATO will be converted into a "clearly defensive" structure.
- Cuts in overall defense spending of 14.2 percent and defense production levels of 19.5 percent over the next two years that clearly reflect plans for a reduced force structure and reductions in rates of equipment modernization.
- Increases in the defense industry's direct contribution to production of consumer and civilian investment goods that will cut significantly into defense output. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Despite these dramatic actions and their apparent far-reaching implications, there remains considerable uncertainty about the durability and consequences of Gorbachev's initiatives on military matters. The amount of progress that is achieved on economic revival will largely determine Gorbachev's ability to sustain his reforms, his willingness to undertake additional initiatives, his standing with the party leadership, the support he receives in pursuing related programs, and his ability to control the impact of external factors that could impinge on his objectives. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Nevertheless, we believe it is highly likely that further decisions to reduce planned defense spending and to shift investment from defense to the civil sector will become apparent during the coming 13th Five-Year Plan (1991-95). We reaffirm the recent assessment in NIE 11-23-88 ~~(Secret NF NC)~~, December 1988, *Gorbachev's Economic Programs: The Challenges Ahead*,

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that Gorbachev will divert additional resources from the defense sector to the civil sector. Over the longer term, Gorbachev probably will continue to impose constraints on the defense budget, and we judge that Soviet defense spending will continue to decline as a portion of GNP through the turn of the century. ~~(S NF NC)~~

We believe that the doctrinal concepts of "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive sufficiency" have been articulated primarily to strengthen Gorbachev's control over defense resource decisions to support economic revival. We also believe that, by the turn of the century, these concepts probably will have become lasting features of Soviet national security policy, helping ensure continued party control over defense policy and defense spending. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Decisions by the USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies to reduce their general purpose forces and cut defense spending over the next two years would reverse the long-term trend of continuing growth in size and offensive capabilities of these forces. As a consequence of the planned cuts, the offensive capabilities of Warsaw Pact theater forces will decline through the first half of the 1990s. ~~(S NF NC)~~

We judge that the USSR will maintain large general purpose forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone to reinforce its status as a superpower, to deter aggression, to carry out wartime missions, and to underwrite its political objectives in the region. Within emerging economic constraints, we also believe the Soviets will modernize their still formidable general purpose forces. Furthermore, the Soviets will want to minimize the erosion of their relative military position due to both Warsaw Pact force reductions and continuing improvements in NATO military capabilities. Absent a far-reaching conventional arms control agreement, the Soviets will maintain the capability to conduct large-scale offensive operations deep into NATO territory but only after general mobilization. For the period of this Estimate, Warsaw Pact forces, led by the USSR, will remain the largest aggregation of military power in the world, and the Soviets will remain committed to the offensive as the preferred form of operations in wartime. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Even with reductions in defense spending and procurement, the Soviets will continue to maintain the world's highest level of weapons production through the turn of the century. Although Soviet weapons projected through the 1990s will involve mostly evolutionary improvements over present types, a steady stream of better military technology will be available to Soviet force developers throughout this period. Indeed, the military expects *perestroika* to yield significantly improved military technologies. ~~(S NF NC)~~

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In addition to reductions in procurement funds, the significantly increased unit costs of high-technology weapon systems will further reduce traditionally high Soviet procurement rates. The increased effectiveness of these weapons, however, will reduce the number of such systems required to maintain the combat capabilities of Soviet general purpose forces. These factors will almost certainly lead to a less than 1-for-1 replacement rate for more advanced Soviet weapon systems over the course of this Estimate. As a consequence, we expect to see a continuation in the recent trends of declining production rates and deployment patterns for high-technology equipment. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Since the late 1970s, the Soviets have improved their capabilities to conduct longer and more intensive conventional operations against NATO, including increased training for defensive operations against attacking NATO forces. The Soviets assess NATO to be a tougher military opponent on the conventional battlefield today than in past decades. Furthermore, they believe improvements in NATO doctrine and projected force modernization will make NATO an even more formidable conventional opponent over the course of this Estimate. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Soviet pessimism regarding the utility of nuclear war and NATO's increased conventional capabilities have caused the Soviets to prepare for the possibility that a NATO-Pact war might remain conventional.² But they believe they must also prepare for nuclear war both to deter it and to wage it if it happens. Indeed, we judge that the Soviets still believe a NATO-Pact war is likely to escalate to the nuclear level due to NATO's doctrine of flexible response. Therefore, we expect the Soviets to maintain sizable nuclear forces subject to limitations imposed by current and future arms control agreements. Furthermore, we believe that, should an agreement with NATO governing quantities and modernization of short-range nuclear forces not materialize, the Soviets will continue to expand and modernize their tactical nuclear missile force by the mid-1990s. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Following a trend we identified in [REDACTED] we believe the overall peacetime readiness posture of Warsaw Pact general purpose forces opposite NATO during the period of this Estimate will be designed to accommodate the following:

- Primary emphasis will be placed on the ability to mobilize and deploy large reinforcements before hostilities, not on the ability of forward forces to initiate a quick, unreinforced attack.

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- In line with the Warsaw Pact's recent decisions to reduce and restructure its theater forces, these forces will be maintained at sufficient readiness to defend against a sudden attack and act as a defensive shield to allow for the full mobilization and deployment of Pact forces. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

We consider Pact initiation of hostilities without mobilization to be extremely unlikely. We cannot, however, rule out the possibility that the Pact might initiate hostilities from a condition of partial mobilization if it perceives an opportunity to achieve decisive results against NATO, or a need to forestall NATO from achieving decisive results against the Pact. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Our judgments regarding Warsaw Pact sustainability in a future war with NATO differ substantially from those made several years ago. In 1985 we stated unconditionally that the Warsaw Pact logistic structure in Central Europe could support 60 to 90 days of theater offensive operations against NATO. We now judge that overall Pact sustainability is a function of the resilience of NATO's forward defenses. If NATO's forward defenses were to collapse within three days of intensive operations, ammunition stocks in the Western Theater of Military Operations (TMO) would be sufficient to support the Pact's Theater Strategic Operation for up to 90 days. If, on the other hand, Pact forces were to require at least two weeks of high-intensity operations to achieve a decisive breakthrough, the Pact would not have enough ammunition in the Western TMO to sustain a theater strategic operation beyond a total of about 30 to 45 days. If confronted with the prospect of some shortfall in ammunition supply, the Pact would move additional ammunition stocks from elsewhere to the Western TMO, or adjust war plans to avoid or at least minimize any adverse impact on combat operations. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Soviet general purpose forces are fielding new weapons of virtually every type, and we believe this trend will continue through the end of the century. Motivated by the need to counter NATO's deep-attack, high-technology conventional weapons and extended-battlefield concepts, for example, the Soviets have been able to match or exceed NATO's capabilities in nearly every major ground forces' weapons category. Rates of equipment modernization probably will decrease through the end of the century as the Soviets reduce defense production to free resources for the civil sector. However, we expect that the Soviets will resist cutting substantially research, development, testing, and evaluation in an effort to close the military technology gap with the West. As in the past, Soviet forces in the Western TMO will likely be the first to receive new equipment. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

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The Ground Forces are the largest element of the Soviet armed forces, and their development determines the overall direction of Soviet theater forces development. We see no evidence that this will change. We now judge, based on the plans for reductions in force levels, defense spending and military procurement, that a 25-year period of Soviet Ground Forces growth has ended, and the decline in their overall size could go beyond that already announced. We further judge that a resumption of growth in the Ground Forces is highly unlikely before the turn of the century. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

In order to meet the targets for reductions set by Gorbachev for January 1991, Soviet Ground Forces will be considerably restructured over the next two years, but we cannot confidently predict their final form. Before Gorbachev's cuts, the Soviets had begun to move toward combined-arms formations. Although the final balance of tanks and mechanized infantry is still in flux, we believe that combined-arms doctrine will guide Soviet force restructuring through the 1990s. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Despite cuts in defense spending and procurement, we judge the Soviets will continue to modernize their Air Forces, albeit more slowly than in the past. Beginning in the mid-1990s and continuing through the turn of the century, the Soviets are expected to introduce light, medium, and Stealth bombers, Stealth and non-Stealth fighter-bombers, and at least one new fighter. The announced reduction of 800 combat aircraft from the Air Forces, however, signals a significant change in the pattern of force expansion of the past two decades. We now judge that the Soviet Air Forces will remain at their post-reduction levels until after the end of the century. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Soviet naval general purpose forces continue to have the major missions of protecting the Soviet missile-launching submarine force and defending the USSR against NATO strategic and theater forces. Although the Navy can be expected to bear a share of spending reductions, major emphasis will be placed on improving antisubmarine and antisurface combatant operations, gradually modernizing Soviet naval aviation, and increasing the availability of sea-based airpower as larger aircraft carriers enter service during the 1990s. Support for land TMOs remains a primary wartime task of naval theater forces, and we project a slow continuation of several organizational and weapon trends that should provide land theater commanders with more capable naval forces for combined-arms operations. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact defense industries have been expanding and producing a larger share of the NSWP military inventory. But announced defense spending cuts and the weakened state of NSWP economies will cause military production in the NSWP countries to decline during the period of this Estimate. We also judge that NSWP forces will fall further

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behind Soviet forces in technology and organization during this same period. The relative contribution of the NSWP armies to overall Warsaw Pact military capability is also likely to decline somewhat over the next few years. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

A major objective of the Soviet leadership's current foreign policy is to reduce political support in the NATO countries for increased defense spending to support NATO's force modernization program. Gorbachev will continue to negotiate for conventional arms control agreements to slow Western military modernization and facilitate his own defense program. In addition, Warsaw Pact foreign policy over the period of this Estimate will seek to weaken the position of the United States and Canada within the North Atlantic Alliance. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Alternative Key Judgment. The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, while recognizing the significance of the ongoing changes in the Soviet Union, believes the likelihood of large unilateral reductions in military expenditures beyond those already proclaimed by Soviet leaders is not as high as implied by the majority view in the Estimate, particularly for the longer term. Notwithstanding the potential importance of new developments in Soviet military policies discussed in this Estimate, the Director, DIA, believes present evidence and future uncertainties make the elements of continuity in Soviet military policy as important as the changes for US national security and defense planning. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

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Executive Summary

A Time of Change in Soviet General Purpose Forces and Policy

We judge that the Soviet leadership's current security policies will produce during the period of this Estimate the most significant changes in Soviet general purpose forces since Khrushchev's drastic force reductions. We further assess that these policies are designed primarily to help the Soviet leadership revitalize the Soviet economy by shifting resources from defense to civil sectors. We also believe decisions already undertaken signal a sharp divergence from existing force development trends, and they have necessitated a dramatic alteration in our forecast of future Soviet general purpose forces.³

~~(S/NF/NC)~~

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he inherited a technologically backward economy that had experienced a decade of slowing growth characterized by industrial bottlenecks, labor and energy shortages, low and declining labor productivity, and decreasing efficiency of capital investment. Almost immediately after becoming General Secretary, he began to establish the political and ideological foundation for imposing his own priorities for resource allocations, clearly signaling a more intense competition between civilian and military needs. In doing so, he:

- Reaffirmed the traditional party authority for formulating military doctrine, which the Brezhnev regime had allowed to become dominated by the professional military hierarchy.
- Promoted a debate carried out in doctrinal terms over "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive sufficiency," but that reflects a more fundamental examination of "How much is enough?" for defense.
- Attempted to dampen demand for defense spending by using arms control forums and foreign policy initiatives to reduce external threats.

³ See Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, alternative judgment on page 13. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

- Broadened the Soviet concept of national security as part of the "new thinking" policy to give greater weight to its economic and political components.
- Embraced vigorously the position adopted by previous Soviet leaders that the impossibility of victory in nuclear war is basic to the political dimension of Soviet military doctrine, and that the pursuit of capabilities associated with achieving victory is too elusive and costly. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

Gorbachev's initial "ground-laying" objectives were largely achieved during his first few years in office. The regime did not order cutbacks in military programs immediately, however, preferring instead to reduce the burden by increasing the efficiency of the defense sector. Despite these efforts to alleviate what Soviet officials describe as a "crisis" in the economy, after four years Gorbachev has failed to bring about a rebound in economic growth. Determined to succeed in his revitalization campaign and recognizing that the defense industrial sector offers an important source of additional help for his modernization program, Gorbachev, in 1988, decided to take stronger action to invest more in consumer-oriented projects. He evidently decided to act at that point because, in addition to the obvious lack of progress on economic programs and the rise in consumer dissatisfaction, the regime was faced with some key deadlines in the preparation of the 13th Five-Year Plan (1991-95). The results have become most vividly evident with announced policy initiatives designed primarily to help the Soviet leadership reinvigorate the economy by shifting resources from defense to the civilian sector:

- Unilateral reduction and restructuring of Soviet general purpose forces that will cut 500,000 personnel from peacetime forces by January 1991, including 240,000 personnel from Soviet forces west of the

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Urals and 50,000 personnel from those in Central Europe. Forces remaining opposite NATO will be converted into a "clearly defensive" structure.

- Cuts in overall defense spending of 14.2 percent and defense production levels of 19.5 percent over the next two years that clearly reflect plans for a reduced force structure and reductions in rates of equipment modernization.
- Increases in defense industry's direct contribution to production of consumer and civilian investment goods that will cut significantly into defense output. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Despite these dramatic actions and their apparent far-reaching implications, there remains considerable uncertainty about the durability and consequences of Gorbachev's initiatives on military matters. The amount of progress that is achieved on economic revival will largely determine Gorbachev's ability to sustain his reforms, his willingness to undertake additional initiatives, his standing with the party leadership, the support he receives in pursuing related programs, and his ability to control the impact of external factors that could impinge on his objectives. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Nevertheless, we believe it is highly likely that further decisions to reduce planned defense spending and to shift investment from defense to the civil sector will become apparent during the upcoming 13th Five-Year Plan. We reaffirm the recent assessment in NIE 11-23-88 (~~Secret NF NC~~), December 1988, *Gorbachev's Economic Programs: The Challenges Ahead*, that Gorbachev will divert additional resources from the defense sector to the civil sector. Over the longer term, Gorbachev probably will continue to impose constraints on the defense budget, and we judge that Soviet defense spending will continue to decline as a portion of GNP through the turn of the century. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Gorbachev and the Formulation of Defense Policy
Gorbachev's decision to include the military as one target of his *perestroika* ("restructuring") campaign has brought into sharp relief his attempts to tighten party control over the Soviet armed forces. Soon after taking office as General Secretary in early 1985,

Gorbachev and his allies moved quickly to reaffirm party control over military issues, in particular its authority for formulating military doctrine. Although most attention has focused on the defense spending implications of Gorbachev's programs, it has become clear that he is also using *perestroika* as a tool to tighten the party's grip on the military's political accountability. The mid-1988 19th Party Conference and subsequent remarks by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze calling for oversight of the Soviet military by nationwide elected bodies provide strong indications of the leadership's determination to broaden and intensify review of national security matters, especially defense spending. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Reasonable and Defensive Sufficiency. The concept of "reasonable sufficiency" is emerging as a major announced theme of Soviet security policy, and it is being linked closely to Gorbachev's new formulations of military requirements. Sufficiency has been generally defined by Gorbachev and other party officials as a level of military power adequate "to repel aggression, but insufficient to conduct offensive operations." The concept remains under discussion in the Soviet Union, and the debate has largely focused on three central issues:

- A contest over resources as Gorbachev seeks a doctrinal basis for strengthening his control over defense resource decisions.
- The need to influence Western audiences in a direction favorable to Soviet defense and economic policy objectives.
- The belief by at least some leaders that Soviet national security can be better ensured if both sides reduce their military forces. ~~(S NF NC)~~

We judge that in presenting this concept the Gorbachev leadership is attempting to establish a new basis for determining "How much is enough?" for defense. It has been linked to two other announced policy outlooks: that overall defense posture should be judged by "qualitative" as well as quantitative measures; and, that further increases over existing force

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levels do not necessarily result in greater security. By advocating these concepts, Gorbachev seeks to promote policies that will benefit his economy by reducing the burden of military spending, mitigate the effects of reduced spending by attempting to manage the future military threat through aggressive arms control policies, and reap political benefits that would contribute to his goals by reducing the Western perception of the Soviet threat. We believe that the concept's long-term implications are inextricably linked to the fate of Gorbachev's reform programs. We further judge that, as long as leadership backing within the party for his emphasis on industrial modernization holds up, and, barring an unforeseen deterioration in US-USSR relations, Gorbachev's concept of sufficiency will provide the basis for Soviet security policy. ~~(S-1F-NC)~~

Over the last few years, the principle of reasonable sufficiency has also been linked to the term "defensive sufficiency" (also translated as "defensive defense"). In this context it has been proposed by Gorbachev and other high-ranking Soviet officials as a basis for determining the organization, size, disposition, and strategy of Pact and NATO forces in Europe. Not surprisingly, even many Soviet military sources have been particularly skeptical about defensive doctrine, and several high-ranking officers have asserted that, while defense can prevent the enemy from defeating the USSR, it does not defeat the enemy. ~~(S-1F-NC)~~

Although usually placed by Soviet spokesmen in the context of its mutual applicability to both alliances, Gorbachev linked his late 1988 unilateral troop reduction and reorganization announcement to Soviet forces adopting a "clearly defensive" structure. The leadership's championing of reasonable and defensive sufficiency derives much of its impetus from economic requirements, and we believe its success ultimately will be determined by the policy agenda and political power of the party leadership rather than by resolution of a doctrinal discourse between military and civilian writers. We further assess, nevertheless, that, by the turn of the century, these concepts probably will have become a lasting feature of Soviet national security policy, helping ensure continued party control over defense policy and defense spending.

~~(S-1F-NC)~~

Alternative Judgment: The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes that Soviet objectives in promulgating the concept of reasonable sufficiency are designed not only to avoid the costs of an unabated continuation of the arms race, but are primarily to establish the basis for arms reduction proposals, to raise Western expectations regarding the prospects for substantial force reductions, and to undermine support for NATO modernization. Its long-term importance will depend primarily on how the West responds to Soviet initiatives and the progress made in the arms control arena. Should Gorbachev fail to achieve his minimum goals by the mid-1990s, the Soviets most likely would, despite the extremely high costs, revert to their traditional resource-intensive approach to develop the next generation of weapons and modernize their forces. ~~(S-1F-NC)~~

Arms Control

In parallel with the doctrinal changes involving sufficiency Gorbachev has advocated "new thinking" on foreign policy. This "new thinking" emphasizes the political and economic dimensions of national security and the limits of military power. An important element of this "new thinking" has been an aggressive public pursuit of conventional arms control since early 1986. The Warsaw Pact's efforts at conventional arms control have featured a number of proposals by Gorbachev, by the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee, and, in addition, hundreds of statements and press articles by lower-ranking officials, all stressing the Soviet Union's desire for a conventional arms reduction agreement. ~~(S-1F-NC)~~

We judge that the Soviets and their allies have a number of interrelated military, political, and economic reasons to engage the West in conventional arms control:

- To improve the correlation of forces and reduce what they perceive as NATO's capability to launch a surprise attack.
- To impede NATO's force modernization plans and prevent or impede NATO's deployment of advanced-technology weapons, thus reducing the

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urgency on the part of the Soviet Union to match or better NATO's high-technology modernization programs.

- To make it politically easier to allocate economic resources within the Soviet Union from the defense sector to the civilian sector to carry out *perestroika*.
- To appeal to public opinion at home and abroad in a generalized way, while adding to Moscow's overall arms control posture and enhancing the USSR's image as a trustworthy and rational player in the international arena. ~~(S NF NC)~~

In early December 1988, Gorbachev announced major unilateral cuts in Soviet military manpower and equipment to occur during the next two years. A month later he announced major reductions in defense spending and defense production (see the table). While we believe that a mixture of economic, political, and military considerations went into these decisions, in our judgment, economic considerations—providing resources and manpower to the civilian economy—were the primary factor. Had the cuts been designed solely for political or propagandistic effect, we believe the withdrawal of the six tank divisions from Central Europe would have been sufficient. Politically, the reductions are designed to put pressure on NATO to move toward conventional arms control negotiations that would involve multilateral force reductions. The unilateral cuts are also intended to influence NATO electorates to withdraw support for new weapons procurement programs and expanding military budgets. Indeed, over the long term, the potential for slowing NATO's modernization is probably a more important factor in Moscow's calculations than the direct savings expected from the unilateral force cuts. Slowing or reversing NATO's modernization reduces the pressure to develop matching programs and permits the Soviet leadership to concentrate on its economic problems. ~~(S NF NC)~~


Depending on the West's response, Gorbachev might advance other initiatives, especially in the context of the conventional arms reduction talks, designed to keep political pressure on the West while holding down the defense burden at home. We believe further major unilateral force reductions would generate

strong opposition which would coalesce within the defense establishment and among its allies in the political leadership. This opposition could be largely neutralized, however, if Gorbachev could demonstrate that NATO's military forces were also being reduced unilaterally. ~~(S NF NC)~~

Soviet Doctrine on Theater War Against NATO
Nature of Future War. We believe that Soviet views on the nature and results of a theater war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact have changed in recent years. Soviet planning through the mid-1970s was based on a belief that NATO's conventional capabilities were relatively weak and the alliance was almost certain to initiate nuclear warfare early in a conflict in an effort to avoid conventional defeat. ~~(S NF NC)~~

The Soviets now perceive that NATO's conventional forces have become substantially more difficult to defeat. Consequently, NATO has become more capable of delaying and perhaps averting the collapse of its conventional defenses, and the necessity for NATO to resort to early use of nuclear weapons has decreased. The Soviets may also believe that the USSR's ability to at least match NATO's nuclear strength at the tactical, theater, and strategic levels has reduced NATO's incentive to initiate nuclear use early. Nevertheless, we judge that, even under contemporary conditions, the Soviets generally assess a NATO-Pact war as likely to escalate to the nuclear level, and they continue to believe that escalation to general nuclear war is likely to be the outcome of the use of any nuclear weapons in the theater. (S NF NC)

The Soviets may also have come to believe, however, that a NATO-Pact war might terminate before the use of nuclear weapons.



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**Announced Warsaw Pact Unilateral Reductions
To Take Place During 1989-90**

	Military Manpower	Force Structure	Tanks	APC/ IFV	Artillery Systems	Short-Range Missile Launchers	Combat Aircraft	Defense Budget (percent)
USSR								
Announced Total	500,000	...	...	...	...	24	...	14.2 (1989-90)
Eastern USSR	200,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Southern USSR	60,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Atlantic-to-the-Urals	240,000	...	10,000	...	8,500	...	800	...
Central Europe ^b	50,000	6 divisions	5,300	...	650 ^c	24	260	...
Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact								
Computed Total ^d	81,300	7 divisions, 6 regiments	2,751	895	1,530	6	210	
East Germany	10,000	6 regiments	600	...	...	...	50	10 (1989-90)
Poland ^e	40,000	4 divisions ^f	850	700	900	6 ^g	80	4 (1989)
Czechoslovakia ^h	12,000	3 divisions	850	165	...	...	51	15 (1989-90)
Hungary	9,300	...	251	30	430	...	9	17 (1989)
Bulgaria	10,000	...	200	...	200	...	20	12 (1989)
Romania ⁱ	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Warsaw Pact Computed Totals ^d								
Atlantic-to-the-Urals	321,300	13 divisions, 6 regiments	12,751	895	10,030	30	1,010	
Eastern Europe	131,300	13 divisions, 6 regiments	8,051	895	2,180	30	470	
Central Europe ^b	121,300	13 divisions, 6 regiments	7,851	895	1,980	30	450	

^a Soviet statements express or imply reductions in these categories, but no specific quantities have been announced.

^b Central Europe includes Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland.

^c This figure is assessed from units announced to be withdrawn.

^d Announced Warsaw Pact totals are currently lagging the computed totals of the reductions announced by individual countries.

^e In addition, Poland has announced that in the past two years (1987-88) 15,000 men, two divisions, unspecified other units, 419 tanks, 225 APCs, 194 aircraft, and other types of equipment were removed from its forces.

^f Two of the divisions are to be eliminated, and two are to be reduced in strength.

^g This figure is based on the announced elimination of an "operational-tactical" (Scud) missile brigade (probably in the Warsaw Military District).


^h Czechoslovakia has announced a reduction of 12,000 men in combat units but is transferring these men and 8,000 men from support units to the military construction troops.

ⁱ A slight increase in defense spending (1.7 percent) was announced for 1989. No force cuts were announced.

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 (AI-
 though our evidence indicates that the Soviets would neither begin a NATO-Pact conventional war for limited goals nor conduct initial operations with limited goals in mind, they may be willing to accept partial achievement of their objectives rather than increase the risk of nuclear escalation. (S-NF-NC)

Nuclear Doctrine. There is no indication that the Soviets have ever been sanguine about the consequences they would expect to suffer in a nuclear war. Moreover, evidence from the 1980s indicates the Soviets doubt they could prevail in any traditionally meaningful military-political sense because of the expected high levels of damage both sides would sustain from nuclear attacks. Since the early 1980s, Soviet leaders have explicitly renounced the possibility of achieving victory in a general nuclear conflict. We judge that the "no victory in nuclear war" position—publicly endorsed by Gorbachev and incorporated in the 1986 27th Party Congress Program—is basic to the political dimension of Soviet military doctrine.³ (S-NF-NC)

The Soviet leaders' public portrayal of their nuclear policy clearly serves their political interests and it does not mean a deemphasis of Soviet nuclear weapons development. The Soviets continue to recognize that circumstances might compel them to fight a nuclear war—regardless of whether they think a traditional victory can be achieved—and they intend

³ The Soviets define military doctrine as a system of basic views on the prevention of war, military organizational development, preparation of the country and the armed forces for repelling aggression, and methods of conducting warfare. It is based on the principles of Soviet military science and has two elements: sociopolitical and military-technical. The first establishes the geostrategic and ideological context in which warfare occurs, and its content is the responsibility of the Soviet political leadership; the second guides the planning and conduct of combat operations, and its formulation is primarily the responsibility of the Soviet General Staff. As Soviet military leaders have publicly acknowledged, the military-technical component is strictly subordinate to the sociopolitical dimension. Doctrine is approved by the highest Soviet civilian and military command authorities and therefore has the status of state policy.

to achieve the best possible outcome if it ever happens. At the same time, the Soviet leadership believes the best possible nuclear-war-fighting capability will produce the best possible nuclear deterrent as well. For these reasons, subject to an arms control agreement, we expect the Soviets to maintain a sizable nuclear delivery force and to continue to improve those weapon systems that constitute this force. (S-NF-NC)

We have not detected any changes in the military-technical dimension of Soviet military doctrine that clearly demonstrate that the Soviets have changed their nuclear-war-fighting doctrine under Gorbachev. The coming 13th Five-Year Plan presents a key opportunity for him to affect decisions involving the future of the Soviet armed forces. Consequently, if the Soviets determine that the pursuit of capabilities associated with traditional Soviet means of victory is too elusive and costly, we would expect, by the mid-to-late 1990s, to acquire evidence of basic changes in the structure and development of the USSR's nuclear forces. (S-NF-NC)

Conventional Doctrine. The Soviets have devoted considerable emphasis during the 1980s to the changing nature of conventional warfare. Their interest has largely centered on three themes:

- Should a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact occur, it might be a protracted, worldwide conflict fought with conventional weapons and continuing for weeks or months, perhaps even longer.
- Conventional weapons are becoming so accurate and lethal that the destructiveness of some now approaches that of low-yield nuclear weapons. They can be employed, therefore, to destroy many targets that previously required nuclear strikes. Their use, however, does not necessarily incur the risks of escalation to general nuclear war inherent in the use of even a single nuclear weapon.
- Military advantages afforded the USSR by its numerical advantages in conventional forces against NATO may be mitigated by Western progress in

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advanced-technology conventional weapons, especially precision-guided, long-range weapons.

~~(S-NF-NC)~~

The acquisition of new conventional battlefield technologies by the West would create two problems for Pact operational planners during a war. First, the development and widespread fielding of such weapons by NATO could increase significantly the losses sustained by the Pact in conventional combat, thus raising the possibility of even otherwise successful operations becoming prohibitively expensive. Instead of the previous expectation of rapid breakthroughs and high-speed exploitation operations, the Soviets are now concerned that offensive operations would assume the agonizing character of "gnawing through" numerous defensive lines. Second, long-range high-technology weapons could be used to isolate the European battlefield from Pact reinforcements. Without substantial, early reinforcement by mobilized forces from the USSR, the Soviets believe that they might not attain a sufficient correlation of military forces to ensure a rapid rate of advance. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

In our view, these concerns have led to a vigorous advocacy by Soviet military leaders over the last several years for modernizing conventional forces through greater exploitation of new technologies. The military's concerns for the high-technology conventional battlefield of the future have given them a strong incentive to support Gorbachev's industrial modernization strategy, which is intended to keep the Soviet Union from lagging even further behind in the development of new weapon technologies. We believe, therefore, that through the mid-1990s the military will accept the promises of future benefits and will refrain from pushing for vigorous development and full-scale fielding of weapons incorporating costly technologies. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Soviet Doctrine on War Initiation

Outbreak of War. We judge the Soviets believe that a period of crisis—possibly of very short duration but probably lasting weeks and even months—will precede a war. The Soviets generally dismiss the notions of an accidental outbreak of a major war or a massive attack launched outside the context of a major crisis. However, as a result of NATO's improved capabilities, the Soviets have expressed a growing concern

that their opportunity to detect enemy preparations for an attack may have grown shorter. Soviet emphasis on defensive operations in their training, while undertaken for a variety of reasons, is consistent with the assessment that the Pact may have less warning and mobilization time than it previously believed. Nevertheless, we believe that the Soviet military still has confidence in its ability to detect enemy preparations for war at a preliminary stage—early enough to take effective action to deprive the West of gaining significant advantage from surprise. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

Force Mobilization. The ability to mobilize large forces rapidly instead of maintaining immediate combat readiness of the entire force is the goal of Pact planners, based on their perception that a war in Europe will be preceded by a period of crisis. The Soviets expect that the forces of both sides will be fully or almost fully mobilized and prepared for combat before the onset of hostilities. We judge that Warsaw Pact theater forces positioned in Central Europe are maintained at sufficient readiness in peacetime to defend against a sudden attack and to act as a defensive shield to allow for the further mobilization and deployment of Pact forces. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

The Pact would take steps during a period of tension to allow for a faster mobilization and transition to higher stages of combat readiness as the situation became more threatening. We estimate that the Soviets currently need at least two to three weeks to fully prepare their current forces in Central Europe for sustained offensive operations at authorized wartime strength. ~~(S-NF-NC)~~

We judge that, at the same time, situations could occur during the prehostilities phase that would convince the Soviets to launch a preemptive attack before reaching full mobilization. Such circumstances might include the belief that their mobilization progress had permitted them a decisive, albeit temporary, advantage in relative force preparedness. Alternatively, concern that NATO's buildup was shifting the correlation of forces against the Pact could persuade the Soviets to attack. After the announced force reductions are completed by 1991, however, Soviet capabilities to attack from a condition of partial mobilization

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will be significantly reduced. Therefore, by the early 1990s, the likelihood that the Warsaw Pact would exercise such an option will decline accordingly.

~~(S/NF/NC)~~

In addition to diminishing Soviet capabilities for conducting a short-warning attack, Gorbachev's proposed force reductions in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone—particularly the 50-percent tank cut in Central Europe—will have a significant effect on the preparation time required for the Warsaw Pact to conduct offensive operations against NATO. Substantial reinforcement of Soviet forces in Central Europe by units from the western USSR and the mobilization of the logistic support structure are already required to launch a sustained theater offensive operation. Tank reductions in the forward area on the announced scale will create the need for even greater reinforcement. The scale of the reinforcement required to conduct a deep theater offensive operation will vary with the structure selected for the forces remaining in Central Europe. Although forces for a theater offensive operation will still be available, the bulk of two fronts will have to be moved forward from the Soviet Union before the onset of offensive operations. This movement will increase the preparation time beyond the two to three weeks we currently assess the Soviets require to prepare their forces for a sustained theater offensive. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

Resource Allocations to the Military

Although he came to power intent on restructuring the Soviet economy, Gorbachev did not initially order cutbacks in military programs. In fact, our estimates of Soviet defense spending since 1985 indicate that it has continued to grow in real terms by about 3 percent per year. Thus far, we have not seen any scaling back or stretching out of major weapons development or production programs that can be directly linked to Gorbachev's economic initiatives. Gorbachev's announcement, however, that overall defense spending will be reduced by 14.2 percent and outlays for arms and equipment by 19.5 percent over the next two years indicates a significant change in the course of future defense spending. In addition, the defense industry has been directed to accelerate its contribution to the production of consumer and civilian investment goods. The cuts are clearly meant to help alleviate the economic burden of defense, and they could provide a meaningful boost to the civilian economy over the longer term. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

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In transferring resources from defense to civilian programs, Gorbachev probably will not limit the impact to any particular service or mission. A host of military, economic, domestic political, and foreign policy considerations will influence the implementation of spending cuts, and we believe that no element of the force will remain totally unscathed. We believe that we will get fairly clear signs early on of broad-based cuts in Soviet weapons procurement or changes in military activity, but measuring precise changes or the exact level of defense spending will be more difficult. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

Weapons Modernization

Even with a reduction in defense spending, the Soviets will continue to maintain the world's highest level of weapon production through the turn of the century. A steady stream of improved Soviet military technology developments will be available to Soviet planners and design engineers throughout this period. Indeed, the military's future development of high-technology weapons is dependent on the same technologies which *perestroika* is intended to improve. Nevertheless, we judge the major portion of Soviet systems projected through the year 2000 will involve evolutionary improvements in systems now in service, rather than dramatic technological breakthroughs. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

Manpower Issues

Since 1980, the number of draft-age males has declined, reflecting the demographic "echo" of the lower birthrate during World War II. The draft-age conscription pool reached its nadir in 1987, however, and, for the first time since the war, the USSR can count on a basically stable youth population. The shrunken conscript pool, nevertheless, has caused the Soviet military serious problems. It has had to lower its mental and physical standards significantly in order to provide the same number of draftees. In addition, the problems of managing a multiethnic military have become increasingly prominent. Soviet military writings have cited minorities' lower educational achievement, Russian language deficiencies, and higher levels of ethnic tension within units. The announced reduction of 500,000 personnel in the Soviet military—nearly 10 percent of the 5.5 million estimate of Soviet military manpower—should alleviate somewhat the military's difficulties in finding suitable conscripts to fulfill manpower requirements. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

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[REDACTED] we stated unconditionally that the Warsaw Pact's logistic structure in Central Europe could support 60 to 90 days of combat operations against NATO. We now judge, however, that overall Pact sustainability will depend to a significant extent on how long NATO's defenses hold and whether NATO can seal off any breakthroughs:

- If Pact forces break through NATO defenses in three days and reach their immediate frontal objectives by D+14 or 15, we judge that sufficient ammunition stocks exist within the Western TMO to support fully such a campaign for 60 to 90 days.
- If Pact forces require about a week of high-intensity operations to achieve a major breakthrough, the Pact's total stocks in the Western TMO could support combat operations for approximately 60 to 75 days.
- If Pact forces require about two weeks of high-intensity operations to achieve a breakthrough or if NATO manages to seal any earlier major Pact breakthrough, the Pact would not have enough ammunition in the Western TMO to sustain combat operations beyond 30 to 45 days. (S NF NC)

If confronted with the prospect of a shortfall in ammunition supply, Pact leaders would adjust wartime plans to avoid, or at least minimize, any adverse impact on combat operations. In addition, the Soviets would move stocks from elsewhere, such as the Strategic Reserve, to the Western TMO. (S NF NC)

Future Soviet General Purpose Forces

Although the Soviets have announced that they will cut their general purpose forces, defense spending, and defense production over the next two years, we believe that the Soviets are determined to maintain large general purpose forces through the period of this Estimate. In addition to supporting their claim to be a superpower, the Soviets believe such forces are necessary to deter aggression, to carry out wartime missions, and to underwrite their political objectives in the region. We judge that these factors will continue to guide Soviet force development in the future. Absent a far-reaching conventional arms control agreement, the Soviets will maintain the capability to

conduct large-scale offensive operations deep into NATO territory, but only after general mobilization. Furthermore, for the period of this Estimate, Pact forces, led by the USSR, will remain the largest aggregation of military power in the world, and the Soviets will remain committed to the offensive as the preferred form of operations in wartime. (S NF NC)

Ground Forces. The Soviet Ground Forces are the largest element of Soviet general purpose forces, and their development largely determines the overall direction of theater forces development. We see no evidence that either of these conditions will change. Cuts in the size of the ground forces announced by the Soviets, however, signal a significant change in the overall developmental path of the force. Before the announcement, the Soviet ground forces were expected to grow gradually in their overall size. The cuts—the most sizable since the early 1960s—diverge considerably from existing trends, and they alter significantly our forecast of future Soviet forces. Ambiguity persists concerning the actual implementation of announced force cuts and the restructuring of forces remaining after the withdrawal into what the Soviets term a “clearly defensive” orientation. We now judge, nevertheless, that a 25-year period of Soviet ground force growth has ended, and that the force will experience a decline in its overall size that could very well go beyond the magnitude of that already announced by the Soviets. We further judge a resumption of force growth, barring an unforeseen deterioration in the international environment, to be highly unlikely before the turn of the century. (S NF NC)

Our assessment of current trends in Soviet force development leads us to conclude that restructured combined-arms formations based on mechanized infantry and tanks supported by artillery have replaced predominantly tank formations as the main component of land combat power. We believe this trend toward combined-arms formations will continue, but we cannot predict with any certainty the final organization of these units. (S NF NC)

The Soviet ground forces are fielding new equipment in virtually every weapon category. This pattern of weapon modernization will continue for the foreseeable future but at a slower pace than in the past:

- The Soviets probably have begun fielding a tank referred to by the Intelligence Community as the

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Future Soviet Tank-I (FST-I), with the capability to fire antitank guided missiles through its main gun. A new design, the FST-II, is expected to reach serial production by the mid-1990s. It will likely incorporate incremental improvements over previous designs and may, in addition, have a larger caliber gun.⁶

- In addition to improving the firepower and protection of their current infantry fighting vehicles, the Soviets should field a new IFV within the next year. A new armored personnel carrier also is under development. These new systems are designed to have improved protection and firepower and reflect the increasing role for these systems in Soviet combined-arms operations against NATO.
 - The Soviets will field several new models of tube artillery by the end of the century. Primary improvements will include fully automatic ammunition loaders, new fire-control systems, increased armor protection, improved metallurgy for the cannon and chassis, and a longer tube for greater range in some models. In addition, the Soviets are developing improved artillery munitions.
 - The Soviets will continue their ambitious short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) research and development program, and we project that they will continue to expand and modernize their tactical nuclear forces by improving the accuracy of their missiles and fielding an extended-range SS-21 and a solid-fueled follow-on to the Scud. A series of improved conventional munition warheads also are being developed to improve the effectiveness of SRBMs in conventional operations.
 - The Soviets are projected to field several new air defense weapons to maximize their future air defense capabilities against helicopters and high-performance aircraft. Improvements will include improved seekers for better low-altitude engagement capability, multiple engagement radar, and more lethal warheads. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~
- Air Forces.* Even before Gorbachev's announcement of force cuts, we had expected the size of the Soviets' air forces to remain relatively constant as they attempted to catch up with the West qualitatively. We now judge that the air forces will be maintained at their postreduction levels until after the turn of the century. We also judge that the Soviets will continue to modernize their air forces, albeit more slowly, during the period of this Estimate in an attempt to narrow major technological gaps with the West. There is considerable uncertainty, nevertheless, over how the Soviets will implement the announced reduction in aircraft and how the air forces will implement spending and procurement cuts. Senior Soviet military leaders have placed great importance on retaining approximate air parity in the Central European air balance, and they have emphasized the importance of new weapon systems in developmental programming:
- Modernization of the Soviet fighter force probably will be based almost entirely on variants of the Fulcrum, Foxhound, and Flanker. We judge that the first follow-on fighter to appear would probably be a Fulcrum replacement.
 - The Soviets will most likely continue to modernize their medium bomber force with improved variants of the Backfire, and we estimate that a new medium bomber will succeed the Backfire about the turn of the century. We further project that a new light bomber, XXXXXXXXXX will begin to replace strategic aviation Fencer aircraft in the mid-1990s.
 - The Fencer probably will continue to replace less capable fighter-bombers in front aviation ground attack units into the early to mid-1990s. We estimate that the Soviets will develop a new fighter-bomber around the turn of the century. This aircraft would probably have a substantial payload-radius capability, incorporate low-observable technology to improve its survivability, and be equipped with advanced navigation and weapons delivery avionics.

⁶ The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, US Army, believes that FST-II may have an unconventional design, possibly with a reduced turret. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

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- The Mystic high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft is expected to enter service in the early 1990s. The Soviets are also augmenting their aerial reconnaissance capability by fielding a family of drones, including the soon-to-be-fielded DR-X-4.
- The Hind continues to be the workhorse of the Soviet attack helicopter force, and variants with improved capabilities continue to replace older models. Two new armed helicopters, the Hokum and Havoc may begin deployment in the early 1990s. Developmental programs are under way for a medium-tiltrotor and a heavy-tiltrotor helicopter, but they are unlikely to be fielded in significant numbers during the period of this Estimate.
- A new V/STOL aircraft is under development, and it may enter service with the Soviet air forces. The Soviets are also developing Stealth aircraft including a bomber and a fighter-bomber. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

The Soviet strategic bomber force is currently undergoing its second reorganization of this decade. While we do not yet have enough evidence to firmly determine the intent or operational significance of the latest reorganization, it appears designed to give the Soviets greater flexibility in allocating heavy bombers between theater and intercontinental missions.

~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Soviet Homeland Air Defense Forces

The Soviets are continuing to modernize their Strategic Air Defense Force including the air surveillance network, the interceptor force, and the surface-to-air missile (SAM) force. This effort, with its emphasis on systems with good capabilities against low-altitude targets, appears to be focused on two main objectives: the development of a long-range capability to shoot down cruise missile carriers before they can release their weapons, and the development of a terminal defense to intercept penetrators that make it through the outer barrier. In addition to improving the capabilities of their current interceptor force, we expect the Soviets to deploy follow-ons to the Fulcrum, Flanker, and Foxhound over the next 10 to 15 years. Performance improvements on the follow-ons will include a radar capable of tracking multiple targets with small radar cross sections in lookdown operations, better maneuverability, and—in the Foxhound

follow-on—a capability to intercept cruise-missile-carrying aircraft before they can launch their missiles. The SA-10 system, including future modifications, will dominate strategic SAM force modernization through the next 10 years. An SA-5 follow-on is projected to begin deployment in the 1990s, but we are unsure whether it will be a modification or a new design. In addition, the Soviets will develop one or more lasers with an air defense application, including those capable of causing structural damage and damage to electro-optical sensors.

~~(S, NF, NC)~~

The Soviets have reorganized their Strategic Air Defense Forces in the peripheral areas of the USSR by giving them back to the national air defense system. This probably was brought about by national air defense authorities to ensure that they controlled the forces required for territorial defense, and perhaps also to improve the responsiveness of Soviet air defenses to peacetime airspace violations. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Naval Forces. Although we do not know how the personnel and budget cuts announced by Gorbachev will be apportioned among the five services, these reductions could have a significant effect on the Soviet Navy's size and mix of forces. The Navy may be trying initially to meet some of its personnel and overall budget reductions by further reducing its operational tempo and retiring older combatants, and the Soviets have already accelerated the rate at which they are scrapping older surface combatants and submarines. Retirements, however, will have no impact on the Navy's need to cut procurement expenditures, and some major programs may have to be reduced, stretched out over time, or eliminated altogether. Surface combatants are likely to take the largest share of "hardware" cuts because of the traditional Soviet bias in favor of submarines and the fact that surface combatants are the most manpower intensive naval systems. Despite such reductions, we expect to see the Soviets continue to make qualitative improvements in their Navy that focus on its most important mission areas. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

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We see no significant operational change in Soviet naval support for land TMOs. We anticipate the slow continuation of several naval organizational and weapon trends that should provide land theater commanders with more capable forces for combined-arms operations as a major wartime task of the Soviet Navy. Chief among these are:

- Integration of the newly developed SS-N-21 long-range land-attack nuclear submarine-launched cruise missile in theater nuclear strike plans. The high-altitude SS-NX-24 is now in development and it will also have a theater mission when it is initially deployed in the early 1990s.
- Continuing efforts to develop more effective sea-borne air defenses against enemy aircraft armed with air-launched cruise missiles or improved air-to-surface missiles.
- Continued gradual replacement of older naval Tu-16 Badgers with Tu-22M Backfire-C bombers, giving Soviet naval aviation greater potential for in-theater maritime strikes. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Forces

Following the Soviets' lead, and undoubtedly with Moscow's approval, all non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) countries, except Romania, announced force and defense spending reductions in January 1989. As in the Soviet case, there is a mixture of economic, political, and military considerations to these decisions. Nevertheless, we judge that weaknesses in the NSWP economies constituted the primary motivation for their decision to cut forces and defense spending. The reductions, however, do not represent as sharp a departure in force and spending trends as represented by the Soviet cuts. NSWP military procurement began slowing in the mid-1970s, and it has dropped significantly since the early 1980s. NSWP force size has been largely static since the 1970s. For these reasons, we had projected no force growth and slow rates of modernization even before the cuts were announced. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

NSWP force cuts range between 5 and 20 percent of currently assessed force levels, and we judge that virtually all equipment cuts will be taken in older

equipment that dominates the NSWP inventory (see the table on page 5). While considerable uncertainty exists regarding the individual impact of defense spending and procurement cuts on the armed forces' acquisition of newer equipment, we project that rates of modernization will slow beyond their already gradual pace. This may be offset somewhat by the reduced size of the NSWP forces and the elimination of the oldest equipment in their inventories. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

NSWP countries maintain important defense industries, and their role in weapons production has increased substantially. They now account for about one-fifth of total Pact land arms production (a much smaller share of aircraft and ships), although the equipment they produce tends to be relatively less sophisticated and easier to manufacture than systems simultaneously in production in Soviet plants. We believe that, over the next decade, the Soviets expect NSWP industry to relieve Soviet industry of more of the burden of equipping NSWP forces while providing increased support for the modernization of Soviet industry. ~~(S/NF/NC)~~

We foresee modest improvements in NSWP forces during the projections period that, while insufficient to close the modernization gap between their forces and Soviet force standards in Eastern Europe, will enable them to fulfill important roles in Warsaw Pact plans for war against NATO. We project NSWP forces will gradually modernize their equipment and reorganize along Soviet lines through the end of this century:

- Ground force equipment modernization will consist primarily of T-72 series tanks, self-propelled artillery, surface-to-air missiles, and newer infantry fighting vehicles. Major restructuring may occur in the ground forces which could follow the lines adopted by the Hungarian ground forces.
- NSWP air force modernization will be a gradual process. The ground attack replacement is the Fitter-K, while the air defense forces will be improved through the fielding of the Fulcrum.

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- The NSWP countries with naval forces do not appear willing or able to significantly increase their naval expenditures. Over the long term, older and less capable weapon systems in the inventories of the NSWP navies gradually will be replaced by more capable systems, though on a less than 1-for-1 basis due to budget constraints. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

The Soviets almost certainly are resigned to accept NSWP force inadequacies, and we judge that they will continue to tolerate such deficiencies while insisting that the most glaring faults be rectified. The Soviets almost certainly are aware of the operational price they will pay if their NSWP allies are not able to perform their assigned missions alongside Soviet forces. The impact of these force deficiencies on operational planning will become more apparent to the Soviets after their force reductions in Central Europe and the western USSR are completed. In general, we forecast that the uneasy, and at times strained, relationship that exists between the Soviets and their allies regarding force modernization and reorganization will remain for the foreseeable future. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Soviet Policy Toward NATO

The major objective of Soviet policy toward NATO is to reduce European governmental and popular support for increased defense spending that would support NATO's force modernization program. If this policy is successful, it would reduce internal Soviet perceptions of the NATO threat, thereby enabling Gorbachev to make major shifts of resources from the defense to the civil sector without being accused of reducing Warsaw Pact security. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Soviet and Warsaw Pact policy toward NATO for the foreseeable future will likely follow two interrelated tracks. First, the Pact will engage the West in arms control negotiations at all levels. Second, it will pursue an aggressive course of public diplomacy, active measures, and unilateral initiatives aimed at influencing NATO governments and electorates to reduce defense spending and slow NATO modernization. Warsaw Pact public diplomacy will also exploit popular opposition in Western Europe to current NATO out-of-country basing policies and publicly burdensome NATO military training programs. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Warsaw Pact foreign policy over the period of this Estimate can also be expected to support another Soviet objective vis-a-vis NATO: the weakening of the position of the United States and Canada within the North Atlantic Alliance. In addition to reducing the apparent threat from the Soviet Union in the eyes of West Europeans—thus reducing the need for NATO's continued dependence on the United States—the Soviets will encourage other NATO members to deal directly with the Soviet Union. Warsaw Pact foreign policy will also complicate NATO's efforts to reach agreement on positions for the Conventional Stability Talks (CST). An apparently accommodating Soviet security policy will undermine tough Western bargaining positions in the CST and increase pressure on the NATO allies to meet Soviet negotiating concerns, such as NATO ground attack aircraft and forward based systems. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

A critical issue confronting NATO over the next decade is to identify, interpret, and react correctly to developments in Warsaw Pact general purpose forces. As decisions on the size and composition of Pact future general purpose forces become apparent, NATO will have to sort out the real from the declared changes in Warsaw Pact capabilities and intentions. Furthermore, NATO will have to accomplish this in an environment of increasing public skepticism about the Warsaw Pact "threat" and sagging support for NATO defense spending. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Even under the most favorable conditions of East-West relations over the course of this Estimate, NATO can expect to face a formidable Pact military force. We judge that military forces will remain, from the USSR's perspective, the primary basis of its superpower status. Thus, despite significant shifts of resources from the defense sector, the Soviet Union will continue to plan for and invest heavily in its general purpose forces while seeking to build a more capable economy to underpin Soviet military capabilities in the future. ~~(S, NF, NC)~~

Alternative Judgment. The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, while recognizing the significance of the ongoing changes in the Soviet Union, believes the

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likelihood of large unilateral reductions in military expenditures beyond those already proclaimed by Soviet leaders is not as high as implied by the majority view in the Estimate, particularly for the longer term. Notwithstanding the potential importance of new developments in Soviet military policies discussed in this Estimate, the Director, DIA, believes that present evidence and future uncertainties make the elements of continuity in Soviet military policy as important as the changes for US national security and defense planning. (S-NF-NC)

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**17. M/H NIE 4-1-84, September 1989, *Warning of War in Europe:
Changing Warsaw Pact Planning and Forces* (Key Judgments only)**



**Director of
Central
Intelligence**

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Warning of War in Europe: Changing Warsaw Pact Planning and Forces

**National Intelligence Estimate
Memorandum to Holders.**

*This Memorandum to Holders represents
the views of the Director of Central Intelligence
with the advice and assistance of the
US Intelligence Community.*

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*NIE 4-1-84
September 1989*

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Director of
Central
Intelligence

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NIE 4-1-84

Warning of War in Europe: Changing Warsaw Pact Planning and Forces

*Information available as of 28 September 1989 was used
in the preparation of this Memorandum to Holders.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Memorandum:*

The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
The Director of Naval Intelligence,
Department of the Navy
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force
The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters,
Marine Corps

*This Memorandum was approved for publication by the
National Foreign Intelligence Board.*

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September 1989

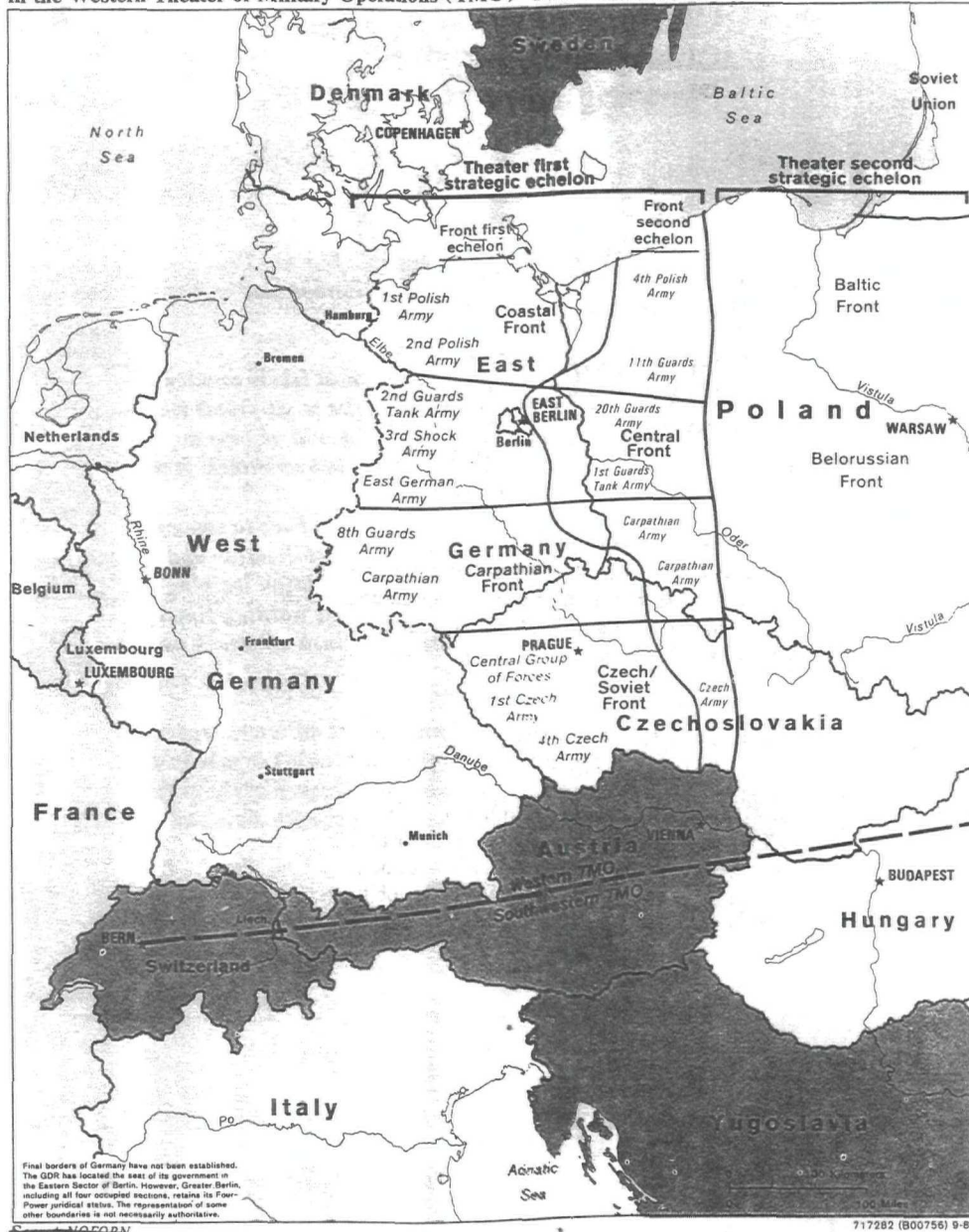
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Warning of War in Europe: Changing Warsaw Pact Planning and Forces (U)

- *The warning times we associate with possible Warsaw Pact preparations for war with NATO in Central Europe have increased significantly from those set forth in 1984. ~~(S-NE)~~*
- *Pact military planners would prefer and are most likely to attempt to conduct a well-prepared attack involving five to six fronts with four fronts in the first strategic echelon. We should be able to provide about four to five weeks of warning of such an attack. ~~(S-NE)~~*
- *We recognize that circumstances could cause the Pact to commit its forces to an attack after the completion of mobilization and movement, but before completing the postmobilization training necessary for minimum offensive proficiency. The warning times would be shorter, but the Soviets would judge such an attack as highly risky. ~~(S-NE)~~*
- *Announced Soviet and non-Soviet Warsaw Pact unilateral reductions, if completed, and given no reduction in NATO capabilities, should significantly extend preparation time because of the greater need in the first echelon for currently low-strength divisions from the western USSR. ~~(S-NE)~~*

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NOFORN-NOCONTRACT

Figure 1
Projected Warsaw Pact Echelons
in the Western Theater of Military Operations (TMO)—Four-Front Attack



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Key Judgments

The warning times we associate with possible Warsaw Pact preparations for war with NATO in Central Europe have increased significantly from those set forth in NIE 4-1-84. These changes are a direct consequence of Soviet assessments of improved NATO military capability, our improved understanding of the Soviet process of transitioning to war, and changes in Soviet peacetime readiness. Accordingly, before unilateral force reductions, we assess that:

- Pact military planners would prefer and are most likely to attempt to conduct a well-prepared attack involving five to six fronts with four fronts in the first strategic echelon. We should be able to provide about four to five weeks of warning of such an attack. The increased time needed to prepare this attack option results from increased reliance in the first echelon on "not ready" divisions from the western USSR.
- An attack with three fronts in the first echelon remains a possibility in some circumstances. We should be able to provide about two to three weeks of warning of such an attack. Our assessment of the increased time needed to prepare these fronts for sustained offensive operations results from new judgments about the time required to prepare Soviet forces based in Eastern Europe.
- We recognize that circumstances could cause the Pact to commit its forces to an attack after the completion of mobilization and movement but before completing postmobilization training necessary for minimum proficiency for offensive operations. If so, we could provide at least two weeks of warning of a four-front attack or at least one week warning of a less likely three-front attack. We believe, however, the Soviets would judge attacks before completion of postmobilization training as highly risky because of the reliance on reserves lacking such training.

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Figure 2
Announced Warsaw Pact Unilateral Force Reductions
in the Western Theater of Military Operations



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Announced Soviet and non-Soviet Warsaw Pact unilateral force reductions, if completed, should significantly extend preparation time because of the greater need in the first echelon for currently low-strength divisions from the western USSR. Warning of our assessed most likely attack option—four fronts in the first echelon—would increase by about two weeks. If the Soviets elected to attack after only mobilization and movement, warning times would increase by almost a week.

These preparation and warning times after unilateral reductions assume that NATO capabilities remain at current levels. Unilateral NATO reductions could diminish Pact perception of their requirements for success and, therefore, reduce warning time.

The ongoing Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Talks are likely to result in an agreement establishing numerical parity between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces below current NATO levels within the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone. From peacetime parity, the Soviets would have to reestablish major forces in order to generate the capability to attack successfully and sustain the offensive to the depth of the theater. This requirement would increase preparation time considerably over what we have assessed in this Memorandum. Alternatively, the Soviets could increase the readiness and combat power of residual forces through higher manning levels and acquisition of modern equipment. This would require reinvesting the savings achieved by reducing their forces under CFE into defense and restructuring their forces and redistributing their equipment. These smaller forces would be capable of launching attacks for limited objectives with warning times more like we are accustomed to today. We do not believe such attacks for limited objectives would be attractive to Pact planners because the risks, to include escalation to nuclear war, would far outweigh any potential short-term gains.

We are confident that for the period of this Estimate we will be able to detect and report significant disruptions or a reversal of present political, social, and economic trends in the Warsaw Pact countries. Although these indicators will remain ambiguous with regard to actual national war preparations, they will continue to signal that the potential for a crisis had increased.

~~This information is Secret NoFORN~~

18. NIC M 89-10002, September 1989, *The Post-CFE Environment in Europe*

National Intelligence Council

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Memorandum

**The Post-CFE Environment
in Europe**

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NIC M 89-10002
September 1989
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18. (Continued)

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NIC M 89-10002

The Post-CFE Environment in Europe (U)

Information available as of 1 September 1989
was used in the preparation of this
Memorandum, which was prepared by the
National Intelligence Officers for General Purpose
Forces, USSR, and Europe. ~~for~~

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September 1989

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Key Judgments

- The era following the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Talks will be a transitional period in Europe, marked by the reevaluation and redefinition of longstanding economic, political, and military relationships between and within the existing alliances. ~~(S-NT)~~
- The overall threat to NATO will diminish in a post-CFE environment, and barring a precipitous decline in NATO, the currently unfavorable balance of forces will be largely eliminated. Remaining Warsaw Pact forces will need even longer and more massive mobilization to be able to carry out deep strategic operations in Central Europe. ~~(S-NT)~~
- West European publics and leaders already perceive a reduced military threat from the Warsaw Pact and will expect continued attempts by the Soviet Union and its East European allies to focus on political and economic relationships with the West, reduce the size of their military forces, and shift resources from defense to civil production. ~~(S-NT)~~
- Continued US leadership of NATO will be challenged by the emergence of a stronger Eurocentric approach emphasizing the importance of political and economic over military matters as West European concerns about the Warsaw Pact threat diminish, and domestic pressures for reallocating defense budgets to civilian needs, such as the environment, and emphasis on East-West cooperation rather than confrontation increase. ~~(S-NT)~~
- There will be an increased prospect of instability in some East European countries if their economies fail to improve significantly—a likely prospect if they are unable to profitably exploit their greater access to the West. ~~(S-NT)~~

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Discussion¹

Intelligence Community analysts believe that the next decade—following the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) talks—will likely see long-established military, political, and economic relationships between and among European nations and their superpower partners reevaluated and redefined. CFE is an important element in a larger process of enhanced West European economic integration, the assertion of independent European political interests, and the political and economic reforms and reallocations under way in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Excepting upheaval in Eastern Europe, Community analysts foresee more direct policy concerns for the United States emerging from the changes in Western Europe than from those in either Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. ~~(S-NF)~~

Post-CFE Warsaw Pact military forces will be incapable, without significant, costly, and time-consuming mobilization, of carrying out the deep strategic operations in Central Europe that have been characteristic of Soviet military planning for several decades. Both the East and the West will be forced to revise their views of war in Europe; current Soviet military reductions and restructuring probably reflect the early stages of such a reevaluation process. Although Soviet strategy and doctrine are clearly changing in reaction to new political instructions and economic imperatives, their final shape is not yet discernible. Nevertheless, Soviet military objectives against NATO would be likely to be much more limited, replacing those of the traditional Theater Strategic Operation, which projects Soviet military operations throughout Western Europe. ~~(S-NF)~~

¹ This Memorandum synthesizes the results of three meetings convened in mid-August 1989 by the National Intelligence Council to discuss Intelligence Community analysts' views of the military, political, and economic implications of a post-CFE Europe. Recognizing the great uncertainties posed by the current political environment in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the discussion focused on projected conditions in the latter half of the 1990s, with the assumption of a CFE agreement based on current proposals. Although coordinated, this memorandum is speculative and not limited to evidence on hand. ~~(S-NF)~~

Post-CFE Soviet forces—although smaller—may be on average better equipped, depending on the Soviet's willingness to reinvest potential savings into the military. Some analysts believe that through this modernization and restructuring the Soviet's readiness posture is likely to improve. Despite potential improvements, however, the overall military threat to NATO will diminish, and, unless there is a precipitous decline in NATO forces, the currently unfavorable balance of forces would be largely eliminated. Under the Warsaw Pact's proposal, a CFE agreement would force the Pact to give up nearly half of its reinforcement capability in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone; NATO's reinforcement capability, however, would be significantly less affected. Further, the Soviet Union will not likely be able to regenerate rapidly the force structure required for deep offensive operations. Strategic surprise in Europe, therefore, will be even less likely, although tactical surprise would remain possible, for example, to obtain limited objectives. ~~(S-NF)~~

Overall, there will be a continued shift in Soviet emphasis away from military power and toward political and economic interaction with the West. Through CFE, Gorbachev apparently intends to validate the basic assumption of his "new" foreign policy line: that national security will no longer be founded primarily on military strength but on a broader based combination of diplomacy, negotiation, economic power, and military strength. ~~(S-NF)~~

On the NATO side, political and budgetary constraints together with perceptions of a reduced Soviet threat will result in a decreasing commitment by European nations to the maintenance of large standing forces, leading to continued force reductions, beyond those agreed to at the CFE Talks. Depending on where such additional cuts were taken, and how far they went in relation to Pact forces, such reductions

18. (Continued)

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would probably force major changes in NATO's defense strategy. Simultaneously, a CFE agreement would contribute to the political momentum toward denuclearization in Europe and lead to changes in Alliance nuclear use policies. In general, the post-CFE situation will be dynamic as both military alliances develop new objectives and strategies and design and field forces to implement them. ~~(S-NF)~~

In a post-CFE Europe, the Soviet Union's dominant role in most of Eastern Europe will decline significantly and depend primarily on formal adherence to the Warsaw Pact and economic ties. East European countries will also become increasingly independent. This could weaken the military rationale for the Warsaw Pact and precipitate increased East European pressure to reorient the Pact toward more of a political alliance. ~~(S-NF)~~

Moscow's East European allies, lacking strong Bloc identity, will probably prefer to establish individual bilateral relations with West European nations. With Soviet military presence and political influence in Eastern Europe reduced, the reliability of the political underpinnings of the current military and economic relationships such as the Warsaw Pact and CEMA will be called into question. Traditional national animosities and historical grievances among the East European countries—already reemerging as the imposed Bloc identity recedes—will worsen in the post-CFE era. If military drawdowns through CFE proceed too quickly—contributing to mounting internal and external pressures for reform—this could lead to social and political unrest in one or more of the East European regimes and result in a regime crackdown that could stall East-West relations. ~~(S-NF)~~

In contrast, events within the European Community (EC)—notably 1992 market integration and significant progress toward European political cooperation—are bolstering and broadening the West European sense of common purpose and community. As West European countries move away from their dependence on a US-led Atlantic Alliance and toward a more intra-European perspective, they will become increasingly parochial in their security concerns and less prone to take a US view. They may attempt to craft a "Common European House" built to EC

rather than Soviet or US specifications. EC member states' vested interests in an economically strong, politically cohesive EC would prevent the admission of any current CEMA state during the next decade. The Council of Europe is the more likely venue for trans-European policy dialogue and cooperation. ~~(S-NF)~~



CFE will strengthen widely held perceptions among West Europeans of a diminished threat. In the aftermath of a CFE agreement, there will be an increased number of politically powerful voices in the West calling into question the need for military alliances. But as long as there remains a substantial—even though reduced—US military presence in Europe, however, the broad foundations of NATO will essentially remain intact. Even in countries where anti-nuclear sentiments and pro-arms-control views are strongest, the majority of the public today still favors membership in NATO. ~~(S-NF)~~

On the economic side, CFE will contribute to a more positive environment for East-West trade, although the continued presence of cumbersome bureaucracies and trade barriers will hinder prospects for significantly increased trade. The East Europeans are anxious to expand economic relationships, singly and in groups, with the European Community. They are unlikely, however, either to increase trade rapidly or to take advantage of technology transfer to offset adverse economic conditions. Some analysts feel that the West European nations are already beginning to

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determine what they could do to improve the East European economies and would continue to do so. Most believe, however, that the EC nations, though conscious of East European need for economic assistance and outside investment, now appear unwilling and unable to provide investment or economic assistance in large enough quantities to achieve long-term fundamental changes in the economic relationship. Despite some interest on the part of the West Europeans, most believe that they are unlikely to make the massive investment needed to assist East European economies. Individual East European nations will also have to contend with the unified decision apparatus represented by the EC with no counterpart economic coalition to represent their interests. Indeed, CEMA will become increasingly ineffective in the projected environment, as individual East European nations seek to expand their own relations based on economic needs and potential. ~~(S NF)~~

The likely effects of CFE on the Soviet Union's economy are less clear. CFE could have enormous implications over time for the Soviet economy, particularly in terms of reduced resources devoted to defense production. Because the Soviet Union spends more than three times more on conventional forces than it does on strategic offensive nuclear forces, a CFE accord offers the potential for much greater resource savings and industrial reorientation than the INF and START agreements combined. Savings can be realized in procurement, force structure, operations and maintenance expenditures, and manpower utilization. Overall, a CFE agreement could allow the Soviets to save up to 15-18 billion rubles per year, or

about 15 percent of total investment and operating expenditures. To put such savings into perspective, the amount is almost equal to Soviet investment in the critical machine-building sector and over half the amount invested in housing. ~~(S NF)~~

At the same time, problems in the Soviet economy and the requirements of future forces will probably prevent the Soviets from realizing the full economic benefits of CFE. There is considerable doubt about the ability of the Soviets to effectively redistribute resources from defense to civilian uses. Factors inhibiting conversion include reluctance to reorient military research and development programs; difficulties in transferring skilled workers from military industries and absorbing released military manpower into the already inefficient and underemployed Soviet industrial labor pool; and the technical problems involved in converting specialized industrial processes. Moreover, an unknown percentage of these savings, in the early years, would have to be spent on modernization and restructuring stemming from shifts in Soviet strategy and weapons requirements. For example, some Soviet officials have stated that, in keeping with the new defensive doctrine, greater emphasis will be placed on "defensive" weapons. Other modernization and potential increases in the costs of maintaining residual forces at higher levels of readiness—should the Soviets do so—could also cut into the projected savings. ~~(S NF)~~

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19. NIC M 89-10003, October 1989, *Status of Soviet Unilateral Withdrawals*

National Intelligence Council

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Memorandum

**Status of Soviet
Unilateral Withdrawals**

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NIC M 89-10003
October 1989

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19. (Continued)

NIC M 89-10003

Status of Soviet Unilateral Withdrawals (U)

Information available as of 1 September 1989 was used in the preparation of this Memorandum, which was prepared by the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. The Memorandum was coordinated with representatives of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency; coordination was chaired by the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces.

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Status of Soviet Unilateral Withdrawals ~~(U)~~

- *Soviet reductions in Eastern Europe are proceeding in a manner consistent with Gorbachev's commitment; they will result in a significant reduction in the combat capability of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe.*
- *Current Soviet activities comprise four simultaneous processes: withdrawal, reduction, restructuring, and modernization.*
- *In Eastern Europe the Soviets, at roughly halfway through the period, have withdrawn about 50 percent of the equipment and units promised. Percentages are much lower for reductions in the overall Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone and for east of the Urals.*
- *Soviet restructuring and modernization activities will produce a smaller, more versatile, standing force optimized for defense, but still capable of smaller scale offensive operations.*

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Discussion

This paper presents the latest assessment of the ongoing unilateral Soviet withdrawal of forces from Eastern Europe and reductions in the so-called Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) zone. It provides the latest figures of forces withdrawn and reduced, the current understanding of the restructuring of the forces remaining, and the best estimates of the factors affecting the combat capabilities and potential missions of those residual forces.

We have reached two bottom-line judgments. First, we believe that the Soviet withdrawal is real and that it will result in a reduction in the combat capability of the remaining Soviet forces in Eastern Europe; second, all of the changes we are seeing, and those we anticipate, are consistent with our understanding of General Secretary Gorbachev's policy objectives—reducing Western perceptions of the Warsaw Pact threat, inducing a relaxation in NATO's defense efforts, achieving an agreement on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), and lowering the defense economic burden on the USSR.

Although "withdrawal" or "reduction" are the terms generally associated with the current Soviet activity, there are actually four processes occurring simultaneously: first, a *withdrawal* of Soviet units and equipment from the traditional "forward areas" in Eastern Europe; second, a *reduction* in the overall Soviet force posture, with a particular emphasis on those areas facing NATO; third, a *restructuring* of the remaining forces intended to bring their capabilities into line with anticipated missions, objectives, and conditions; and, fourth, a continuation of programmatic *modernization* intended to raise the combat effectiveness of Soviet forces. All of this activity is totally unilateral. The Soviets are under no formal obligation to carry through and are free to adjust the process as they proceed. Nevertheless, Gorbachev has a strong interest in demonstrating that he is fulfilling his promises.

In assessing what is going on, the best place to start is with the dramatic 7 December 1988 speech at the UN by Gorbachev. He made the following key statements of Soviet intentions, that over the next two years the Soviets would:

- *Reduce* the overall size of their armed forces by 500,000 personnel.
- *Reduce* the size of their forces in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary by 50,000 persons and 5,000 tanks. This was later increased to 5,300 tanks with the inclusion of reductions in Soviet forces in Poland.
- *Reduce* 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems, and 800 combat aircraft from Eastern Europe and the Western USSR (the ATTU zone).
- *Withdraw and disband* six tank divisions from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.
- *Withdraw* assault landing formations and units and assault river crossing forces.
- *Restructure* the remaining forces to present an "unambiguously defensive" posture.

He made additional promises concerning Asia.

Gorbachev's speech was met with many questions and much skepticism in the West. Between late December and late February, official Soviet spokesmen asserted that the six Soviet divisions to be withdrawn from Eastern Europe would be withdrawn in their entirety, that all of their combat equipment would be destroyed, and that the other tanks removed from Eastern Europe would be destroyed or converted.

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As the withdrawals and restructuring have progressed, it has become increasingly clear that, although the Soviets are generally moving toward meeting Gorbachev's initial commitments, they are not being implemented in the manner described by some subsequent spokesmen. The tank regiments, other units, and all of the tanks of the three divisions scheduled for removal in 1989 have been withdrawn, along with many tanks from other divisions. Other units—and almost all of the artillery and armored troop carriers—however—are being used in the restructuring of the remaining divisions, each of which is losing two battalions of tanks as one tank regiment is converted to a motorized rifle regiment. Moreover, the tanks being removed from Eastern Europe are not being destroyed.

The Soviets are beginning to acknowledge deviations from some of their statements, but they have still not been entirely forthcoming about some of the consequences, notably:

- That the artillery in the remaining divisions is being increased by the addition of one artillery battalion in tank divisions and that artillery battalions in divisions are being expanded from 18 to 24 guns.
- That the restructuring of the remaining divisions may eventually require the introduction of some 2,000 additional armored troop carriers.

Most of what the Soviets are doing makes military sense. Indeed, it is generally what we would have expected until the Soviets began making additional statements. Despite these deviations, the overall result will still be a very significant reduction in the offensive combat power of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe.

How close have the Soviets come to meeting Gorbachev's 7 December promises as we approach the midway point? Tables 1-3 illustrate our answer. Table 1 provides the scorecard for forces withdrawn from Eastern Europe. Column one gives the reportable items; column two, the total number of those items in that area as of 1 January 1989; column three, the specific reductions announced for each of the items; column four, the reductions the Soviets have announced as of 1 August 1989; column five, our assessment of reductions as of 1 September 1989; and, finally, column six provides the percentage that our

assessment represents of the total announced reduction. At halfway through the period, the percentages are in the neighborhood of 50 percent complete. We believe that up to 2,800 tanks; 180 combat aircraft; four air assault units; and two assault crossing units have been withdrawn; and three tank divisions have been removed from the force structure. No percentage is offered for artillery because no specific withdrawal of artillery from the forward area was promised in Gorbachev's speech.

Turning to table 2, we see a similar picture, although the percentages are somewhat reduced. For example, we have not detected that the Soviets have reduced the total number of tanks in the ATTU zone to the same degree that they have withdrawn the promised number of tanks from Eastern Europe. Finally, table 3 provides a picture of the status of the reductions from east of the Urals. Overall, the Soviets, within the limits of our ability to observe and assess, seem to be proceeding with the unilateral withdrawals as outlined by Gorbachev.

Questions have arisen concerning the spirit and letter of their promise. Are they doing what they promised? Is the force size really changing? Even if it is, are the residual Soviet forces more capable? In short, is there less here than meets the eye?

Let us look at the tank issue first. Following Gorbachev's 7 December speech, statements by Soviet officials indicated that most or all of the of the 5,300 tanks to be withdrawn from Eastern Europe would be destroyed and that most of the 4,700 others to be reduced in the western USSR would be converted to civilian use. Some subsequent statements have indicated that tanks would also be placed in storage or used to upgrade units. The inconsistency and ambiguity of these statements make it difficult to determine how many tanks the Soviets now intend to dismantle or destroy, but virtually all of them will be older models from within the USSR and not the relatively more modern tanks being withdrawn from Eastern Europe. Moreover, some evidence indicates that Moscow is planning to store a significant number of the tanks removed from units in the ATTU zone east of

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Table 1
Soviet Forces Withdrawn From Eastern Europe to the USSR

	Total in Units (As of 1 January 1989) ^b	Announced With- drawals (to be implemented by 1 January 1991)	Withdrawals Claimed (completed as of 1 August 1989)	Assessed With- drawals (as of 1 September 1989)	Percent of Announced Withdrawals Completed
Ground forces divisions	30	6	3	3 ^e	50
Tanks	10,600	5,300	2,700 to 3,100 ^d (1,988 from East Germany)	2,700 to 2,800 ^e (2,000 from East Germany)	51 to 53
Artillery	7,000 ^f	Unspecified	690 to 700 ^g (169 from East Germany)	36 ^h	
Combat aircraft	1,600 ⁱ	260 to 321 ^j	120 to 162 ^k	180	56 to 69
Air assault units	8	8	4	4 ^l	50
Assault crossing units	7	7	2	2 ^m	29
Manpower	600,000	50,000	31,800 ⁿ (11,400 from East Germany)		

^a This table includes forces the Soviets are removing from Eastern Europe. It does not include the disposition of these forces in the Soviet Union.

^b Aircraft totals are as of 1 January 1988.

^c Major elements of the 25th Tank Division (TD) and 32nd Guards Tank Division (GTD)—including all tanks and the air defense regiment, reconnaissance battalion, and multiple rocket launcher battalion from each division—have departed from East Germany. Both divisions transferred their motorized rifle regiment to another division, but a tank regiment from these divisions was removed in their place. Most of the artillery and virtually all motorized rifle elements from the 25th TD and 32nd GTD probably have been retained in East Germany to facilitate the restructuring of remaining Ground Forces units.

Major elements—and perhaps all—of the 13th Guards Tank Division have departed from their garrisons in Hungary. Only tanks from the division, however, have been identified at bases in the USSR.

^d Some Soviet spokesmen have indicated that from 2,700 to 3,100 tanks are being or have been withdrawn from "abroad." In each instance, their statements may include tanks removed from Eastern Europe and Mongolia. Most recently, another Soviet spokesman stated that some 2,700 tanks had departed from Eastern Europe.

^e Tanks from as many as five maneuver regiments and a tank training regiment may have departed from Hungary.

^f This total is for all Soviet artillery 100 mm and above, including mortars, multiple rocket launchers, and antitank guns.

^g Soviet spokesmen have stated that from 690 to 700 "guns" or artillery pieces have been withdrawn from "abroad." Their statements either specifically or probably include artillery removed from Eastern Europe and Mongolia.

^h Because of force restructuring requirements, most—perhaps all—self-propelled artillery pieces probably remain in Eastern Europe; some 36 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers were observed on railcars and apparently departed from East Germany.

ⁱ This total excludes helicopters and AWACS.

^j Soviet spokesmen have stated that from 260 to 321 combat aircraft will be removed from Eastern Europe.

^k Soviet spokesmen have stated that from 120 to 162 combat aircraft have been withdrawn from "abroad." Their statements either specifically or probably include aircraft removed from Eastern Europe and Mongolia.

^l In addition to the four air assault battalions apparently removed from Eastern Europe, the air assault brigade at Cottbus in East Germany is in the process of withdrawing and probably has been eliminated from the structure of the Western Group of Forces.

^m Some assets from withdrawn assault crossing battalions apparently have been reassigned to units remaining in East Germany.

ⁿ Soviet spokesmen have stated that 31,800 servicemen have been withdrawn from "abroad." Their statements probably include personnel removed from Eastern Europe and Mongolia. One spokesman said that 11,400 men had departed from East Germany.

the Urals. There is also evidence that the Soviets will upgrade divisions in the USSR, including those in the ATTU zone, with more modern tanks withdrawn from Eastern Europe.

In general, we believe that tanks withdrawn from Eastern Europe are replacing older tanks that had been in cadre units or storage in the USSR. To the

best of our knowledge, the Soviets are taking the opportunity created by this withdrawal to retain their most modern equipment in their residual forces. Thus, in East Germany, the residual force will be entirely equipped with T-80s. The withdrawn T-64s replace T-10s, T-55s, T-54s, and the oldest T-64s that had

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Table 2
Soviet Force Reductions in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone *

	Total in the Force (as of 1 January 1989 ^b)	Announced Reductions (to be implemented by 1 January 1991)	Assessed Reductions (as of) September 1989	Percent of Announced Reductions Completed
Ground Forces divisions	144	Up to 50 ^c percent	20 ^d	28
Tanks	44,000	10,000	1,600 ^e	16
Artillery	52,500 ^f	8,500	1,400 ^g	16
Combat aircraft	11,500 ^h	800	530 ^h	66
Manpower	2,424,000 ⁱ	240,000		

* This table includes equipment apparently removed from the force but most of which remains unaccounted for.

^b Aircraft totals are as of 1 January 1988.

^c Soviet spokesmen have stated that as many as half of Soviet Ground Forces divisions will be eliminated.

^d This total includes those divisions that have physically disbanded or deactivated to mobilization bases (2nd TO&E divisions). An additional six divisions apparently are in the process of disbanding or deactivating.

^e Some 2,700 to 2,800 tanks have been withdrawn from Eastern Europe (see Table 1, footnote f). Most of these are T-64s, which have been accounted for in units or bases in the USSR. Some 1,600 additional tanks—mostly T-10s and T-54/55s—were removed from army corps or divisions deactivating or disbanding in the western Soviet Union. Most of these tanks remain unaccounted for.

^f This total includes antitank guns in units and artillery pieces stored in depots.

^g This total excludes helicopters, sea-based naval air, heavy bombers, tankers, and AWACS.

^h These aircraft have been removed from active units. A senior Soviet officer has indicated that some of these aircraft will be scrapped, some used for training or as flying targets, and some mothballed. To date, no scrapping has been confirmed.

ⁱ This total includes 1,309,000 in the Ground Forces; 358,000 in the Air Defense Forces; 263,000 in the Air Forces; 280,000 in the Navy; and 214,000 in the Strategic Rocket Forces. It does not include construction and railroad troops or civil defense and internal security forces.

been held for many years in cadre units or in long-term depot storage in the interior of the Soviet Union and east of the Urals.



What does this mean for Soviet capabilities? There has been no net increase in the number of T-72 and T-80 tanks in the forward area, and only modest increases are anticipated in the next few years. Therefore, the overall number of "most modern tanks" is not affected by the restructuring. In fact, the net number of tanks is being reduced by a significant number of older, yet fully capable T-64 tanks. Whereas the Soviets had 30 divisions with 120 maneuver

regiments before the withdrawal began, after the withdrawals are concluded they will have 24 divisions with 96 maneuver regiments.

The manner in which the Soviets are carrying out their restructuring has, however, provoked serious questions that have not yet been answered. Clearly, although they have adhered to their promise to withdraw tanks and have removed three divisions from their force structure in Eastern Europe, equipment other than tanks from those units is being used to modernize and expand the equipment holdings of the remaining divisions.

The inconsistency of certain features of the reduction and restructuring programs with some Soviet descriptions of these activities probably reflects adjustments made by the General Staff as the programs have

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Table 3
Soviet Force Reductions East of the Urals^a

	Total Deployed (As of 1 January 1989) ^b	Announced Reduc- tions (To be imple- mented by 1 January 1991)	Assessed Reductions (As of 1 September 1989)	Percent of Announced Reduc- tions Completed
Ground Forces army corps	5		2 ^c	
Ground Forces divisions	75	15 divisions in "eastern" USSR ^d	5	13 to 33 ^e for divi- sions in "eastern" USSR
Tanks	22,600		650	
Artillery	31,000 ^f		1,050	
Combat aircraft	3,930 ^g	15 ^h regiments in "eastern" USSR	115 aircraft ⁱ	
Manpower	967,000 ^j	260,000 ^k		

^a This table includes equipment apparently removed from the force but most of which remains unaccounted for.

^b Aircraft totals are as of 1 January 1988.

^c This total includes army corps headquarters that have been disbanded along with their nondivisional units. The divisions subordinate to the army corps have not all been disbanded. They are included in the figures for divisions. An additional army corps may be deactivating.

^d The Soviets have announced that 15 divisions will be eliminated in the "eastern" USSR. They have not specified, however, which areas and forces are included in the "eastern" USSR. Because Soviet spokesmen also have stated that as many as half of all Soviet Ground Forces divisions will be eliminated, this would total 38 of the 75 divisions east of the Urals if the reduction is apportioned evenly.

^e The lower percentage excludes force reductions resulting from the Afghan withdrawal from the "eastern" USSR total; the higher figure includes these reductions.

^f This total includes an estimated 3,000 antitank guns and an undetermined number of artillery pieces with a caliber less than 100 mm stored in depots.

^g This total excludes helicopters, sea-based naval air, heavy bombers, tankers, and AWACS.

^h This total includes the four regiments to be withdrawn from Mongolia. The Soviets have not specified which other regiments and how many additional aircraft are included.

ⁱ These aircraft have been removed from active units and remain unaccounted for. Because the Soviets have not specified the number of aircraft to be reduced, we cannot determine what percentage 115 is of the total they plan to eliminate.

^j This total includes 491,000 in the Ground Forces; 157,000 in the Air Defense Forces; 94,000 in the Air Forces; 120,000 in the Navy; and 105,000 in the Strategic Rocket Forces. It does not include construction and railroad troops or civil defense and internal security forces.

^k This total includes 200,000 in the "eastern" USSR and 60,000 for the "southern" USSR, the latter probably being servicemen withdrawn from Afghanistan.

evolved. With the withdrawal program originally having been imposed from above, the General Staff probably has been given considerable flexibility in organizing remaining Soviet forces within the constraints imposed by "defensive" restructuring.

The character of the restructured residual force, therefore, is a major question. To discuss that force, however, requires some explanation of the overall Soviet motivation for the process. We believe that the ongoing unilateral reductions and restructuring are intended largely to foster a perception of reduced threat in the West and to maintain the momentum toward a CFE agreement that would allow Gorbachev

to reduce his forces further, reap potential economic benefits, and simultaneously reduce NATO force capability. We believe the Soviets remain committed to this end game and will not jeopardize it in an effort to obtain short-term military advantages that almost certainly would be quickly discovered by the West.

Gorbachev's economic agenda is an overriding consideration as we assess the scope of the Soviet's reductions and withdrawals. But what of the restructuring and modernization? As long ago as the middle-to-late 1970s, the Soviets recognized that the type of war that would probably be fought in Central Europe had

~~Secret~~*Key Statements on Soviet Tank Reductions**22 December 1988*

Major General Lebedev of the Soviet General Staff states that entire units with their materiel will be withdrawn from Eastern Europe. The units will be disbanded, and much of their equipment—including the latest model tanks—will be scrapped. Tank engines and auxiliary equipment will be turned over to the civilian economy. (Lebedev's statement was referring specifically to the tanks in the six divisions to be withdrawn; however, the context of his remarks indicate he may have been referring to all tank units removed from Eastern Europe.)

16 January 1989

Marshal Akhromeyev states that six tank divisions will be withdrawn from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. In addition, 3,300 tanks will be removed from Soviet motorized rifle divisions and other units in Eastern Europe. All 5,000 tanks to be withdrawn will be destroyed, and most of the tanks to be reduced west of the Urals will be dismantled.

17 January 1989

Marshal Kulikov asserts that "withdrawn forces" will not be stationed in the western military districts, although some would be stationed east of the Urals.

18 January 1989

General Secretary Gorbachev announces that half of the 10,000 tanks will be destroyed and half will be converted to civil use.

24 January 1989

Deputy Foreign Minister Karpov says that, of the 10,000 tanks to be reduced, half would be scrapped and the other half converted to civil or training use. The reduction involved 5,300 of the "most

modern" tanks and, of these, 3,300 would be from divisions remaining in Eastern Europe. The 2,000 tanks in the six tank divisions withdrawn from Eastern Europe would be "dismantled."

17 April 1989

Army General Snetkov, commander of Soviet forces in East Germany, states that the tanks removed from the GDR will be sent beyond the Urals; some will be "mothballed" and some modified for use in the national economy.

5 May 1989

Lieutenant General Fursin, Chief of Staff of Soviet forces in East Germany, announces that 1,000 tanks are already beyond the Urals, where they will be turned into bulldozers.

12 May 1989

Colonel General Chervov of the Soviet General Staff states that, of the 10,000 tanks to be eliminated, 5,000 will be destroyed and 5,000 will be used as towing vehicles or targets for firing practice.

19 May 1989

Soviet General Staff Chief Moiseyev says that Moscow reserves the option to retain rather than destroy equipment withdrawn from Eastern Europe.

23 May 1989

General Markelov, Chief of the General Staff Press Center, announces that older, wornout tanks will be smelted, and that newer tanks will be remodeled to serve as tractors for civilian purposes. He also states that a steel works at Chelyabinsk in the Urals is already smelting tanks.

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**Key Statements on Soviet Tank Reductions
(continued)**

23 May 1989

Major General Shchepin, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Central Group of Forces, states that some of the T-72 tanks removed from Czechoslovakia will be scrapped or converted for civilian use at the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk in the North Caucasus Military District.

3 June 1989

General Staff spokesman Lieutenant General Petrov states that more than 2,750 tanks and artillery pieces have been dispatched to storage bases or for destruction.

30 June 1989

Colonel General Omelichev, First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, states that more than 3,000 tanks have been withdrawn from Eastern Europe and Mongolia. He adds that units being withdrawn will be disbanded and some of their equipment will be destroyed, some transferred to storage bases, and some used in the national economy.

3 July 1989

Defense Minister Yazov states that some tanks withdrawn from Eastern Europe are being used to upgrade units in the USSR, some are being mothballed, and "old" tanks made in the 1950s and 1960s are being destroyed.

3 July 1989

Colonel General Krivosheyev of the General Staff states that the smelting of tanks has begun and that their engines and other components are being used in the economy; other tanks are being converted for civilian use. In 1989, 5,000 will be scrapped and 2,000 will be converted. Those being scrapped are heavy tanks like the T-10, which are unsuitable for civilian use.

changed. Where once the use of nuclear weapons was expected, causing the Soviets to plan for rapid breakthrough and exploitation, the Soviets began to foresee a largely or wholly conventional war, where both sides' nuclear arsenals might be checked by parity. At the same time, they saw changes in NATO conventional forces that made those forces more and more capable of withstanding a conventional Soviet breakthrough operation. With the advent of densely deployed, relatively cheap, and highly effective antitank weapons systems, the Soviets began to talk about "gnawing" rather than "slicing" through NATO defenses. As Soviet General Staff attention turned toward the demands of a high-tech conventional battlefield, the Soviets recognized an increasing need to train for defensive operations. They also saw that their heavy tank forces were becoming more vulnerable, but only after the December initiative did they alter the planned expansion of their tank forces. In general terms, the current Soviet military response to NATO conventional capabilities is more infantry and artillery up front, backed by tank forces.

It is the reduction in the force and the change in the missions it is structured to perform that reflect Gorbachev's impact. Gorbachev has reasserted the Party's leading role in determining the sociopolitical content of Soviet military doctrine. The Communist Party and its leaders decide matters of national security, determine the potential opponents, the strategic likelihood of war, and the resources to be allocated to defense. Gorbachev's views of Soviet economic problems, and his assessment that near-to-midterm conflict with the West was unlikely, led him to conclude that reductions were a feasible method of contributing to his economic and political objectives.

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19. (Continued)

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The Soviet leadership's reductions and restructuring programs will produce over the next few years the most significant changes in Soviet general purpose forces opposite NATO since Khrushchev's drastic force reductions of the late 1950s and early 1960s:

- As a consequence of decisions by the USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies to cut their general purpose forces over the next two years, the offensive capabilities of Pact theater forces will decline through the first half of the 1990s.
- The announced withdrawals of Soviet forces from Central Europe, when completed, will significantly reduce Soviet prospects for attacking from a less than fully prepared force posture and lengthen considerably the amount of time required for the Pact to prepare and position forces for sustained offensive operations against NATO.
- Residual forces would be sufficient to mount a hastily constituted but still effective defense against NATO forces until reinforcements could be mobilized and moved forward.

As the Soviets move to an infantry-heavy force structure through restructuring, there may be a dramatic increase in the number of BMP infantry fighting vehicles. Although effective in combat operations, BMPs are not tanks, and we judge:

- Regardless of how the Soviets choose to restructure their forces, the loss of half the tanks previously stationed in Eastern Europe will significantly degrade Pact offensive capabilities.
- Even a large addition of well-equipped infantry would not totally offset this loss of armored striking power.

The Soviets, nevertheless, have no intention of disarming themselves, nor do they intend to maintain obsolete forces. Quite the contrary, Gorbachev's economic reforms, if successful, would prevent such outcomes. It is consistent with stated objectives, therefore, simultaneously to withdraw tanks, reduce the size of forces overall, and restructure and modernize residual forces using existing equipment to maximize their potential effectiveness against NATO.

Although we have a pretty good perspective on the general impact of these changes, there are still some important uncertainties. We do not know the actual shape that Soviet forces will take. Will Soviet objectives for their restructured forces change? They seem unlikely to have a capability to conduct breakthrough operations without mobilization—will that change? Will the residual forces be maintained at a higher level of readiness? On all these questions, opinions will abound, but until evidence or trends appear, conclusions are premature.

We conclude that the Soviet withdrawals and reduction observed to date are generally consistent with Gorbachev's initial statement. We also conclude that Soviet restructuring and modernization activity—consistent with emerging Soviet military doctrinal views of war in Europe and the nature and capability of NATO—will result in a smaller standing force optimized for defense, but still capable of smaller scale offensive operations. Such a force would require a massive and lengthy mobilization in order to perform deep strategic offensive operations against NATO.

~~Secret~~

20. NIC M 89-10005, November 1989, *Soviet Theater Forces in 1991: The Impact of the Unilateral Withdrawals on Structure and Capabilities* (Key Judgments only)

National Intelligence Council

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Memorandum

**Soviet Theater Forces in 1991:
The Impact of the Unilateral
Withdrawals on Structure
and Capabilities**

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NIC M 89-10005
November 1989

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National Intelligence Council

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NIC M 89-10005

Soviet Theater Forces in 1991: The Impact of the Unilateral Withdrawals on Structure and Capabilities (U)

Information available as of 22 November 1989 was used in the preparation of this Memorandum, which was prepared by the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. The Memorandum was coordinated throughout the Intelligence Community by the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. (U)

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November 1989

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Key Judgments

Implementation of the two-year program of unilateral troop reductions announced by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in December 1988 appears to be roughly on schedule. To date, the Soviets have withdrawn almost 2,000 tanks from the German Democratic Republic; however, reorganization and modernization in the Western Group of Forces (WGF) will partially offset the resulting reduction in force capabilities.

At the end of 1990, the WGF will consist of five armies and 15 divisions (seven tank and eight motorized rifle). It appears that the divisions will consist of four maneuver regiments: tank divisions will have two tank and two motorized rifle regiments, while motorized rifle divisions will have four motorized rifle regiments. Regiments apparently will not have combined arms battalions. It is not yet clear whether motorized rifle regiments in tank divisions will have two or three motorized rifle battalions (along with one tank battalion).

Complete reorganization of units in the WGF will require the Soviets to introduce approximately 1,800 armored troop carriers (ATCs), 400 artillery pieces (122 mm and 152 mm) and 200 antitank guns. Only about 450 ATCs, about 100 artillery pieces, and about 100 antitank guns have been introduced. Therefore, although the reorganization could be completed by the end of 1990, the current pace of equipment introduction would need to be increased significantly.

The restructuring of WGF tank and motorized rifle divisions will result in greater changes in their capabilities than are apparent from the changes in their aggregate combat potential scores. The divisions—and the WGF—will have substantially less armored striking power. Moreover, the new division organization makes it more difficult to concentrate tank forces.

Manpower reductions, coupled with the requirements of the reorganization, will not allow division-level readiness to be increased in the foreseeable future. Divisions will probably continue to be manned at about 85-percent strength.

20. (Continued)

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The unilateral air reductions and restructuring will, when completed, result in a Soviet aircraft mix weighted toward air-to-air fighters over ground attack aircraft in East Germany. The aircraft force mix in the Western Theater of Military Operations as a whole, however, will be weighted more heavily than before toward ground attack aircraft. The number of deep attack aircraft remains unchanged. Although this new force structure will be more capable of defending against a surprise NATO air offensive, it will not further impair the Soviets' ability to conduct offensive air operations.

The unilateral reductions are consistent with the announced Soviet shift toward a more defensive doctrine. Pursuant to the new doctrine's "War Prevention" tenet, the reductions will virtually eliminate the Soviets' already limited short warning attack capability. By lengthening Soviet timelines to transition to war, the reductions increase the prospects for successful crisis management.

We believe the General Staff would have mid-to-high-level confidence in its ability to prosecute deep offensive operations against NATO forces in the Central Region, given sufficient time for force generation. However, the need to draw substantially on forces in the western USSR would severely constrain Soviet options in a multitheater war.

~~This information is Secret NoFORN.~~

~~Secret~~

21. NIC M 90-10002, April 1990, *The Direction of Change in the Warsaw Pact*

National Intelligence Council

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Memorandum

**The Direction of Change
in the Warsaw Pact ~~(CONF)~~**

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NIC M 90-10002
April 1990

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21. (Continued)

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NIC M 90-10002

The Direction of Change in the Warsaw Pact (~~E-NF~~)

Information available as of 1 March 1990 was used in the preparation of this Memorandum. The Memorandum was drafted and coordinated within the Intelligence Community by the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces to whom comments may be directed at secure 37311. ~~1~~

~~Secret~~
April 1990

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~~NOFORN NOCONTRACT~~

Key Judgments

Recent political events in Eastern Europe will further erode Soviet confidence in their allies. Moscow can *not* rely upon non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces; it must question its ability to bring Soviet reinforcements through East European countries whose hostility is no longer disguised or held in check. On the basis of completed unilateral Warsaw Pact cuts without NATO reciprocation and considering current political turmoil, we now believe that the capability to conduct an unreinforced conventional Pact attack on NATO would be virtually eliminated.

Should current CFE proposals for both sides be implemented, we believe that Soviet defense planners would judge Pact forces *incapable* of conducting a theater strategic offensive *even after full mobilization of reserves and deployment of standing forces within the Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) Zone*. Conduct of an attack upon NATO in such conditions would require generation of additional forces and equipment.

The unilateral reductions begun a year ago by the Soviet Union will probably be completed on schedule. The recent Soviet agreements to remove all forces stationed in Czechoslovakia and Hungary by mid-1991 will nearly double the originally announced unilateral withdrawal in ground forces (at least 11 rather than six divisions).

The large unilateral reductions in Soviet forces due to be completed by the end of 1990 are forcing widespread restructuring of military units, substantially reducing the armor in Soviet ground force divisions, eliminating some specialized assault units, and reducing ground attack capabilities of tactical air units.

The originally announced Central European reductions (nearly 10 percent in manpower, 20 percent in aircraft, and 50 percent in tanks) will reduce the offensive capabilities of Pact Forces and, along with sweeping Soviet CFE proposals, are convincing indicators of Soviet intent to cut their military burden and are consistent with a movement toward a defensive doctrine.

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In the aggregate, the above changes lessen the state "combat potential" of forward Soviet units. We believe that Soviet planners recognize that these reductions (assuming no change in NATO forces) would require substantially greater forces to be brought forward from the USSR for the conduct of sustained theater offensive operations. On the basis of these military changes alone, in September 1989 we judged that NATO would have 40 to 50 days of warning of a four-front Pact attack. Current political changes would probably increase this warning time.

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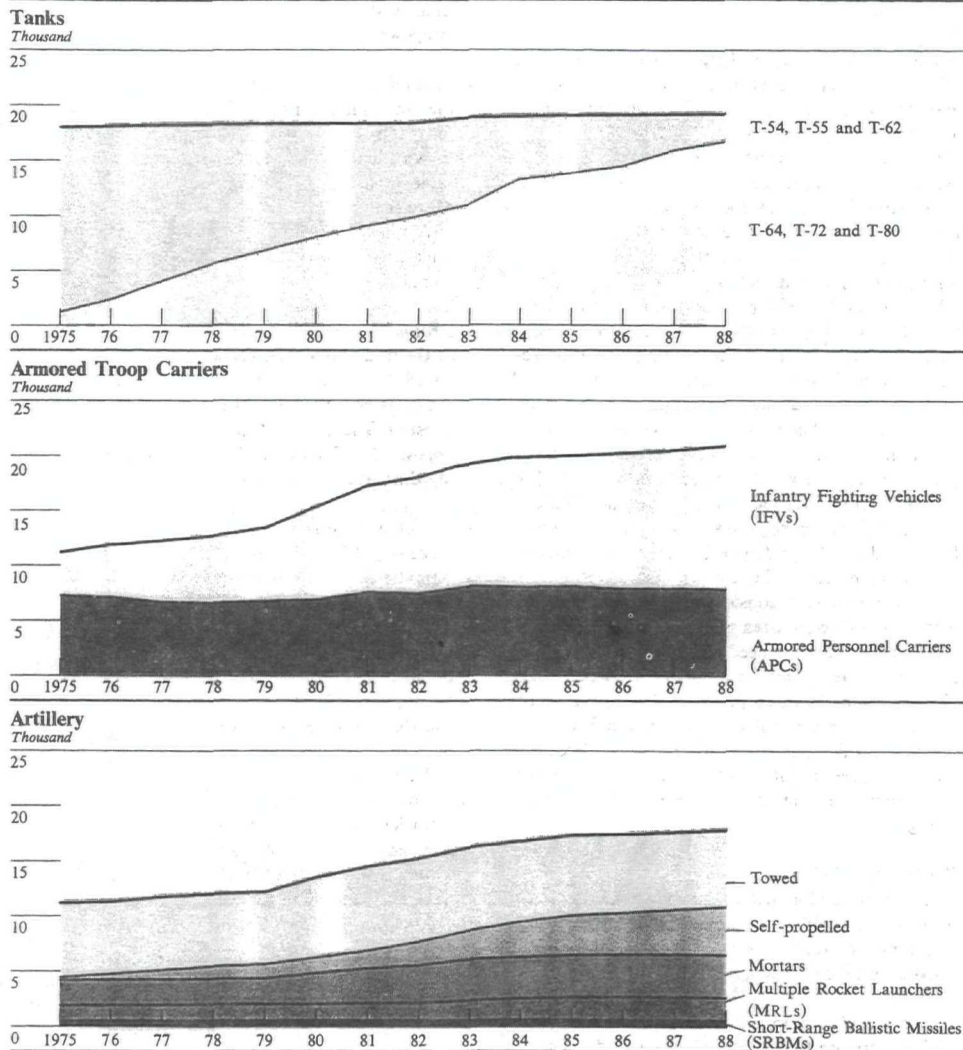
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Figure 1
Soviet Tanks, Armored Troop Carriers, and
Artillery in the Western TMO (in units)



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Discussion

Background

Traditional Soviet Views of Operations Against NATO

The Soviet General Staff based its war plans on the assumption that, if it had to fight a war with the West, the Soviet Union would be able to achieve classic military victory through the destruction of NATO forces and the occupation of NATO territory, principally Western Europe. Occupation of Germany and the political imperative for control of Eastern Europe led to the stationing of substantial Soviet forces in the forward area. By the middle-to-late 1970s, however, Soviet perceptions of their ability to prevail were changing. Where once Soviet forces, using nuclear weapons, could obtain planned objectives with relatively little assistance from their smaller, less well-equipped allies, the prospect of war with at least an initial conventional phase changed the situation to one that required the participation of East European forces and relied upon the long lines of communication that fed supplies from the USSR through Eastern Europe to attacking Soviet forces. Influenced to a large degree by their perception of greatly improved NATO conventional defenses, the Soviet General Staff considered even the large Soviet force in the forward area no longer adequate to the task, and foresaw the need to draw additional forces from the Soviet Union for its planned Theater Strategic Operation. Thus, by the mid-1980s, Soviet staff planners forecast a prolonged conventional war with NATO in which non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces were included in the initial attack and which relied upon major reinforcements from the Soviet Union for success. (S)

The Soviets Modernize

When Mikhail Gorbachev took over as party General Secretary in early 1985, the Soviet military already was implementing a long-term program of force restructuring, expansion, and modernization:

- *Restructuring* of 36 active divisions from the late 1970s through the end of 1984 had made them larger, more mobile, and more flexible, with

enhanced combined-arms capability and increased firepower.

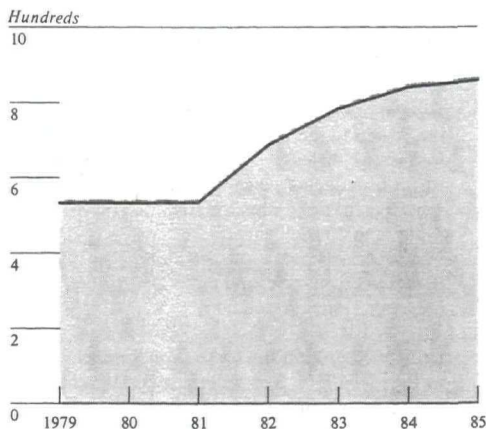
- *Ground force mobilization bases*—units created by the Soviets in the 1960s to stockpile older equipment for inactive divisions—were gradually being activated with small cadre elements that could facilitate rapid expansion to wartime strength and readiness. More than 20 such bases were activated between 1975 and 1984, while the overall number of active tank, motorized rifle, and airborne divisions increased from 176 to 200.
- *Ground equipment modernization*, begun as early as the mid-1960s, had become persistent and even paced. For example, the quantity and quality of tanks, armored troop carriers and artillery in the Western Theater of Military Operations (TMO) opposite NATO's central region had been increasing dramatically (see figure 1).
- *Attack helicopters* also increased significantly—by more than 60 percent from 1981 to 1985 in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone (see figure 2).
- *Air forces modernization* introduced the Su-24 Fencer light bomber and Tu-22M Backfire medium bomber in the 1970s and fourth-generation MiG-29 Fulcrum and Su-27 Flanker fighter-interceptors in the 1980s (see figure 3). (S)

The NSWP Lags

The non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) forces lagged the Soviets in force modernization, yet the Soviets depended on them to play a significant, perhaps vital, role in a war with NATO. If NSWP forces were no longer available, Soviet staffs would need to rethink operations against NATO. Soviet confidence in the reliability of non-Soviet Pact forces was the result of strategic interests generally shared with East European Communist leaderships, as well as a carefully planned Soviet-dominated command and control structure to

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Figure 2
Soviet Attack Helicopters in the
ATTU Zone^a



^a Includes Hip E, Hind D, E, and F helicopters.

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which the East Europeans acceded. Although that architecture gave the Soviet General Staff executive authority for wartime decisionmaking and command generation of Warsaw Pact forces, it relied upon national general staffs to pass orders. Therefore, the Pact command and control structure was, and remains, dependent upon the cooperation of the highest political and military leaders in each Pact country. Since it was clear that their interests in most crisis situations through the mid-1980s would be congruent with the Soviets' interests, we formerly assessed—and believed that Soviet planners also assessed—that the East European forces were at least initially reliable and would respond to commands to fight. (S, NT, W, R)

Reassessing the Doctrine

By 1985 Soviet theater forces were structured for fast-paced, offensive operations lasting for an extended period of time (weeks—perhaps months) in a nonnuclear environment. Soviet and Pact exercise patterns tended to confirm that they planned on such

a scenario. In building to this capability, however, the Soviets had traded decreased readiness for increased combat power after full preparation. Soviet forces in Central Europe were manned some 170,000 below full wartime strength and were assessed to require two to three weeks to prepare for offensive operations. (S)

Soon after coming to power, Gorbachev held talks with his military leadership. He agreed with the need to modernize Soviet conventional forces but understood that conventional modernization would be enormously expensive. He probably concluded that the USSR could not afford a buildup of both nuclear and conventional forces. In 1986 and 1987, there was mounting evidence that the Soviets were reassessing their military doctrine. High-level Soviet military leaders told their Western counterparts that Soviet/Warsaw Pact doctrine had changed, and that evidence of such change should be clear to observers of Pact exercises and training patterns. There were also indications that the “defensive doctrine” being stressed by the Soviets was not understood or accepted uniformly throughout the Soviet military leadership. (S)

The Warsaw Pact in Transition

Soviet Cutbacks

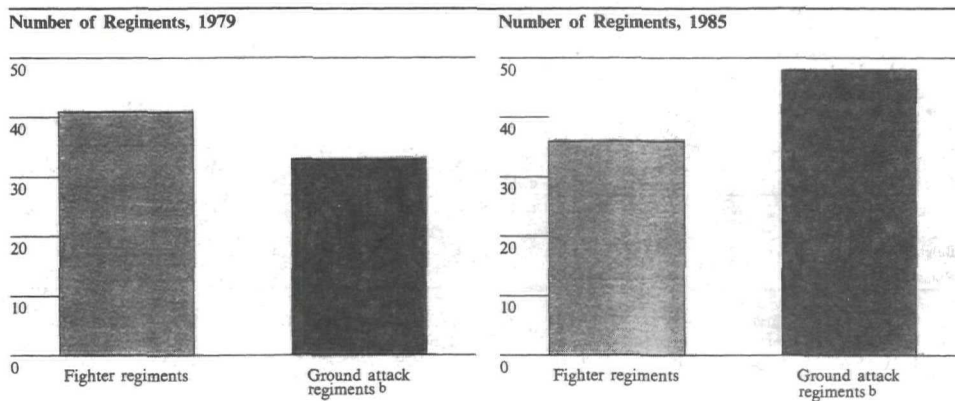
In December 1988, Gorbachev announced at the United Nations that significant unilateral reductions of Soviet forces would take place in 1989 and 1990. His statement was followed by various explanations of Soviet reduction plans and additional announcements concerning cuts in defense spending and production (see inset). Soon after Gorbachev's announcement, each of the USSR's Warsaw Pact Allies except Romania announced force and defense spending cuts. These cuts—to be completed by the end of 1990—roughly parallel the Soviet cuts in types and proportional amounts of equipment, manpower, and expenditures (see table 1). These announcements of cuts, which almost certainly had Moscow's prior approval, contradicted earlier indications that the Soviets would require their allies to make up any unilateral Soviet force reductions. (S)

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Figure 3
Force Composition in the ATTU Zone, 1979 and 1985^a
Soviet Tactical Air Force



^a Includes all frontal aviation regiments and the Fencer air armies. Excludes PVO and Navy.

^b Ground attack regiments (light bombers and fighter-bombers).

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Soviet Unilateral Force Reductions Announced by President Gorbachev on 7 December 1988 (To Be Implemented by 1 January 1991)

Reduced from the Soviet Armed Forces 500,000 personnel

Withdrawn from Eastern Europe Six tank divisions
 50,000 personnel
 5,000 tanks
 Assault landing units
 Assault crossing units

Reduced in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone 10,000 tanks
 8,500 artillery systems
 800 combat aircraft

In Central Europe alone, Gorbachev's announced Soviet reductions would entail:

- A total of 50,000 men and 5,000¹ tanks to be withdrawn from Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. As part of this reduction, six Soviet divisions—four from East Germany, and one each from Czechoslovakia and Hungary—were to be withdrawn. The removal of 50,000 Soviet military personnel would reduce Soviet strength in the forward area by nearly 10 percent. The withdrawal of 5,300 tanks would cut total Soviet tank strength in Central Europe in half (see figure 4).
- From the air forces, 320 combat aircraft to be removed from Central Europe; this is a 20-percent reduction in Soviet combat aircraft stationed in Central Europe.

¹ Later increased to 5,300 with the inclusion of Soviet forces in Poland. (U)

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21. (Continued)

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Table 1
Announced Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Unilateral
Reductions

	Military Manpower	Force Structure	Tanks	Combat Aircraft	Defense Budget (percent)
Total	81,300		2,751	210	
East Germany	10,000	6 regiments	600	50	10 (1989-90)
Poland	40,000	4 divisions ^a	850	80	4 (1989)
Czechoslovakia	12,000 ^b	3 divisions	850	51	15 (1989-90)
Hungary ^c	9,300	1 tank brigade	251	9	17 (1989) 30 (1990)
Bulgaria	10,000		200	20	12 (1989)
Romania					1.7 (1989)

^a Two to be eliminated; two to be reduced in strength.
^b Being transferred to construction troops.
^c Excludes November-December 1989 announcements.

This table is Secret Noform WNINTEL.

- A total of 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems, and 800 combat aircraft to be eliminated from the Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) Zone. A 10,000-tank reduction in the ATTU zone would cut the number of Soviet tanks in operational units by about one-fourth. Cutting 800 aircraft represents a reduction of more than 8 percent of the Soviet combat aircraft in units opposite NATO.
- A "major portion" of troops in Mongolia to be withdrawn, later clarified as a cut in ground forces of 75 percent, with the air forces there to be eliminated. ~~(S)~~

Although unilateral Navy reductions were not part of Gorbachev's speech, the Soviets have embarked on a program of naval measures. In 1989, 46 ships and submarines departed Soviet naval facilities to be scrapped in foreign yards. All but one were at least 30 years old; only one was operational. We have identified an additional 120 units that are candidates for scrapping in 1990. The Soviets have also reduced out-of-area deployments by both ships and Soviet naval aircraft. At the same time, the Soviets continue with

force modernization and construction of aircraft, submarines, and surface combatants, including three conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) aircraft carriers, although there is debate within the USSR over the need for carriers. ~~(S)~~

The Halfway Point

One year into the two-year unilateral withdrawal/reduction period announced by Gorbachev, the first phase of the program is complete (see inset). Moscow has withdrawn at least 50 percent of the tanks and approximately 60 percent of the combat aircraft from Eastern Europe that Gorbachev said would be removed, and it has withdrawn about half of the tanks and a quarter of the combat aircraft to be removed from Mongolia. In Eastern Europe, of the six Soviet tank divisions to be withdrawn by the end of 1990, Moscow has withdrawn the major elements of three (two from East Germany, one from Hungary). The number of Soviet tactical aviation units (for which no reductions were announced) remains about the same, but the units are losing assigned aircraft. ~~(S)~~

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Figure 4
Soviet Ground Forces in Central Europe, March 1990



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Announced Soviet Unilateral Withdrawals From Central Europe				
	Current	To be withdrawn	Percentage to be withdrawn	To remain
Maneuver divisions	30	6	20	24
Tanks	10,600	5,300	50	5,300
Combat aircraft	1,600	320	20	1,280
Personnel	600,000	50,000	8.3	550,000

21. (Continued)

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<i>Assessed Unilateral Soviet Force Reductions, 1 January 1990</i>	
<i>Withdrawn from Eastern Europe</i>	<i>Three tank divisions (major elements) 2,600-2,775 tanks Four air assault units Two assault crossing units</i>
<i>Reduced in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone</i>	<i>3,260 tanks 2,120 artillery systems 580 combat aircraft</i>
<i>Reduced from the Soviet Armed Forces</i>	<i>Total: 26 divisions ATTU Zone: 16 divisions disbanded and three deactivated Non-ATTU Zone: four divisions disbanded and three deactivated</i>

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Restructuring

To accommodate such radical equipment changes and claimed changes in doctrine, many units are being restructured:

- *Ground force restructuring.* About two-thirds of the 27 Soviet divisions that remained in Eastern Europe at the end of 1989 are probably being restructured (figure 5), as are up to four divisions in the USSR:

- Tank divisions*, which had three tank regiments and one motorized rifle regiment, will now have two tank regiments and two motorized rifle regiments. Most divisions will lose 69 tanks, or 22 percent of their original holdings.

- Motorized rifle divisions*, which had one tank regiment and three motorized rifle regiments, will now have four motorized rifle regiments. They are also losing tanks from other divisional

elements. These changes reduce the number of tanks by 105 per division in most motorized rifle divisions in Eastern Europe and by 65 per division in the USSR—40 and 30 percent respectively of their original holdings.

- Some of the personnel and most of the armored troop carriers and artillery from the units being withdrawn are being used to meet the needs of the restructured divisions remaining in Eastern Europe. Additional armored troop carriers—some 450 observed thus far—have arrived from the USSR. Some 2,000 additional armored troop carriers would be required to restructure the 24 Soviet divisions in the originally planned residual force in Eastern Europe. Artillery battalions continue to increase from 18 to 24 guns, and a third artillery battalion appears to be being added to the artillery regiments of tank divisions.

- In addition, some river-crossing and air assault units are to be withdrawn to the USSR.

- *Tactical air force restructuring* (figure 6).

- Few units are being disbanded; instead, the average strength of tactical air regiments is being reduced by about 10 aircraft each. Overall, there will be about 17 percent fewer aircraft opposite NATO (bars 1 and 2).

- The most modern of the displaced aircraft are going to regiments with older aircraft (MiG-21/MiG-23/Su-17), which are leaving active service.

- The predominance of ground attack regiments over fighter regiments in East Germany has changed to a more balanced force.

- Half the light bombers (Fencers) in the forward area have been relocated to the Western USSR. These aircraft could be rapidly reintroduced into Eastern Europe.

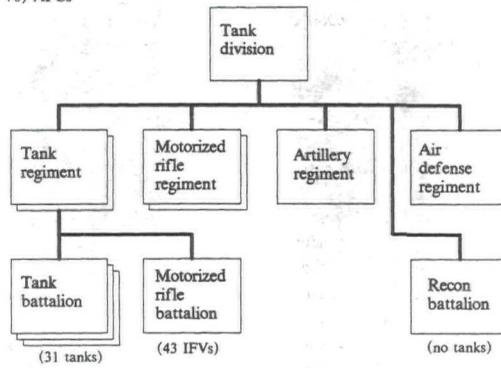
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Figure 5
Soviet Division Restructuring

Tank Division ^a

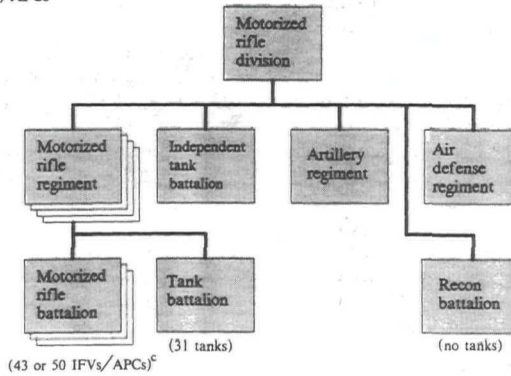
Total equipment: 250 tanks (22- or 31-percent decrease)
340 to 432 IFVs/APCs



^a Soviet tank divisions in Eastern Europe have had 319 or 363 tanks and 251 IFVs/APCs, not including command and reconnaissance variants.

Motorized Rifle Division ^b

Total equipment: 155 tanks (40- or 44-percent decrease)
655 IFVs/APCs



^b Soviet motorized rifle divisions in Eastern Europe have had 260 and 277 tanks and 455 IFVs/APCs, not including command and reconnaissance variants.

^c Varies depending on whether the regiment is BMP or BTR equipped. Soviet motorized rifle divisions in Eastern Europe that have been restructured have two BMP-equipped regiments and two BTR-equipped regiments.

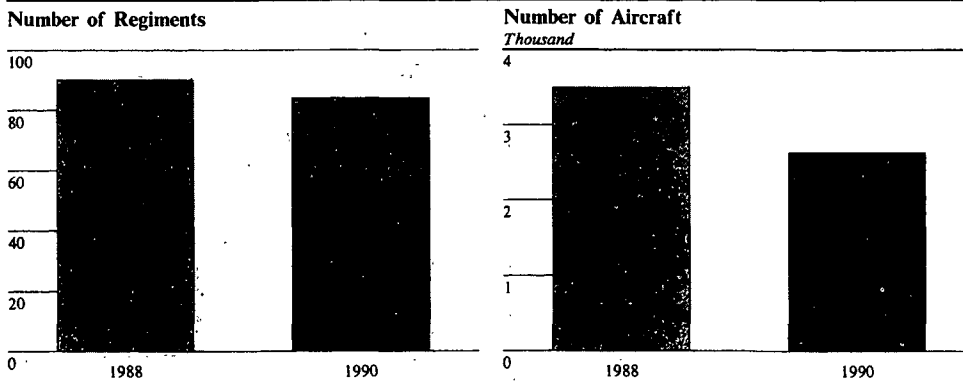
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Figure 6
Reduction and Restructuring, 1988 and 1990
Soviet Air Forces in the ATTU Zone



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- The certainty of complete withdrawal from Czechoslovakia and Hungary and the high likelihood of other reductions beyond those originally announced raise the prospect of further changes in Soviet plans for restructuring. ~~(S, NF, WN)~~

Effects of the Changes

Reductions and restructuring will significantly degrade the ability of Soviet forces to concentrate combat power, particularly for offensive operations. Armored striking power, in particular, is reduced and fragmented. The new motorized rifle divisions are well suited for defensive operations but are not organized specifically to conduct large-scale attacks or counterattacks. The new tank divisions are "balanced"—thus, better suited for holding ground than the previous standard tank divisions—but they retain substantial offensive punch. ~~(S, NF)~~

Combat Potential

To gauge the probability of mission success, Soviet staff officers often compare the relative strength of opposing forces in terms of their calculated "combat potential." How the Soviets come up with combat



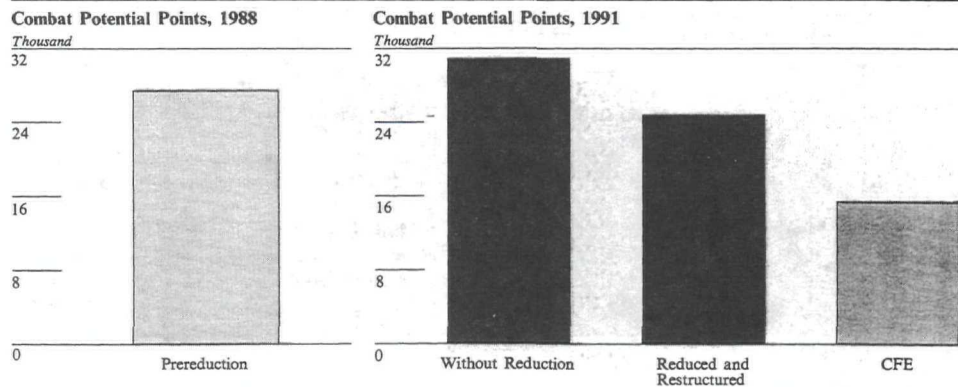
it is useful to essay a Soviet-style combat-potential analysis to see how the Soviets might view the correlation of forces in Europe following their unilateral reductions and restructuring. ~~(S, NF)~~

Application of such analysis to the portion of the Soviet *Western Group of Forces* (WGF) in East Germany shows (see figure 7) that the 1991 force will

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Figure 7
Western Group of Forces, 1988 and 1991



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be large, modern, and will possess major combat potential. But it will possess *less* offensive combat potential than the Intelligence Community assessed it would have had in the absence of the unilateral reductions. In fact, a reduced and restructured WGF in 1991 has less combat potential than the 1988 WGF, even though some modernization will have taken place. The projected WGF structure for 1991 (without reductions) would have derived over half its offensive combat potential from tanks, but the force projected for 1991 *after* reductions will draw less than 40 percent of its offensive potential from its tanks.

~~(S-NF-WA)~~

The *air* assessment is different. The Soviets probably expect most of the effect of the unilateral reductions in air forces to be offset by modernization by the late 1990s. We believe, using Soviet-style combat-potential calculations, that the Soviets expect the unilateral force reductions to result in a modest shift in the

Central European air balance to the *advantage* of NATO, but the current situation of near parity would not be upset (see figure 8). These changes in Warsaw Pact air forces probably would *not* substantially alter the Pact's overall prospects in an air war in Central Europe. ~~(S-NF-WA)~~

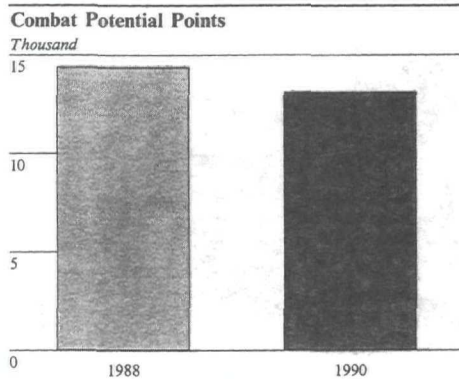
How the Changes Affect Soviet Perceptions of the Balance

Taken together, the reductions and restructuring reinforce our mid-1980s judgment that the Soviet General Staff did not have high confidence in its ability to conduct a deep attack on NATO without introducing significant reinforcements from the Soviet Union before D-Day. After reducing the shock power of forward area forces by 5,300 tanks, the General Staff would consider the Pact even less capable of conducting an attack without substantial reinforcement to

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Figure 8
Soviet Air Forces in the ATTU Zone,
1988 and 1990

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bring four fronts into the offensive (see figure 9). The need to bring forward tank-heavy forces from the Western USSR extends Soviet timelines to transition to war and virtually eliminates Soviet capability to execute a successful short warning attack (24 to 48 hours). ~~(S NF WD)~~

While the influx of armored troop carriers and artillery creates a more balanced force in the forward area, it would not make an unreinforced (three-front) attack option appear more attractive to the General Staff. The General Staff would perceive an even greater need to bring forces forward from the western USSR before D-Day to restore the offensive combat power lost with the removal of those tanks as well as the considerable reductions in East European forces. In turn, this would require the Soviets to shift a comparable number of divisions from the strategic reserve to the second strategic echelon—the follow-on fronts necessary to carry an offensive to strategic objectives beyond the Rhine into France. ~~(S NF WD)~~

Considering only the effects of the originally announced Soviet unilateral withdrawal, we believe that the residual Soviet forces would be unable to mount a "short warning" attack and that the Soviets would not be even moderately confident of success in pursuing deep theater objectives unless their attack was preceded by a lengthy mobilization period. But events in Eastern Europe have an even greater effect. By mid-1991, Soviet forces will be completely withdrawn from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Moreover, the fundamental political changes occurring in the individual Warsaw Pact nations and their effect on the reliability of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact military forces lead us to conclude that the Warsaw Pact does not at this time represent a significant offensive threat to NATO. The rate and scope of political change in Eastern Europe in recent months have outpaced our ability to assess completely the consequences for East European military capabilities. We judge that Soviet planners face the same uncertainties. ~~(S NF)~~

Recent and continuing political developments in Eastern Europe have undoubtedly eroded the confidence of Soviet war planners. Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces traditionally have made up nearly 50 percent of the Pact's first strategic echelon in Central Europe, and local transportation and security services would be crucial in moving Soviet forces into the forward area. NSWP forces were counted on to play critical roles in operations on both flanks in a NATO-Pact war. Now, the nonavailability of NSWP forces for Soviet offensive war plans and the increased potential of civil resistance to Soviet transit as the result of recent political changes will have far-reaching and adverse impacts on Soviet force commitments, dispositions, and objectives. ~~(S NF)~~

The military changes outlined in this memorandum have led to important lengthening of estimated preparation times for Soviet attack options (see table 2 and, for more detail, the annex). When the effects of the announced cuts under way in most of the NSWP states and the ongoing political developments in Eastern Europe are coupled with Soviet unilateral reductions and restructuring, we believe that Warsaw Pact

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Figure 9
Projected Warsaw Pact Echelons
in the Western Theater of Military Operations (TMO)—Four-Front Attack



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21. (Continued)

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Table 2 Days
Estimated Preparation Times for Soviet Attack Options

	NIE 4-1-84	Before Warsaw Pact Unilateral Reductions *		After Warsaw Pact Unilateral Reductions *	
		Mobilization and Movement	Minimum Preparation for Offensive Combat	Mobilization and Movement	Minimum Preparation for Offensive Combat
Three fronts in first echelon	10 to 12	7 to 14	14 to 21	9 to 16	35 to 45
Five- to six-front attack with four fronts in first echelon	Not addressed	14 to 21	28 to 35	18 to 25	40 to 50

* Based on conditions in Eastern Europe in September 1989.

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capability to conduct an unreinforced conventional attack against NATO is virtually eliminated (assuming that NATO remains at current force levels).

~~(S NF WNM)~~

We assess that Soviet General Staff planners will probably conclude that—without reinforcements from the western USSR roughly equal to at least two fronts—their forces remaining in Eastern Europe after the unilateral cuts would *not* possess the advantage needed to initiate and sustain offensive operations to the depth of the theater against current NATO forces. On the basis of this assessment, we concluded in September 1989 that NATO would have a 40- to 50-day warning time to prepare for a conventional force attack. The current political changes in Eastern Europe, not considered in that assessment, would probably increase warning time.

~~(S NF WNM)~~

The arms reduction proposals unveiled by both the Warsaw Pact and NATO for the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations would

result in further substantial cuts in Pact conventional forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals (ATTU) Zone (see table 3). Moscow would possess by far the largest national force structure in a post-CFE Europe but has already agreed to 30,000 more US than USSR stationed forces, in recognition of its large force advantage on the Continent. After such cuts, and assuming that equipment is destroyed and that NATO maintains parity, we believe that the Soviets would judge Warsaw Pact Post-CFE Forces incapable—even after full mobilization of reserves and deployment of standing forces within the ATTU Zone—of achieving the political-military objectives traditionally associated with Soviet strategy for a theater-strategic offensive. Their CFE proposal serves as one of the most convincing indicators to date of the defensive reorientation of their military doctrine and their intent to decrease the economic burden of the Soviet theater force structure through aggressive pursuit of conventional arms control. ~~(S NF)~~

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Table 3
Post-CFE Warsaw Pact Force Structure
Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone

	1988			1997		
	Soviet	NSWP	Total	Soviet	NSWP	Total
Tanks	35,002	14,809	49,811	12,000 14,000	8,000 6,000	20,000 20,000
Armored troop carriers	36,202	15,948	52,150	16,800 18,000	11,200 10,000	28,000 28,000
Artillery	32,523	10,312	42,835	10,000 17,000	6,500 7,000	16,500 24,000

Blue = Western proposal.
 Red = Eastern proposal.

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Annex

Warning Implications of Warsaw Pact Unilateral Force Reductions ^{2,3}

The announced reductions of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe and East European national forces, if fully implemented, will significantly lower Pact force levels in the forward area. Six Soviet tank divisions, plus critical combat support units such as bridging, and substantial amounts of additional equipment are scheduled to be withdrawn. Scheduled tank reductions amount to about half the Soviet tanks in Eastern Europe. Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces, which currently comprise a large proportion of the forces in Eastern Europe, are also to be reduced. Moreover, forces inside the Soviet Union are to be restructured and are to lose tanks and possibly artillery from their structure. Equipment modernization and restructuring of remaining Soviet forces in Eastern Europe may offset to some extent the loss of combat capability, but Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces are not taking similar steps. ~~(S NF)~~

These reductions—which are well under way—probably will render an unreinforced Pact attack practically impossible and will require the Pact to rely more heavily on currently nonready divisions to support either a two-, three-, or four-front attack. Pact planners will probably conclude that—without reinforcements from the western USSR roughly equal to two fronts—their forces remaining in Eastern Europe after the unilateral cuts would not possess the advan-

tage over current NATO forces needed to initiate and sustain offensive operations to the depth of theater. The Soviets probably would believe that, to attain sufficient combat power in the theater, they would have to generate enough not-ready divisions to replace the withdrawn Soviet divisions, as well as the disbanded East European formations. Such greater reliance on the early commitment of currently not-ready divisions from the Soviet Union for sustained offensive operations would stretch out Pact preparations to 40 to 50 days. We cannot rule out the possibility that the Soviets might judge circumstances as compelling them to commit their forces without the minimum postmobilization training necessary for offensive operations in as little as 18 to 25 days (see table 4). ~~(S NF)~~

Our assessment of preparation and warning times after the Pact's unilateral reductions are complete assumes that NATO remains at current force levels. The extent of Pact preparations—reinforcement of forces in Eastern Europe and training—required to conduct a potentially successful offensive campaign is driven in large measure by Pact assessments of NATO military capability. As a result, unilateral NATO reductions outside the context of a conventional force reductions agreement could diminish the Pact's assessment of its force requirements for success and thus reduce the preparation time needed for the Pact and the warning time available to NATO. ~~(C)~~

² Extract from Memorandum to Holders of NIE 4-1-84 (Secret NF NC), September 1989, *Warning of War in Europe: Changing Warsaw Pact Planning and Forces*. ~~(C)~~

³ Note that the preparation times assessed in this annex were based on the Eastern Europe of September 1989. Political turmoil since then would likely increase these preparation time estimates. (S NF)

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Table 4
Estimated Preparation Times for Soviet Attack Options

Days

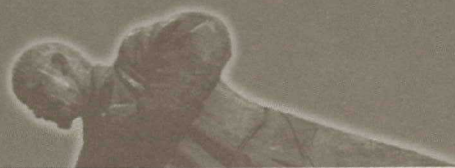
	NIE 4-1-84	Before Warsaw Pact Unilateral Reductions		After Warsaw Pact Unilateral Reductions ^b	
		Mobilization and Movement	Minimum Preparation for Offensive Combat ^a	Mobilization and Movement	Minimum Preparation for Offensive Combat ^a
Three fronts in first echelon	10 to 12	7 to 14	14 to 21	9 to 16	35 to 45
Five- to six-front attack with four fronts in first echelon	Not addressed	14 to 21	28 to 35	18 to 25	40 to 50



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The Military Balance II

Strategic Nuclear Weapons



22. NIE 11-3/8-88, December 1988, *Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1990s* (Key Judgments and Executive Summary)



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1990s

National Intelligence Estimate
Key Judgments and Executive Summary

*These Key Judgments and Executive Summary
represent the views of the Director of Central
Intelligence with the advice and assistance of the
US Intelligence Community.*

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NIE 11-3/8-88
1 December 1988
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Central
Intelligence

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NOFORN/NOCONTRACT

NIE 11-3/8-88

Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Late 1990s (U)

*Information available as of 1 December 1988 was used
in the preparation of this National Intelligence Estimate.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
The Bureau of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State
The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Intelligence, Department of Energy

also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
The Director of Naval Intelligence,
Department of the Navy
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force
The Director of Intelligence,
Headquarters, Marine Corps

*This Estimate was approved for publication by the
National Foreign Intelligence Board.*

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1 December 1988

NOTE

This Estimate is issued in several volumes:

- **Key Judgments and Executive Summary.**
- **Volume I** contains the Key Judgments, an overview of major Soviet strategic force developments in the 1980s, and a summary of Soviet programs and capabilities believed to be of greatest interest to policy-makers and defense planners.
- **Volume II** contains:
 - Discussion of the Soviets' strategic policy and doctrine under Gorbachev, including their objectives in the event of a US-Soviet nuclear conflict and how the Soviet national command authority would operate.
 - Descriptions of Soviet programs for the development and deployment of strategic offensive and defensive forces and supporting systems.
 - Projections of future Soviet strategic forces.
 - Description of Soviet command, control, and communications capabilities and discussion of the peacetime posture of Soviet strategic forces.
 - Discussion of Soviet concepts and plans for the operations of strategic forces during the several phases of a global conflict.
 - Trends in the USSR's capabilities to carry out some missions of strategic forces in nuclear conflict.
- **Volume III** contains tables with detailed force projections and weapon characteristics.

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Key Judgments

We have prepared this year's Estimate against the backdrop of considerable ferment in the national security arena in the Soviet Union that could over time result in a change in the Soviets' military outlook. Gorbachev has shown himself willing and able to challenge long-cherished precepts in this as in other policy areas. The evidence presented in this Estimate indicates, however, that, in terms of what the Soviets spend, what they procure, how their strategic forces are deployed, how they plan, and how they exercise, the basic elements of Soviet defense policy and practice thus far have not been changed by Gorbachev's reform campaign. ~~(S NF)~~

Given the turmoil that Gorbachev has set in motion over many of these issues, Soviet strategic goals and priorities over the long term have become more difficult for us to predict, and a major change toward a less threatening nuclear doctrine and strategic force structure could occur. However, we believe it is prudent to adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward the prospects for longer term change in the Soviets' fundamental approach to war. Many key doctrinal issues are far from settled among the Soviets themselves. Furthermore, if we are witnessing a transition in Soviet military thinking, substantial tangible evidence of any change in some areas may not be immediately forthcoming. ~~(S NF)~~

Ongoing development and deployment efforts indicate that all elements of Soviet intercontinental nuclear forces will be extensively modernized between now and the late 1990s. The Soviets will move from a force that has primarily consisted of fixed, silo-based ICBMs to one in which mobile platforms constitute well over half the deployed forces:

- *ICBMs.* In 1988 the Soviets began to deploy two new silo-based ICBMs that will be increasingly more vulnerable as US countersilo capabilities improve, but will enhance the Soviets' capabilities for prompt attack on hard and soft targets. The Soviets also began to deploy their first rail-mobile ICBM, and continued deploying road-mobile ICBMs, which will significantly improve Soviet force survivability.
- *SLBMs.* The Soviet ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) force of the future will contain fewer submarines but more long-range missiles and more warheads, and will generally be much more survivable. The Soviets have recently deployed their first submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) with some capability to attack hardened targets, but SLBMs during the next 10 years will not be nearly as effective for this role as Soviet silo-based ICBMs.

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- *Bombers and cruise missiles.* The heavy bomber force will have a greater role with more weapons and greater force diversity. In 1988 the Soviets began to deploy their new supersonic strategic bomber—the Blackjack—capable of carrying long-range, air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) and supersonic short-range missiles. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In 1988 the Soviets launched their second Yankee Notch submarine as a dedicated launch platform for long-range, land-attack, sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). In addition, ALCM and SLCM versions of a large, long-range, supersonic cruise missile are likely to become operational in 1989 and 1990, respectively. (S-NF-WN) —


The Soviets continue to invest about as heavily in active and passive strategic defenses as they do in offensive forces, and their capabilities are improving in all areas:

- *Air defense.* Soviet capabilities against low-flying bombers and cruise missiles are increasing because of continuing deployments of all-altitude surface-to-air missiles and fighter and support aircraft.
- *Ballistic missile defense.* The new Moscow antiballistic missile (ABM) defenses should be operational in 1989 and will provide an improved intercept capability against small-scale attacks on key targets around Moscow. It is unlikely through at least the mid-1990s that the Soviets would make widespread ABM deployments that would exceed treaty limits, although they have developed a capability to do so. Also, improving technology is blurring the distinction between air defense and ABM systems.
- *Leadership protection.* A primary Soviet objective is to protect and support the leadership from the outset of crisis through a postattack period. The Soviets have had a 40-year program for leadership protection that includes facilities deep below Moscow and elsewhere that would be very difficult to destroy.
- *Laser weapons.* There is strong evidence of Soviet R&D efforts in high-energy laser weapons for air defense, antisatellite (ASAT), and ballistic missile defense (BMD) applications. The Soviets appear to be considering space-based lasers for BMD, but we do not expect them to be able to deploy an operational system until well after the year 2000.
- *Antisubmarine warfare (ASW).* The Soviets currently lack an effective means of locating US SSBNs in the open ocean. We judge that they will not deploy such a capability in the 1990s, and we see no Soviet solution to

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the problem on the horizon. On the other hand, the Soviets will increase the threat to US attack submarines attempting to operate in areas close to the Soviet Union. ~~(S-NF-WR)~~

Without START constraints, if the Soviets were to modernize their forces in a manner that generally follows past efforts, in the next 10 years intercontinental nuclear weapons would probably grow from the current level of about 10,000 to between 12,000 and 15,000. In the absence of an arms control process, the Soviets would not necessarily expand their intercontinental attack forces beyond these figures, but they clearly have the capability for expansion in the late 1990s to 16,000 or even 18,000 if, for example, they decided to expand forces in response to a US deployment of strategic defenses. As a result of the assessed operational payloads of Soviet bombers and assumed rules for counting bomber weapons, a Soviet force of 6,000 accountable weapons under a START agreement would in fact probably contain 8,000 weapons. In a crisis or wartime situation, the Soviets might be able to deploy a few thousand additional weapons, by augmenting their force with nondeployed mobile missiles and by uploading some missiles to their maximum potential payloads, higher than the accountable number of warheads on these missiles. We note that efforts to deploy additional warheads in crisis or wartime would involve some operational and planning difficulties. ~~(S-NF)~~

An alternative view holds that  deploying additional warheads in crisis or wartime (assuming they were available) would be time consuming, disruptive to force readiness and operations, and potentially detectable. ~~(S-NF)~~

The Soviets apparently believe that, in the present US-Soviet strategic relationship, each side possesses strategic nuclear capabilities that could devastate the other after absorbing an attack and that it is highly unlikely either side could achieve a decisive nuclear superiority in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, they continue to procure weapons and plan force operations intended to secure important combat advantages and goals in the event of nuclear war, including, to the extent possible, limiting damage to Soviet forces and society. Although we do not have specific evidence on how the Soviets assess their prospects in a global nuclear war, we judge that they would not have high confidence in the capability of their strategic offensive and defensive forces to accomplish all of their wartime missions—particularly limiting the extent of damage to the Soviet homeland. ~~(S-NF)~~

¹ The holder of this view is the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Department of State. ~~(S)~~

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Thus far, we see no convincing evidence that the Soviets under Gorbachev are making basic changes in their approach to actually fighting nuclear war. Our evidence points to continuing Soviet programs to develop and refine options for both conventional and nuclear war, and the Soviets are preparing their forces for the possibility that both conventional and nuclear war could be longer and more complex than they previously assumed. ~~(S-NF)~~

There is an ongoing debate among the leadership concerning how much is enough for defense, focused on the concept of "reasonable sufficiency." Although couched in doctrinal terms and aimed in part at Western audiences, the debate at this point appears to be primarily about resource allocations. (See page 15 for an alternative view.) To date, as demonstrated in the strategic force programs and resource commitments we have examined, we have not detected changes under Gorbachev that clearly illustrate that either new security concepts or new resource constraints are taking hold. ~~(S-NF)~~

The large sunk costs in production for new strategic weapons and the fact that such production facilities cannot readily be converted to civilian uses mean that Gorbachev's industrial modernization goals almost certainly will not have major effects on strategic weapons deployments through the mid-1990s. Gorbachev might attempt to save resources by deferring some strategic programs, stretching out procurement rates, and placing more emphasis on replacing older systems on a less than 1-for-1 basis. Major savings could be achieved in the next several years only through cutbacks in general purpose forces and programs, which account for the vast majority of Soviet defense spending. Further, for both political as well as military reasons, Gorbachev almost certainly would not authorize unilateral cuts in the size of the strategic forces. Nevertheless, concerns over the economy's performance, as well as perceived foreign policy benefits, heighten Moscow's interest in strategic and conventional arms control agreements, and have contributed to the greater negotiating flexibility evident under Gorbachev's leadership. We judge, however, that Soviet force decisions, including potential arms control agreements, will continue to be more strongly influenced by the requirement to meet military and political objectives than by economic concerns. ~~(S-NF)~~

The Soviets' recent positions on strategic arms control should not be taken as an indicator of whether or not they are implementing fundamental change in their approach to nuclear war. The asymmetric reductions and acceptance of intrusive on-site inspections entailed by the INF Treaty and the apparent Soviet willingness to accept deep strategic force reductions in START do reflect a marked change in political attitude on security issues under Gorbachev. Overall, however, we do not see Moscow's recent arms control positions resulting in strategic forces that the Soviets would perceive as less capable of waging a nuclear war. ~~(S-NF)~~

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Executive Summary

A Time of Change in Soviet Strategic Policy?

We have prepared this year's Estimate against the backdrop of considerable ferment in the national security arena in the Soviet Union that could over time significantly alter Soviet strategic programs and policies, and thus the overall strategic threat. We take the possibility of such change seriously because Gorbachev has shown himself willing and able to challenge long-cherished precepts in this as in other policy areas. We conclude that sufficiently compelling evidence is lacking to warrant a judgment in this Estimate that the Soviets already have begun to implement fundamental changes in their approach to warfare under Gorbachev. This year, in our assessments of the various elements of Soviet strategic programs and capabilities traditionally presented in this Estimate, we have paid particular attention to indications from the available evidence of whether major change is in the offing. In terms of what the Soviets spend, what they procure, how their strategic forces are deployed, how they plan, and how they exercise, the basic elements of Soviet defense policy and practice appear thus far not to have been changed by Gorbachev's reform campaign. ~~(S/NF)~~

Given the turmoil that Gorbachev has set in motion over many of these issues, Soviet strategic goals and priorities over the longer term have become more difficult for us to predict, and a major change toward a less threatening nuclear doctrine and strategic force structure could occur. We believe, however, it is prudent to adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward the prospects for longer term change in the Soviets' fundamental approach to war. Many key doctrinal issues are far from settled among the Soviets themselves. Furthermore, if we are witnessing a transition in Soviet military thinking, substantial tangible evidence of any change in some areas may not be immediately forthcoming. ~~(S/NF)~~

Strategic Offensive Forces

Evidence and analysis of ongoing development and deployment efforts over the past year have reaffirmed

our judgment that all elements of Soviet intercontinental forces will be extensively modernized between now and the late 1990s, and will be more capable, diverse, and generally more survivable. ~~(S/NF)~~

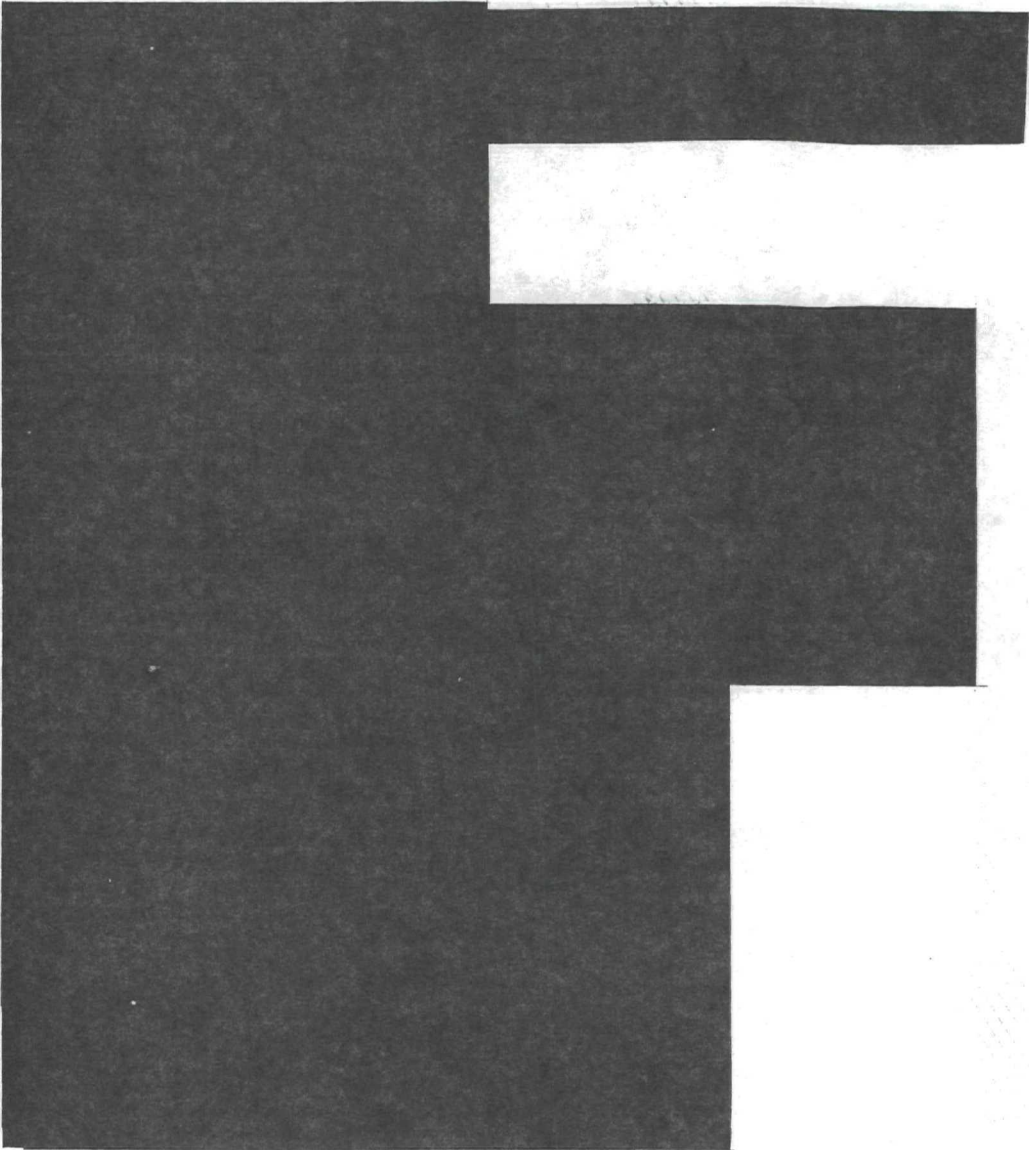
~~(S/NF)~~ The Soviets will move from a force that has primarily consisted of fixed, silo-based ICBMs to a force in which mobile systems (mobile ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers) constitute well over half the deployed forces. A START agreement could have a significant impact on the size and composition of Soviet strategic offensive forces, although we expect most of these modernization efforts to continue in any case. Major changes in the force include:

- **ICBMs.** The Soviets began deployment in 1988 of two new silo-based ICBMs—the SS-18 Mod 5 heavy ICBM with an improved capability to destroy hardened targets and the SS-24 Mod 2, a medium, solid-propellant ICBM with 10 warheads that is replacing the six-warhead SS-19 liquid-propellant ICBM. The new silo-based systems will be increasingly more vulnerable as US countersilo capabilities improve, but will enhance the Soviets' capabilities for prompt attack on hard and soft targets. Over the past year the Soviets also deployed the SS-24 Mod 1 rail-mobile ICBM. These rail-mobile deployments, continued deployments of the road-mobile SS-25 (a single-warhead ICBM), and expected improvements and follow-ons to both missiles will significantly improve Soviet force survivability.
- **SLBMs.** The proportion of survivable Soviet weapons also will grow through the deployment of much better nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and new submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). The new submarines are quieter and are capable of operating from deep under the icepack. Equipped with new long-range SLBMs that have many warheads (four to 10), the Soviet SSBN force of the future will contain fewer submarines

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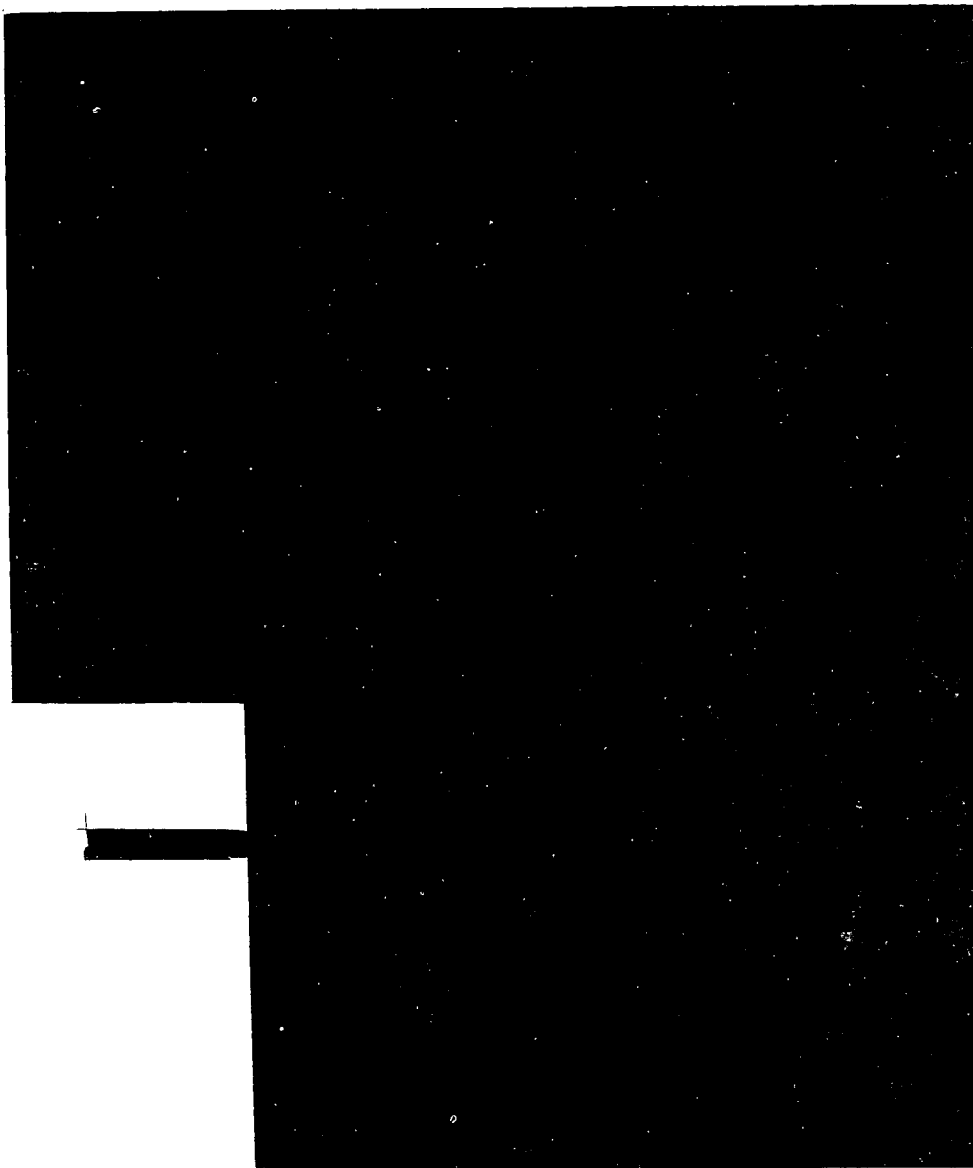
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but more warheads and will be much more survivable. We expect the Soviets to build additional Typhoon and Delta-IV submarines; we judge they will also introduce at least one and possibly two new SLBMs in the 1990s, and probably a new class of SSBN. The Soviets' recently deployed SS-N-23 Mod 2 on the Delta-IV gives them an emerging sea-based capability to destroy hardened targets. We expect, as the Soviets improve the accuracy and responsiveness of their SLBMs, that they will have greater confidence in their ability to attack US ICBM silos, but SLBMs during the next 10 years will not be nearly as effective for this role as Soviet silo-based ICBMs.

- *Bombers and cruise missiles.* Ongoing modernization will give the heavy bomber force a greater role in intercontinental attack, with more weapons and greater force diversity. Production of the Bear H, which carries AS-15 long-range, subsonic, air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), seems to be winding down. A force size of 80 is projected. The new supersonic Blackjack, which can carry ALCMs and short-range air-to-surface missiles, achieved initial operational capability in 1988; the Soviets will likely deploy some 80 to 120 by the late 1990s. The Soviets continue to deploy the Midas—their first modern tanker—in support of the heavy bomber force. We expect up to about 150 Midas to be built by the late 1990s to support both strategic offensive and defensive operations.

[REDACTED]

In 1988 the Soviets launched their second Yankee Notch submarine as a dedicated platform for up to 40 SS-N-21 long-range, subsonic, land-attack, sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). In addition, ALCM and SLCM versions of a large, long-range, supersonic cruise missile are likely to become operational in 1989 and 1990, respectively.

[REDACTED]

we estimate that they may develop low-observable or Stealth cruise missiles for deployment in the mid-to-late 1990s. (S, NE, MW)

Strategic Defensive Forces

The Soviets continue to invest about as heavily in active and passive strategic defenses as they do in offensive forces, and their capabilities are improving in all areas:

- *Air defense.* Soviet capabilities against low-flying bombers and cruise missiles are increasing because of continuing deployments of the SA-10 all-altitude surface-to-air missile and three different types of new lookdown/shutdown aircraft. These will be supported by the Mainstay airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft, which became operational in 1987.
- *Ballistic missile defense.* The new Moscow antiballistic missile (ABM) defenses, eventually with 100 interceptors, should be operational in 1989 and will provide an improved intercept capability against small-scale attacks on key targets around Moscow. The Soviets have developed all the required components for an ABM system that could be used for widespread deployments that would exceed treaty limits. However, we judge that such a widespread deployment is unlikely through at least the mid-1990s.

[REDACTED]

some new ABM components may be under development and might begin testing in the next year or two; if so, a new ABM system could be ready for deployment as early as the late 1990s for Moscow or possibly as part of a widespread system. Also, improving technology is blurring the distinction between air defense and ABM systems—for example, the capabilities of the SA-12 system.

- *Leadership protection.* A primary Soviet objective is to protect and support the leadership from the outset of crisis through a postattack period. The Soviets have had a 40-year program for providing

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hardened and dispersed facilities for the survival of their leadership and for wartime management during a nuclear war. This program includes deep underground facilities, many of which are beneath Moscow or nearby, that would be very difficult to destroy [REDACTED]

- *Laser weapons.* There is strong evidence of Soviet R&D efforts in high-energy lasers for air defense, antisatellite (ASAT), and ballistic missile defense (BMD) applications. There are large uncertainties, however, about how far the Soviets have advanced, the status and goals of any weapon development programs, and the dates for potential prototype or operational capabilities. We expect the Soviets to be able to develop mobile tactical air defense lasers in the 1990s, followed by more powerful strategic systems, although there is a serious question as to whether the Soviets will field many dedicated laser weapons for air defense. Limited capability prototypes for ground-based and space-based ASAT could be available around the year 2000, possibly earlier. If ground-based BMD lasers prove feasible and practical, we expect Soviet technology would allow the Soviets to build a prototype for testing around 2000, maybe a few years earlier, although operational systems probably would not be available for some 10 years after initial prototype testing. The Soviets most likely are considering space-based lasers for BMD. We do not think they will be able to test a feasibility demonstrator before the year 2000, and we estimate that an operational system would not be deployable until much later, perhaps around 2010.
- *Other advanced technologies.* The Soviets are also engaged in extensive research on other technologies that can be applied to ASAT and BMD weapons.

[REDACTED]

there is potential for a surprise development in one or more of these areas. However, the Soviets probably are at least 10 to 15 years away from testing any prototype particle beam weapon for ASAT or BMD. The Soviets might be able to test a ground-based radiofrequency ASAT weapon by the early 1990s. We believe it is possible a space-based, long-range, kinetic-energy BMD weapon could be deployed, but probably no earlier than about 2005.

- *Antisubmarine warfare (ASW).* The Soviets currently lack an effective means of locating in the open ocean either US SSBNs or modern attack submarines (SSNs) carrying land-attack cruise missiles. We see no Soviet solution to this problem on the horizon. We base this judgment on the difficulty we expect the Soviets to encounter in exploiting the basic phenomena of wake detection, and the technological hurdles they face in sensors, high-speed signal processing, and data relay.
- There is a possibility that the Soviets will introduce a space-based submarine detection system during the 1990s that, while it would have little or no ability to detect properly operated SSBNs, might have a very limited capability against US SSNs, under favorable conditions. Missions for such a system would be to detect SSNs operating in Soviet SSBN bastion areas or seeking to launch land-attack cruise missiles near the USSR. Technological and operational difficulties associated with building a complete ASW system would push system operational capabilities well into the first decade of the next century. Surface-towed passive surveillance sonar arrays and low-frequency active sonars will likely be deployed by the mid-1990s for local-area ASW surveillance. We assign a moderate probability to the deployment of an airborne radar by the late 1990s, intended to detect submarine-induced surface phenomena.
- Judgments on future Soviet ASW capabilities must be tempered by the difficulties inherent in forecasting Soviet ASW advances [REDACTED]

Projected Offensive Forces


This year, we have projected five alternative Soviet strategic forces to illustrate possible force postures under various assumptions about the strategic environment the Soviets will perceive over the next 10 years:

- Under a START agreement, as a result of the assessed operational payloads of Soviet bombers and

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assumed rules for counting bomber weapons, a Soviet force of 6,000 accountable weapons would in fact probably contain about 8,000 weapons. In a crisis or wartime situation, the Soviets might be able to deploy a few thousand additional weapons, by augmenting their force with nondeployed mobile missiles and by uploading some missiles to their maximum potential payloads, higher than the accountable number of warheads on these missiles. We note that efforts to deploy additional warheads in crisis or wartime would involve some operational and planning difficulties.

- An alternative view holds that  deploying additional warheads in crisis or wartime (assuming they were available) would be time consuming, disruptive to force readiness and operations, and potentially detectable.²
- Two of the other projected forces are premised on a Soviet belief that relations with the United States are generally satisfactory and, although a START agreement has not been concluded, arms control prospects look good. Intercontinental weapons would probably grow over the next five years from the current number—about 10,000—to between 12,500 and 15,000 depending on modernization and growth rates and military spending levels. (Online weapons, those available after a short generation time, would be about 1,000 to 1,500 fewer, because of submarines in overhaul or empty ICBM silos being modified.) The increase in weapons results from deployment of new systems (SS-24, SS-N-20 follow-on, SS-N-23, Blackjack, Bear H) with more weapons than the systems they replace and not from any increase in launchers. We would expect no additional growth in warheads through the late 1990s.
- In the absence of an arms control process, the Soviets would not necessarily expand their intercontinental attack forces beyond these figures, but they clearly have the capability for significant further expansion. In an environment where the Soviets see

² The holder of this view is the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Department of State. ~~(S)~~

relations with the United States as generally poor and arms control prospects bleak, the number of Soviet intercontinental weapons could grow to over 15,000 in the next five years and some 16,000 by 1998. In all of these cases, the introduction of modernized systems will result in a decline in the number of launchers. ~~(S)~~

We have a projection for an SDI response force that features a greater offensive force expansion (over 18,000 weapons by 1998). The projection is based on a postulated US decision in the early 1990s to deploy land-based ABM interceptors and space-based SDI assets, with actual deployments beginning around 2000. The projection depicts Soviet measures aimed primarily at overwhelming US defenses through sheer numbers of warheads. In addition, Soviet responses could include increased ASAT efforts, BMD deployments, and advanced penetration aids. While increasing the sheer size of their offensive forces would be the Soviets' most viable near-term response, advanced technical countermeasures would be critical to dealing with SDI in the long term. The size of the force could be lower than 18,000, depending on the timing of the introduction of technological countermeasures. Given the uncertain nature of the US program and the potential disruption of Soviet efforts 

 we judge that the deployment of significant numbers of countermeasures is unlikely before the year 2000. ~~(S)~~

Strategic Force Objectives and Operations

We judge that, in part, the Soviets view their strategic forces as effectively deterring adversaries from starting a nuclear war with the USSR and as underpinning the USSR's superpower status. The Soviets also have been preparing their strategic nuclear forces to meet two basic military objectives:

- To intimidate NATO from escalating to nuclear use in a conventional war, so that Warsaw Pact conventional forces have some prospect to secure NATO's defeat without such escalation.
- If global nuclear war occurs, to wage it as effectively as possible as mandated by their nuclear war-fighting strategy.

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Some Soviet public statements now seem to espouse certain longstanding Western strategic theories such as the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), which, in part, in order to provide a rationale for emphasizing second-strike nuclear forces and restraining growth in the US strategic force structure, drew sharp distinctions between deterrence and war-fighting requirements for strategic forces. The Soviets, in our view, despite some recent public differences on the matter, are continuing to build their forces on the premise that forces that are better prepared to effectively fight a nuclear war are also better able to deter such a war. (S/NF)

The Soviets apparently believe that, in the present US-Soviet strategic relationship, each side possesses strategic nuclear capabilities that could devastate the other after absorbing an attack. Thus, the Soviets have strong incentives to avoid risking global nuclear war. Moreover, the Soviets apparently do not believe that this strategic reality will soon change or that either side could acquire a decisive nuclear superiority in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, they continue to procure weapons and plan force operations intended to secure important combat advantages and goals in the event of nuclear war, including, to the extent possible, limiting damage to Soviet forces and society. (S/NF)

In planning for the possibility of actually having to wage a global nuclear war, the Soviets emphasize:

- Massive strikes on enemy forces, passive defenses, and active defenses to limit the damage the enemy can inflict.
- Highly redundant and extensive command, control, and communications (C³) capabilities and leadership protection to ensure continuity of control of the war effort and the integration and coordination of force operations both at the intercontinental level and in Eurasian theaters.
- In general, preparations for more extended operations after the initial strikes. (S/NF)

The Soviets have been increasing the realism in their force training to more fully reflect the complexity of both large-scale conventional and nuclear warfare. Since the late 1970s there has been a continuing Soviet appreciation of the extreme difficulties in

prosecuting a nuclear campaign in the European theater. We believe that the Soviets have become more realistic about the problems of conducting military operations in a nuclear environment, but the requirement to carry out nuclear combat operations as effectively as possible is still one of their highest priorities. Indeed, the Soviets continue to prepare their strategic forces to conduct continuing nuclear combat operations for up to a few months following the initial nuclear strikes. (S/NF)

Nuclear War Initiation and Escalation

In peacetime, the Soviets' lack of high confidence in accomplishing all of their wartime missions, and their appreciation of the destructiveness of nuclear war, would strongly dissuade them from launching a "bolt-from-the-blue" strategic attack. The Soviets also would probably be inhibited from provoking a direct clash with the United States and its NATO Allies that could potentially escalate to global nuclear war. (S/NF)

The Soviets believe that a major nuclear war would be most likely to arise out of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conventional conflict that is preceded by a political crisis. The Soviets see little likelihood that the United States would initiate a surprise nuclear attack from a normal peacetime posture. (S/NF)

In a conventional war in which the Soviets were prevailing, they would have strong incentives to keep the war from escalating. Nevertheless, we continue to judge that the Soviets generally assess a NATO-Warsaw Pact war as likely to escalate to the nuclear level; the Soviets recognize, however, that escalation of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict would be strongly influenced by the course and perceived outcome of the conventional war in Europe. This Soviet assessment appears to be driven, in large part, by the Soviet expectation that NATO—consistent with official NATO doctrine—is highly likely to resort to nuclear weapons to avoid the defeat of its forces on the continent.

The Soviets are capable of executing a

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preventive/first-strike nuclear option in circumstances where they do not anticipate an imminent NATO nuclear strike. Despite our uncertainties about how this option fits into overall Soviet strike planning, we judge that it would be attractive for the Soviets to consider only if Warsaw Pact forces suffered serious setbacks in a conventional war. The Soviets would not expect, in any case, to be able to forestall a devastating counterstrike by the United States or NATO forces. (S-~~NF~~)

The Soviets apparently also have developed a limited nuclear option that focuses on the brief use of small numbers of battlefield nuclear weapons. However, this option has not substantially evolved since the early 1970s when it was first developed. Also, we lack clear indications of limited nuclear options involving strategic weapons despite the growth and improvements in the entire array of Soviet nuclear forces, from battlefield weapons to intercontinental weapons. In the event NATO launches a few small-scale nuclear strikes in the theater that do not disrupt a Warsaw Pact conventional offensive, the Soviets might be willing to absorb such strikes without a nuclear response. (S-~~NF~~)

We judge that, if the Soviets had convincing evidence that the United States intended to launch a large-scale strike with its strategic forces (in, for example, an ongoing theater war in Europe), they would attempt to preempt. It is more difficult to judge whether they would decide to preempt in situations where they see inherently high risks of global nuclear war but have only ambiguous evidence of the United States' intentions to launch its strategic forces. The Soviets have strong incentives to preempt in order to maximize damage to US forces and limit damage to Soviet forces and society. Exercising restraint could jeopardize the Soviets' chances for effectively waging nuclear war. Because preempting on the basis of ambiguous evidence, however, could initiate global nuclear war unnecessarily, the Soviets would also have to consider such factors as: the probable nuclear devastation of their homeland that would result; the reliability of their other nuclear employment options (launching their forces quickly upon warning that a US ICBM attack is under way and retaliating after absorbing enemy strikes); and their prospects for eventual success on the conventional battlefield. We cannot

ultimately judge how the Soviets would actually weigh these difficult trade-offs. (S-~~NF~~)

Strategic Force Capabilities

Because of the Soviets' demanding requirements for force effectiveness, they are likely to rate their capabilities as lower in some areas than we would assess them to be. They are probably apprehensive about the implications of US strategic force modernization programs—including significant improvements in US C³ capabilities—and are especially concerned about the US SDI program and its potential to undercut Soviet military strategy. Although we do not have specific evidence on how the Soviets assess their prospects in a global nuclear war, we judge that they would not have high confidence in the capability of their strategic offensive and defensive forces to accomplish all of their wartime missions—particularly limiting the extent of damage to the Soviet homeland. (S-~~NF~~)

The Soviets have enough hard-target-capable ICBM reentry vehicles today to attack all US missile silos and launch control centers with at least two warheads each. The projected accuracy and yield improvements for the SS-18 Mod 5 ICBM now being deployed would result in a substantial increase in the effectiveness of a 2-on-1 attack. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We judge that heavy ICBMs will continue to be the primary and most effective weapons against US missile silos during the next 10 years, but some SLBMs and probably other ICBMs are expected to acquire a capability to kill hard targets and thus supplement heavy ICBMs in carrying out the overall hard-target mission. (S-~~NF~~)

Over the next 10 years, we expect that Soviet offensive forces will not be able to effectively target and destroy patrolling US SSBNs, alert aircraft, aircraft in flight, or dispersed mobile ICBMs. However, we judge that, for a comprehensive Soviet attack against North America, the Soviets currently have enough warheads to meet most and probably all of their other targeting objectives in a preemptive strike. This would also be the case if the Soviets could accomplish a reasonably successful launch-on-tactical-warning (LOTW). However, we judge that the Soviets would have insufficient warheads to achieve high damage goals against US ICBM silos if they were to retaliate

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after absorbing an initial US attack because of expected Soviet losses in their silo-based ICBMs. On balance, we judge that, even with implementation of the INF Treaty and 50-percent reductions of a START treaty, combined with severe constraints on the deployment of ballistic missile defenses, the Soviets could probably meet their worldwide fixed targeting objectives as effectively as with current forces.

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Strategic Policy Issues Under Gorbachev

The Soviets claim that they are reorienting their military doctrine to focus more on defensive operations—the concept of “defensive defense”—and are applying a more stringent criterion of “reasonable sufficiency” in determining military force requirements. The Soviet military appears to be reexamining the nature of a future war. In addition, statements by key political and military leaders indicate that they are examining such issues as the winnability of nuclear war, the basis for a credible strategic deterrent, preemption, and how much is enough for defense. Although we have considerable uncertainty about where these matters stand, we make the following judgments:

- *Nature of a future war.* Nuclear warfare remains a dominant factor in the Soviets' war plans, although they have been devoting more attention over the past several years to the possibility of a prolonged conventional war. Thus far, we see no convincing evidence that the Soviets under Gorbachev are making fundamental changes in their approach to actually fighting nuclear war. Our evidence points to continuing Soviet programs to develop and refine options for both nuclear and conventional war, including longer conventional combat and defensive operations, in order to cope with NATO's improving conventional capabilities—much as the Soviets have worked since the 1970s on improving their options for more extended strategic nuclear operations.
- *Soviet nuclear warfighting objectives.* Among other actions, Soviet leaders have incorporated a “no nuclear victory” position in the recent party program; some military writings, however, have continued to cite the victory objective. There are differences in the US Intelligence Community over what this means. We judge that, in any case, the Soviets continue to be committed to acquiring capabilities

that could be important in achieving the best possible outcome in any future war. There is no indication that the Soviets were ever sanguine about the consequences they would expect to suffer in a war no matter which side struck first. At the same time, they have continued to believe that nuclear war is possible, and they have consistently pursued a warfighting strategy that goes beyond deterrence and includes the acquisition of both offensive and defensive warfighting capabilities.

- *Superiority, sufficiency, defensive defense.* We judge that the Soviets continue to place high value on combat advantages in nuclear war, but believe it is highly unlikely that decisive nuclear superiority is achievable by either side in the foreseeable future. There is an ongoing debate among the leadership concerning how much is enough for defense, focused on the concept of “reasonable sufficiency.” Although couched in doctrinal terms and aimed in part at Western audiences, the debate at this point appears to be primarily about resource allocations. An alternative view holds that, while Soviet discussions about “reasonable sufficiency” involve, in part, resource allocation issues, they are designed primarily to reduce US/NATO force modernization efforts by proclaiming a less threatening Soviet posture.³ Much of the Soviet public discussion about “defensive defense” appears aimed at influencing Western opinion, particularly to allay Western concerns about the Soviet conventional threat in the context of nuclear arms reductions. The concept, however, also may be perceived by Soviet military leaders as another device for political leaders to challenge traditional military outlays. To date, as demonstrated in the strategic force programs and resource commitments we have examined, we have not detected changes under Gorbachev that clearly illustrate that either new security concepts or new resource constraints are taking hold.

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Resources

Heavy investment in the defense industries since the late 1970s will enable the Soviets to produce the strategic forces projected in this Estimate at least

³ The holder of this view is the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

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through the early-to-middle 1990s. For some basic materials and intermediate goods used in the production process, however, competition within the defense sector and between the military and civilian economies might be stiff during this period. It is possible these factors could somewhat affect the rate at which some strategic systems are introduced and the levels deployed. Nevertheless, the large sunk costs in production for new strategic weapons and the fact that such production facilities cannot readily be converted to civilian uses mean that Gorbachev's industrial modernization goals almost certainly will not have major effects on strategic weapons deployments through the mid-1990s. However, new construction of defense plants and retooling of existing facilities will be required in the late 1980s and early 1990s to produce new weapons for the late 1990s and beyond. (S, NF)

Gorbachev might attempt to save resources by deferring some strategic programs, stretching out procurement rates, and placing more emphasis on replacing older systems on a less than 1-for-1 basis. Major savings could be achieved, in the next several years, only through cutbacks in general purpose forces and programs, which account for the vast majority of Soviet defense spending. Further, for both political as well as military reasons, Gorbachev almost certainly would not authorize unilateral cuts in the size of the strategic forces. We expect, therefore, that Gorbachev will choose to continue his vigorous campaign for deep cuts in both strategic and conventional forces through arms control and for slower growth in defense spending. (S, NF)

Although we do not believe that the Soviets' economic difficulties are the primary reason for their interest in arms control, we believe that concerns over the economy's performance, as well as foreign policy benefits, heighten Moscow's interest in strategic as well as conventional arms control agreements and have contributed to the greater negotiating flexibility evident under Gorbachev's leadership. We judge, however, that Soviet force decisions, including potential arms control agreements, will continue to be more strongly influenced by the requirement to meet military and political objectives than by economic concerns. The Soviets see arms control as a way of avoiding the costs of an escalated military competition with the United

States that would, by requiring increased defense spending, force them to reduce the resources scheduled to go elsewhere in the future. Restraining or eliminating SDI, for example, could free enormous amounts of technical and industrial resources vital to other Soviet military and civilian programs, which would otherwise be spent on countermeasures, and the Soviets could pursue advanced technology efforts at their own pace. In addition, they apparently anticipate savings from strategic arms control agreements, which, while small in comparison with the economy's needs, could be used to help alleviate critical bottlenecks and help advance priority programs such as those for industrial modernization. Some of the potential savings, however, might be used for other military purposes. In the near term, the civilian economy would accrue only small benefits from reducing or even eliminating particular strategic systems that are well under development and for which production facilities have been constructed; also, strategic offensive programs account for only about 10 percent of the Soviet military budget. (S, NF)

Arms Control

The Soviets' recent positions on strategic arms control should not be taken as an indicator of whether or not they are implementing a fundamental change in their approach to nuclear war. On the one hand, the asymmetric reductions and acceptance of intrusive on-site inspections entailed by the INF Treaty and apparent Soviet willingness to accept deep strategic force reductions in START do reflect a marked change in political attitude on security issues under Gorbachev. On the other hand, the Soviets' stance on arms control thus far allows them to continue to pursue certain combat advantages, while seeking to constrain US and NATO force modernization—especially in such areas as ballistic missile defense, space warfare, and advanced technology conventional weapons—and at the same time seeking to protect the key capabilities of their own forces. Further, the Soviets see the INF Treaty and a potential START agreement as helping to establish a more predictable environment in which to plan strategic force modernization. Overall, we do not see Moscow's recent arms control positions resulting in strategic forces that the Soviets would perceive as less capable of waging a nuclear war. (S, NF)

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23. NIE 11-3/8-91, August 1991, *Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Year 2000* (Key Judgments)

Director of Central Intelligence

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Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Year 2000 ~~(C-NF)~~

National Intelligence Estimate

Key Judgments

*These Key Judgments represent the views
of the Director of Central Intelligence
with the advice and assistance of the
US Intelligence Community.*

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NIE 11-3/8-91W
8 August 1991

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The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of these Key Judgments:

The Central Intelligence Agency
 The Defense Intelligence Agency
 The National Security Agency
 The Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research,
 Department of State
 The Director for Intelligence,
 Department of Energy

also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
 Department of the Army
 The Director of Naval Intelligence,
 Department of the Navy
 The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
 Department of the Air Force
 The Director of Intelligence,
 Headquarters, Marine Corps

The National Foreign Intelligence Board concurs.

The full text of this Estimate is being published separately with regular distribution.

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Soviet Forces and Capabilities for Strategic Nuclear Conflict Through the Year 2000 (C NF)

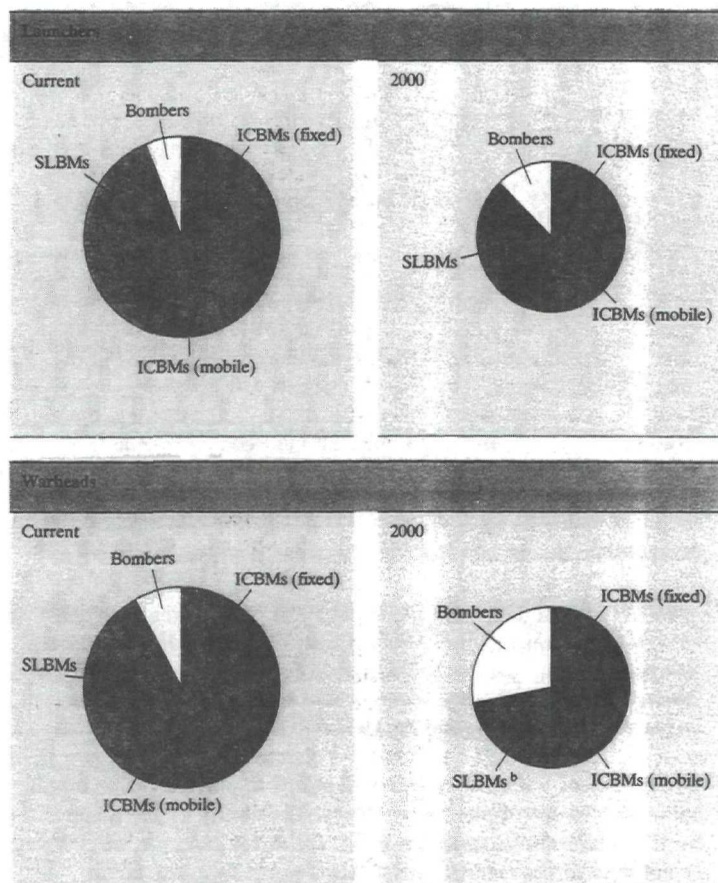
- The decline of the Soviet Union has caused its leaders to view their national security and superpower status as hinging more than ever on strategic nuclear power. Barring a collapse of central authority or the economy, we expect the Soviets to retain and modernize powerful, survivable strategic forces throughout the next decade. ~~(S NF)~~
- We have evidence that five new strategic ballistic missiles are in development—two land based and three sea launched. If these programs continue, four of them would begin deployment in the mid-1990s. ~~(S NF)~~
- Nevertheless, we believe that political upheaval and economic decline will lead to the cancellation or serious delay of one or more of these programs. The Soviet economy will be unable to support a sustained military production and deployment effort in the 1990s comparable to that of the 1980s, even for strategic forces. ~~(S NF)~~
- Production and deployment rates of some new strategic systems have been reduced as the Soviets adjust their programs in expectation of 35- to 40-percent reductions in both launchers and warheads under START. These force cuts would enable them to realize important savings in spending. ~~(S NF)~~
- Soviet nuclear controls appear well suited to prevent the seizure or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. The ability of the General Staff to maintain its cohesion in the event, for example, of civil war or collapse of the central government, would be a key factor determining whether nuclear controls would break down. ~~(S NF)~~

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23. (Continued)

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Soviet Intercontinental Attack Forces Under START^a



^a The change in the area of the circles for the year 2000 indicates the projected reduction in the size of the force.

^b The Director of Naval Intelligence projects that the number of SLBM warheads will continue to comprise about one-third of the number of strategic warheads under START.

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Key Judgments

New Policy Context

We confront divergent trends in Soviet strategic nuclear policy. On one hand, the diminished Soviet conventional threat to Western Europe has significantly lessened the chances of East-West conflict and thus of global nuclear war. On the other hand, Soviet strategic nuclear forces remain large and powerful, major modernization programs are in progress, and Soviet nuclear strategy evidently retains its traditional war-fighting orientation. ~~(S-NF)~~

As a result of the crumbling of many other aspects of the Soviet Union's overall superpower position, current Soviet leaders appear to view their security and superpower status as hinging more than ever on strategic nuclear power. Over the past year, statements by various Soviet political and military officials have emphasized the increasing importance of Soviet strategic nuclear power. Barring a collapse of central authority or the economy, it seems clear that Soviet leaders will continue to try to shield their strategic forces and programs from the impact of political unrest and economic decline. At the same time, strategic forces have not been exempt from defense spending cuts since 1988, as procurement spending for both strategic offensive and defensive forces has fallen. ~~(S-NF)~~

We have significant uncertainties about the future roles of reformers, separatists, hardliners, and the Soviet military itself in charting the course of Soviet strategic policy.¹ The possibility remains, therefore, that a reformist regime might challenge the need to maintain strategic nuclear forces comparable to those of the United States to ensure superpower status and might settle for a lower level of force solely for deterrence. ~~(S-NF)~~

In light of the grave economic, political, and social difficulties afflicting the USSR, we are more skeptical than we were last year that the Soviets will be able to implement fully in the coming decade their modernization plans

¹ For discussion of four alternative futures, which the Intelligence Community believes captures the major possibilities for how the Soviet political and economic situation might develop over the next five years, see NIE 11-18-91: *Implications of Alternative Soviet Futures*, ~~(Secret-NF-NC)~~ July 1991. ~~(S-NF)~~

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for their strategic offensive and defensive forces. The Soviet economy will be unable to support a sustained military production and deployment effort in the 1990s comparable to that of the 1980s, even for strategic forces. Indeed, the defense sector is already experiencing some of the disruptions that beset the civilian economy. Some facilities for strategic forces seem to be affected, but these difficulties do not yet appear to have had an appreciable effect on the production or deployment of strategic forces. Observed reductions in Soviet spending on strategic forces appear to be primarily the result of programmatic decisions rather than unplanned disruptions. ~~(S-NF)~~

Separatist pressure in some republics raises the possibility that the center could lose control over certain strategic production facilities, R&D facilities, and test sites. A loss of control would at least complicate and could severely cripple the overall modernization of strategic forces. Moreover, the ability of the central government to fund defense programs depends on economic revenues from the republics, particularly the Russian Republic, some of which are withholding substantial funds. Separatist problems could also affect the deployment and operation of strategic forces. The Baltic republics, for example, are key to the strategic air defense of the northwestern approach to the USSR. We judge that, even if the central government eventually grants the Baltic republics greater autonomy or independence, it would seek to negotiate basing rights with them to preserve these defenses, at least until they could be relocated or replaced. Gorbachev as well as Yeltsin and other republic leaders are working on arrangements for a new union treaty, but we have large uncertainties about relations between the center and the republics over the long term, and how strategic forces might be affected. ~~(S-NF)~~

Nuclear Security and Control

The Soviets have established physical security and use-control measures that appear well suited to prevent the seizure or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. These measures minimize the risk that renegade military officers or other dissidents could gain access to nuclear weapons and threaten to use them. Since the late 1980s, heightened concern about potential internal threats has prompted the Soviets to strengthen security, including removing some warheads from areas of unrest. However, a military coup, the collapse of the central government, or a civil war might threaten the center's ability to maintain these controls. Because of the General Staff's crucial role in controlling nuclear weapons, maintenance of its cohesion in these situations would be a key factor determining whether a breakdown of nuclear controls would occur. ~~(S-NF)~~

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START

At present, a broad array of both strategic offensive and defensive systems are in various stages of development, production, or deployment. The rates of production and deployment of some new systems, however, have been lower in the past few years than we anticipated from past practices. As a result, strategic force modernization has slowed somewhat. We attribute these trends primarily to programmatic decisions made in the late 1980s, in particular Soviet preparations for an eventual START agreement that would allow savings by not building forces beyond START levels. ~~(S-~~TOP~~)~~

Soviet political and military leaders have strong incentives to see START implemented. Political leaders perceive an opportunity to reduce military expenditures and create a climate that fosters foreign economic aid. Military leaders see an opportunity to modernize their forces under a treaty that would preserve the relative strategic balance between the United States and USSR, introduce an element of predictability in strategic force planning, and bolster US incentives to reduce spending on strategic and other military forces. ~~(S-~~TOP~~)~~

For several years, Soviet military leaders have been adjusting their strategic programs to fit START limits. Soviet strategic intercontinental nuclear forces currently stand at about 2,400 launchers and 10,500 deployed warheads; under probable Soviet planning assumptions for START, these forces would decline by some 35 to 40 percent to 1,400 launchers and 6,700 warheads to comply with the Treaty. ~~(S-~~TOP~~)~~

START II

[REDACTED]

A force of 3,000 to 4,000 weapons would require the Soviets significantly to revise their targeting strategy, but they still would be able to deliver a devastating countermilitary strike.

[REDACTED]

It is unlikely that the General Staff would gear its long-term strategic planning to such an uncertain prospect as START II, although they probably are preparing contingency plans. ~~(S-~~TOP~~)~~

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Strategic Offensive Forces

The Soviets are moving from a force of which nearly half consists of silo-based ICBMs to one consisting mainly of mobile ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and bombers. Under START, well over half of all Soviet deployed warheads would be on mobile systems, although we project some 2,200 warheads would still be on silo-based ICBMs. Five new ballistic missiles are in development—two land based and three sea based. If these programs continue, we project flight-testing of four of them to begin within the next two to three years with deployments beginning in the mid-1990s. In the midst of political upheaval and economic decline, however, we believe that one or more of the five programs is likely to be canceled or seriously delayed:

- *ICBMs.* The Soviets continue to deploy the new SS-18 Mod 5 silo-based ICBM, which enhances capabilities for prompt attack, and the SS-25 road-mobile ICBM, which significantly improves force survivability. They have apparently completed the deployment of the SS-24 Mod 1 rail-mobile ICBM and the Mod 2 silo-based ICBM. Follow-on missiles to both the SS-25 and SS-24 are currently being developed.
- *SLBMs.* The Soviet SSBN force of the future will consist of considerably fewer submarines than today but will be equipped mostly with modern, long-range SLBMs. The Soviets are modifying Typhoon submarines to carry the SS-N-20 follow-on missile, which is being readied for flight-testing within the next year. In addition to the seven Delta-IV submarines already built, four additional submarines, which are probably modified Delta-IVs, probably are under construction. We project that these submarines will carry a new, liquid-propellant SLBM, which we anticipate will be armed with a single warhead. (There is a chance, however, that the Soviets are not building any new modified Delta-IV SSBNs.) There is evidence that a new SSBN is being developed and that it will be armed with a new, solid-propellant SLBM.
- *Bombers.* The Soviets continue to produce the Blackjack, their new strategic bomber, at the rate of three or four a year. We project about 40 will be deployed by 2000, a lower total than we previously had projected. Production of the Bear H cruise missile carrier has slowed and may soon end. ~~(S NE W)~~

The Soviets have enough warheads to mount a comprehensive attack against fixed targets worldwide (while still retaining weapons in reserve), whether they conducted a preemptive strike or launched on tactical warning. They would retain the same capabilities under proposed START constraints, but they would have fewer weapons in reserve. ~~(S NE)~~

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Heavy SS-18 ICBMs will remain the primary and most effective weapons against US missile silos during the next 10 years, but some SLBMs and other ICBMs also will be able to destroy hard targets. The SS-18 Mod 5 is about twice as effective against hard targets as the SS-18 Mod 4 that it is replacing; this difference in effectiveness probably enabled the Soviet military to agree to halve the SS-18 force under START. ~~(S/NF)~~

Strategic Defensive Forces

The Soviets will continue to devote considerable resources to strategic defense, at least through the early 1990s. Nonetheless, with Soviet military resources declining and arms treaties and budget cuts constraining Western capabilities, pressure is increasing to shrink Soviet strategic defense programs. During the past year, the level of effort has decreased somewhat but with little effect on Soviet strategic defensive capabilities:

- *Antisubmarine Warfare.* The extensive Soviet ASW program has made some gains. The Soviets have an improved, although limited, ability to detect and engage enemy submarines in waters adjacent to the USSR. In the future, the combined effect of multiple layers of ASW systems may constitute a significant challenge to Western submarine operations in Soviet-controlled waters. We judge, however, that through at least the next 15 to 20 years the Soviets will remain incapable of threatening US SSBNs and SSNs in the open ocean.
- *Air Defense.* We project considerably smaller, but heavily modernized strategic air defenses, with a doubling of deployed systems with good capabilities to engage low-altitude vehicles. Modernization programs include deployment of SA-10 surface-to-air-missiles, Foxhound and Flanker interceptors with lookdown/shutdown capabilities, and Mainstay airborne warning and control system aircraft. New versions of these systems also are in development. We judge that, in the event of a major US nuclear attack, the current Soviet air defense system would be unable to prevent large-scale, low-altitude penetration of Soviet airspace. In the coming decade, however, Soviet strategic air defenses will be much more capable of engaging low-altitude vehicles. As a result, penetration by currently deployed US bombers and cruise missiles will become more difficult, particularly in the heavily defended western USSR. If the B-2 bomber and advanced cruise missile achieve the desired level of reduced observability, using tactics appropriate to stealth vehicles they probably would be able to penetrate most of the Soviet Union at low altitude. The capabilities of Soviet air defenses will place some limitations on operations of the B-2 bomber, however.

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- *Ballistic Missile and Space Defense.* The modernized Moscow antiballistic missile (ABM) system, which will eventually have 100 silo-based interceptors, provides an improved intercept capability against small-scale attacks. Through the late 1990s, the Soviets are highly unlikely to undertake widespread ABM deployments that would exceed ABM Treaty limits. Current Soviet antisatellite-capable systems pose a threat to US low-altitude satellites, but the only Soviet capability against high-altitude satellites is electronic warfare.
- *Directed Energy Weapons.* The Soviets are continuing efforts to develop high-energy lasers for air defense, antisatellite, and ballistic missile defense applications. There are large uncertainties and differences of view among agencies, however, about how far the Soviets have advanced, the status and goals of weapon development programs, and the dates for potential prototype or operational capabilities. We judge that within the next two decades the Soviets are likely to develop air defense lasers, ground-based antisatellite lasers, and ground-based radiofrequency anti-satellite weapons. The Soviets continue to be interested in developing space-based laser weapons.
- *Leadership Protection.* For 40 years, the Soviet Union has had a vast program under way to ensure the survival of its leaders in the event of nuclear war. This program has involved the construction of an extensive network of deep underground bunkers, tunnels, and secret subway lines in urban and rural areas. There is recent evidence that substantial construction activity continues, and we expect the program to move forward along traditional lines. ~~(S-NF)~~

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24. NIE 11-30-91C, December 1991, *The Winter of the Soviet Military:
Cohesion or Collapse?*



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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The Winter of the Soviet Military: Cohesion or Collapse?

National Intelligence Estimate

*This National Intelligence Estimate represents
the views of the Director of Central Intelligence
with the advice and assistance of the
US Intelligence Community.*

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NIE 11-30-91C
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NIE 11-30-91C

The Winter of the Soviet Military: Cohesion or Collapse? ~~(CONF)~~

*Information available as of 5 December 1991 was used
in the preparation of this National Intelligence Estimate.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
The Bureau of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State

also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
The Director of Naval Intelligence,
Department of the Navy
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force
The Director of Intelligence,
Headquarters, Marine Corps

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24. (Continued)

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This Estimate is one of a series to be published in the coming weeks on various crises facing the former USSR.

The multiplicity of problems facing the new governments and their limited ability to cope with them make it likely that one or more of these problems will take on "worst case" proportions. This Estimate focuses on the cohesion of the Soviet military only over the winter and does not address all the components that constitute current Soviet military capability (C NE)

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Key Judgments

The Winter of the Soviet Military: Cohesion or Collapse? ~~(E-NF)~~

- Forces unleashed by the collapse of the Soviet system are breaking up its premier artifact—the Soviet military; the high command cannot halt this process. While a centralized command and control system continues to operate, political and economic collapse is beginning to fragment the military into elements loyal to the republics or simply devoted to self-preservation. These forces include:

- Fragmentation:

- Republic action to take control of units, equipment, and facilities could provoke conflicts of loyalty within the armed forces.
- Shortages of basic necessities are prompting commanders of major formations to seek ties to local political bodies.
- Commanders who do not receive local support may act on their own to seize or extort basic necessities.

- Shortages:

- Housing shortfalls continue to undermine morale and cohesion.
- Traditionally first in line for high-tech resources, the military now has difficulty obtaining food and fuel.
- Triple-digit inflation and the lack of a military budget threaten pay.

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— Erosion of legitimacy and discipline:

- Since the August coup, questioning of traditional discipline has increased, and officers face difficult decisions about whom to obey.
- The disappearance of an external threat has increased officer disorientation.
- Massive officer cuts further erode discipline and morale. The uncertain future, coupled with a general lack of transferable job skills, heightens officer concern. ~~(S-NF)~~

• The picture with respect to cohesion in the armed forces is mixed:

~~_____~~ we have detected little change in the day-to-day activity of much of the force, suggesting unit integrity and nominal responsiveness to the chain of command.

- On the other hand, senior Soviet officers acknowledge serious problems, and a growing body of anecdotal evidence indicates an increasing tendency for unit commanders to challenge orders that threaten the well-being of their troops.

The armed forces are likely over the winter to continue to exhibit basic unit integrity and responsiveness, but, as the center fails to provide essential goods and services, the established chain of command will become increasingly irrelevant. ~~(S-NF)~~

- Moreover, merely getting through the winter will present a false picture of military cohesion and stability. The most likely scenario will be continued decay and breakup of the Soviet armed forces. Halting this trend would require countering the centrifugal forces at work in the former Soviet Union and a major improvement in the economic conditions now affecting the military. ~~(S-NF)~~
- Although less likely, there is still a significant chance of rapid disintegration and widespread violence if a large number of units seek autonomy or military organization collapses. ~~(S-NF)~~
- Even less likely is the involvement of the armed forces in a large-scale civil war between or within major republics during the winter. ~~(S-NF)~~

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Discussion

Armies are microcosms of their societies; often indeed their core.

Michael Howard
The Lessons of History

Everything I have devoted my whole life to building is collapsing.

Suicide Note of Marshal Akhromeyev

Forces unleashed by the collapse of the Soviet system are breaking up its premier artifact—the Soviet military. While a centralized command and control system continues to operate, political and economic collapse threatens to fragment the military into elements loyal to the republics or simply devoted to self-preservation. Widespread shortages are depriving military personnel and their families of basic necessities, damaging morale. The events surrounding the failed coup and the collapse of the Communist Party challenge the moral basis of the officer corps, the authority of the center, and the chain of command. The disappearance of the perceived Western threat and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact have increased the sense of disorientation among officers. These forces threaten military cohesion, that is, the ability of units at all levels to maintain organizational integrity and respond to orders from an acknowledged chain of command. ~~(S/NF)~~

Stresses on the Military

Fragmentation

Plans by several republic and regional governments to take control of units, facilities, and equipment on their territory will increase pressure on military unity. So far, these plans amount largely to declarations of intent, but, should a republic decide to take control of a major unit, installation, or nuclear weapons, a showdown with the center could provoke conflicts of loyalty within the armed forces. Defense Minister Shaposhnikov and Interior Minister Barannikov, for

example, stated in November that force would be used to counter republic attempts to turn such declarations into reality. ~~(S/NF)~~

We believe that through the winter more large military formations will seek ties to local political entities. Many units have longstanding ties to republics or subrepublic areas from which they receive economic essentials. A few Ground Forces units in Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Russia already have offered allegiance to the republics where they are stationed. Failing a local accommodation, some unit commanders may try to take direct control of supplies or, alternatively, engage in warlord-like extortion. ~~(S/NF)~~

The shift in political power to the republics has allowed the nationalist genie to escape from the Stalinist bottle, a condition that hastens fragmentation. Ukraine's situation illustrates one especially dramatic aspect of the pressure of nationalism. Its declaration of independence and demand for its own forces threaten to split the Soviet military. Ukrainians constitute some 30 percent of the officer corps and 17 percent of the conscripts, according to Soviet sources. Many of these personnel may join the Ukrainian armed forces. ~~(S/NF)~~

As a result of the accommodation by the central Ministry of Defense (MOD) to republic demands for a "stay at home" conscription policy, Ground Force units in the republics are becoming more homogeneous (68 percent of Azerbaijan-based units are Azeri). This process, combined with republic concern about possible violence to obtain supplies, may lead to "creeping absorption" of units by local governments. ~~(S/NF)~~

Shortages of Basic Goods and Services

The Soviet military, traditionally first in line for high-tech resources, now finds it difficult to obtain food and fuel (see figure). It can no longer command the

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delivery of basic items across republic boundaries amid widespread shortages and a growing barter system. Industrial and agricultural enterprises increasingly ignore orders to supply the armed forces in return for "wooden rubles." (S-NF)

Units throughout the military confront worsening shortages:



Housing shortfalls continue to undermine military morale and cohesion:

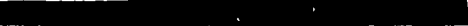


- Soviet media reported in November that troops in the Baltic states—including an elite airborne unit—refused to leave until "normal social and living conditions are created at their new postings." (S-NF-NO-06)

Military pay is also threatened. Salary increases have not kept pace with triple-digit inflation. Some units have not been paid on time, a problem that will become more widespread in the absence of a military budget. Yel'tsin recently promised that Russia will pay the military (and double their pay), but in the short run this probably will require printing more money, thereby increasing inflation. (S-NF)

The capacity of the armed forces to deal with these problems is limited. Military command and control, logistics, and personnel systems are designed for

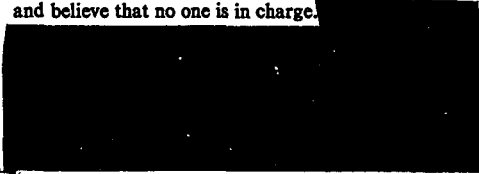
central control and have only limited ability to respond to current developments. Despite such resources as military farms and reserves of food, fuel, and other commodities—



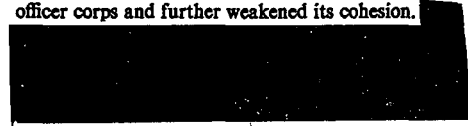
commanders look elsewhere for help. Units get supplies from civilian enterprises in return for labor and sell or rent military equipment. The Chief of the General Staff has asked the Soviet public to donate to a newly created charity for the military. Clearly, such makeshift efforts will not solve the problem. Only improvement in the economy coupled with either interrepublic agreement on military funding or complete breakup into republic armed forces can do that. (S-NF-NO-06)

Erosion of Legitimacy and Discipline

Soviet officers also face fundamental questions of loyalty and discipline. They are uncertain how to act in the present chaotic political situation. In theory, the armed forces are under control of the central state apparatus, but some officers question its legitimacy and believe that no one is in charge.



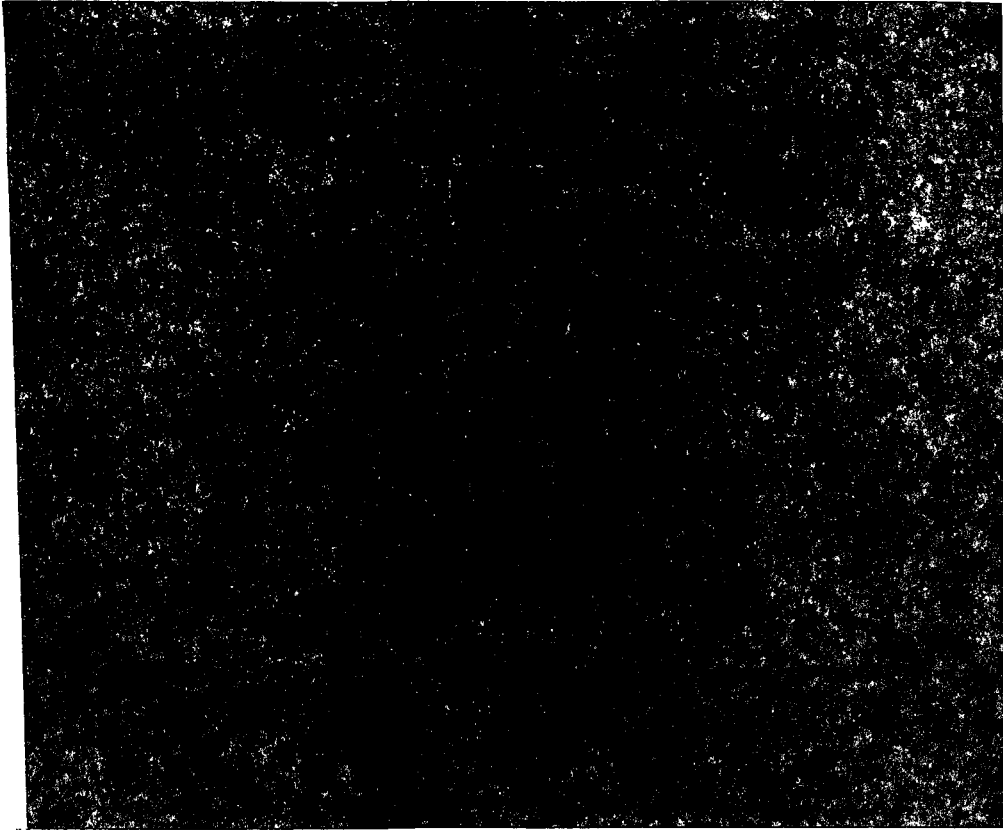
Since the August coup attempt, questioning of traditional military discipline has spread within the officer corps. The actions of senior officers—Defense Minister Yazov supported the coup while Air Force Chief Shaposhnikov opposed it—exacerbated splits in the officer corps and further weakened its cohesion.



Officers face increasingly difficult decisions about whom to obey. Those who supported the "right side" while disobeying their superiors—such as the Pacific Fleet officers who supported Yel'tsin—are sometimes praised. Others who followed orders are condemned.

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Traditional obedience to orders is no longer adequate; officers are not to obey a "clearly criminal" order. But they have been given no clear guidance on what constitutes such an order. ~~(S-NT)~~

Massive officer reductions further erode discipline and morale. Gorbachev's announcement in December 1988 of a unilateral reduction of 500,000 men included a cut of about 100,000 officers, and additional cuts are scheduled. Most Soviet officers, to a much greater degree than Western counterparts, lack transferable skills; the uncertain future intensifies their fear. ~~(S-NT)~~

Units Become Pressure Points

The effects of these pressures—fragmentation, shortages, and the erosion of legitimacy and discipline—come together at the garrison, divisional, and regimental levels. Individual commanders must deal directly with these new problems. On the whole, they have done a reasonably good job. Whatever their internal problems, most Soviet units retain their basic structure and equipment and, with varying degrees of success, continue some routine operations and training. With no clear alternative, most Soviet officers follow the well-worn patterns of the past. ~~(S-NT)~~

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Prospects for the Winter

Over the winter it is likely that the armed forces will maintain cohesion. We expect cohesion to hold whether the armed forces continue to decay under the nominal control of central authorities or whether agreements among republics lead to division of the armed forces among them. The latter case would mean the end of the traditional Soviet military. Even in a situation where its basic structures are maintained, however, the military will likely lose control of some units to republics and localities, or even collapse. Such loss of control could lead to incidents of localized violence. (S NF)

Decay will continue. The pressures undermining the military cannot be checked or alleviated over the next several months. The situation—and the military's condition after the winter—will vary by service and from republic to republic. Simultaneous and interdependent outcomes are possible. The ultimate character of the outcome will depend on the military's institutional coherence; its allegiance to civil authorities; its ability to satisfy basic needs; and its willingness to accept increasing hardship and uncertainty. (S NF)

Our conclusion that the armed forces are likely to maintain cohesion over the winter reflects the following:

- Military service, for all its problems, will continue to be more appealing to many than a return to civilian life. The availability of resources in military supply channels and reserve stockpiles, in contrast to bleak civil prospects, will keep many units largely intact.
- Most officers support military subordination to civil authority.
- Yel'tsin has promised to fund the MOD, albeit with major cuts. (S NF)

Getting through the winter relatively peacefully, however, could present a false picture of military cohesion and stability. Spring will find the military under increased pressures and with fewer resources. Absent

interrepublic political and economic agreements, there will be even less hope of a solution to the problems facing the military. The reliability of military forces ordered to take unpopular actions, such as suppression of civil unrest, is open to serious question. The effect of such orders probably would be to accelerate the disintegration of the armed forces. (S NF)

Ironically, one of the most disruptive, but least likely, developments—a coup initiated by the military—would require cohesion in the units involved to ensure that orders would be obeyed. The unsettled atmosphere in the officer corps, confusion about the legitimacy of traditional authority, and a reluctance to take action that might accelerate military disintegration inhibit such an act.

Such a coup attempt would reflect a desperate judgment by military leaders that there was no other alternative. A failed coup attempt could precipitate a descent into civil war. (S NF)

Alternative Outcomes

Though unlikely, there is still a significant chance of outcomes involving the severe degradation or destruction of organizational cohesion. These include widespread local unit autonomy and total collapse of the armed forces:

- *Widespread local unit autonomy.* Traditionally strong ties between some units and local civilian authorities and the trend toward local and regional autarky in the economy could produce even more fragmentation in the military structure, leading to autonomous action by units operating in their own interest. The armed forces would retain unit cohesion but fragment on a regional, rayon, or oblast basis. The pressure on military officers to deal with local civilian authorities on a basis of food for

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loyalty or to ensure more military influence in civil affairs could become stronger. Unit accommodations with local authorities would bolster local ties and lead to allegiance to republic or subrepublic governments. On the darker side, where local authorities refused cooperation, units could assume local control or, alternatively, extort supplies from local authorities.

- *Collapse.* Conditions worse than we anticipate—widespread failure to provide military personnel and their families with basic goods and services, collapse of discipline, and lawlessness throughout society—would destroy existing military organization. Large numbers of soldiers would desert. Gangs of deserters would take what they wanted from the civilian population. ~~(S-NF)~~

Even less likely, though most violent, is the involvement of the armed forces in large-scale civil war within or between major republics during the winter.

Triggering events could be resistance by the center or Russia to republic efforts to assume control of military forces or equipment on their territory or, alternatively, violence involving Russian minorities in a non-Russian republic. Such conflict would be especially dangerous if the control of nuclear weapons were at stake. Conflicts between republics other than Russia and Ukraine may be more likely but, while violent, probably would remain localized. ~~(S-NF)~~

Least likely are conditions, much better than we anticipate, that could halt the decay and breakup of the Soviet armed forces. Such an outcome would require major improvement in the economic conditions now affecting the military and countering the centrifugal forces at work in the former USSR. ~~(S-NF)~~