

**DER BUNDESMINISTER
FÜR LANDESVERTEIDIGUNG****II-4479** der Beilagen zu den Stenographischen Protokollen
des Nationalrates XV. Gesetzgebungsperiode

GZ 10 072/647-1.1/82

Stand der konventionellen
Rüstung in Ost und West;Anfrage der Abgeordneten
Dipl.-Vw. Dr. STEINER und
Genossen an den Bundesmi-
nister für Landesverteidi-
gung, Nr. 2097/J

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Herrn

Präsidenten des
NationalratesParlament
1017 Wien

In Beantwortung der seitens der Abgeordneten zum Nationalrat Dipl.-Vw. Dr. STEINER und Genossen am 5. Oktober 1982 an mich gerichteten Anfrage Nr. 2097/J, betreffend Stand der konventionellen Rüstung in Ost und West, beehre ich mich folgendes mitzuteilen:

Da die vorliegende Anfrage keine "Gegenstände der Vollziehung" (§ 90 des Geschäftsordnungsgesetzes 1975, BGBl.Nr. 410) des Bundesministers für Landesverteidigung betrifft, bitte ich um Verständnis, daß ich von einer Beantwortung dieser Anfrage absehe. Ich darf aber darauf verweisen, daß zum gegenständlichen Fragenkomplex ausführliche Literatur veröffentlicht wurde; als Beispiel ist ein Auszug aus "The Military Balance - 1982/83" des international hochangesehenen International Institute for Strategic Studies in der Anlage beigegeben.

. November 1982

Anlage

The East–West Conventional Balance in Europe

Any assessment of the military balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact involves comparison of the deployed strengths of both men and equipment and of reinforcement potential, consideration of qualitative characteristics, of factors such as geographical advantages, military technology, deployment, training and logistic support, and of differences in national doctrine and philosophy. It must be set within the context of the strategic nuclear balance, of military forces world-wide and, in particular, of the relative strengths of the navies and long-range air forces of both sides.

Certain elements in the equation change very little over time. Warsaw Pact equipment, doctrine and procedures are standardized, whereas those of NATO are not, despite long-standing attempts to improve interoperability and encourage uniformity. The Pact's advantages in flexibility and logistic support will be obvious, as will the geographical advantages which permit it to reinforce any of its fronts on interior lines and, in almost every case, overland. The West has hitherto relied on its superior technology and – although there is evidence that the East has been catching up and, in some instances, has actually overtaken the West – some Western advantage still remains, though this is now much smaller than it was.

The question of balance, as a practical calculation, begins by a comparison of the relative numerical strengths of each side, and this is shown in the table at the end of this essay.

Manpower

The total numbers of men in uniform in the armed forces of the countries which comprise NATO and the Warsaw Pact are given in the table, as are the ground force figures. Yet much of this manpower will be employed elsewhere than in Europe – particularly in the case of the United States and the Soviet Union – and so figures are given for the ground forces in place in Europe. (For convenience, Europe in this case is assumed to exclude the territory of the Soviet Union.) However, in the event of hostilities erupting or threatening to erupt, two kinds of augmentation can take place: first, standing forces not in Europe can be moved there; second, reserve forces can be mobilized either for combat in place or in order to be moved to Europe by external powers. A *total* reserve figure can be assessed but, as with standing manpower, not all these reserves would be allocated to Europe – particularly, again, of non-European powers.

Formations

Totals for the numbers and types of divisions and division-equivalents in place and manned in time of peace are shown in the table. Estimates of the

numbers of divisions existing in peacetime which are not in Europe but are presumed to be earmarked for it as reinforcements *prior* to mobilization, and of the number of divisions or division-equivalents on both sides which could be added to the order of battle on mobilization and earmarked for the European Theatre, are also listed.

Some qualifications and explanations are necessary. First, divisions on the two sides, and within the two sides, are very unequal both in strengths and equipment holdings. Second, the assumption is made that only European Military Districts of the Soviet Union (see p.15) would in fact provide forces for the European Theatre. Third, territorial defence units have been excluded from the figures in the table. Fourth, rates of mobilization and of forward movement would not be equal. A Norwegian brigade mobilized in place should be ready for defence long before a Soviet division could be mobilized around Leningrad and moved to attack it. On the other hand, an American division based in the continental United States and without equipment prepositioned in Europe will in all likelihood be slower to move into action than a Soviet division from Belorussia. Fifth, Europe is divided in to distinct areas of possible confrontation where local balances may look very different to the overall balance and where, particularly on the NATO side, communications between battlefronts will prove very difficult. As a simplification in this analysis, NATO has been divided into North and Central Europe, on the one hand, and Southern Europe (Italy, Greece and Turkey), on the other. Finally, substantial combat elements are held outside divisional establishments and are not listed.

Equipment

Equipment holdings can be broken down into categories. The complicating factors are that total holdings of equipment do not necessarily match what is in divisional establishments (there are equipment reserves, non-divisional units and stockpiles), and not all equipment will be in theatre at the outbreak of hostilities. In the case of Soviet formations moving from the Western USSR, they will be expected to take their full unit inventories. In the case of American reinforcing formations, some plan to equip themselves from stockpiles in Europe. For these reasons, the table includes for each side only the total holdings of equipment known or estimated to be *in Europe*. As a separate category, estimates of the *additional* equipment presumed to come with Soviet reinforcing divisions moved to Europe have also been included; these figures are shown with a + sign below the line for USSR and in Pact total figures. Two ratios for equipment are given: one without rein-

forcement and one after Soviet divisions have reinforced the Pact in Europe.

Naval Forces

The assessment lists the numbers of vessels presumed to be in the Atlantic, Channel, North Sea and Mediterranean for NATO and, for the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Northern, Baltic and Black Sea Fleets, together with non-Soviet Pact vessels in the Baltic and Black Seas. Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean are drawn from the Black Sea Fleet or, in the case of submarines, from the Northern Fleet. As with ground force equipment, there are great disparities within categories, both with respect to capability and age. In the case of naval or maritime aircraft, classification by type is necessarily somewhat arbitrary but conforms to the nomenclature used in the country entries. The figures include both land- and sea-based aircraft with a clear maritime role in the above sea areas.

Air Forces

Assessment of land attack aircraft and fighters (including armed helicopters) requires similar assumptions to those made in the case of ground forces. The figures for US aircraft are for those based in Europe and do not take account of possible reinforcements from the continental US; the Soviet figures show a possible augmentation of frontal aviation from the Western military districts as a result of reinforcement. These figures are necessarily estimated. In the case of bombers, in particular, the question of allocation to the nuclear role is important. An assessment of nuclear systems is given in the Table on p. 136, and the figures given here are for all medium-range bombers, regardless of whether or not they might be reserved for nuclear delivery. It is necessary to stress the point that the increasing number of multi-role aircraft on both sides tends to make mission distinctions otiose. Aircraft intended primarily for ground attack often have a limited self-defence capability, but national terminology separates the standard air-superiority fighter and the interceptor, and this distinction has been applied.

Defining the Combat Zone

The Northern and Central European sectors are shown as one entity. Yet this is inevitably an incomplete notion. Norwegian defences, for example, are pulled in two directions. The land forces have as their main responsibility the protection of the northern approaches to the country and they have either deployed or plan to deploy virtually all their active field forces to the north because the Soviet formations in the northern Leningrad Military District pose a substantial potential threat. The Norwegian Navy must assign its larger vessels to support the coastal flank of the forces in Northern Norway; but the Soviet Baltic Fleet poses a

threat to Southern Norway, forcing the Navy to attend also to that area. The Air Force has to be prepared to support both sectors. Schleswig-Holstein, although also part of NATO's Northern Command, must anticipate attack from East Germany.

NATO's Southern Flank is even more divided. Italy must contest any Pact threat from Central Europe towards the central Mediterranean basin. Greece and Turkey must between them defend Thrace and the Aegean Sea and its air space, while Turkey must also defend her border in the Caucasus. This means that NATO has to be prepared to fight here on three widely separated fronts, each with its own tactical challenges and each with its own peculiar supply requirements. Yet it is impossible, without making a number of assumptions, to forecast the size and composition of the forces on both sides which would be assigned to those three fronts during hostilities. Pact forces in the south-western sector and threatening Thrace and the Dardanelles would be based on the Southern Group of Forces - Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania plus the Soviet formations - perhaps supported by formations from the Carpathian and Odessa Military Districts. The south-eastern sector, threatening Eastern Turkey, would be the responsibility of the Trans-Caucasus MD, and reserves for this front would most probably come from the North Caucasus MD. Trans-Caucasus MD is also responsible for the border with Iran.

Mobilization

The rate at which nations *can* mobilize will depend upon the system adopted, staff procedures and competence, distances and the transport facilities available. The rate at which nations *will* mobilize will depend on the warning received, on the political will to mobilize, on the ability to make decisions and put them into effect, and on how far enemy action obstructs mobilization.

The Warsaw Pact has maintained a reserve based upon large numbers of conscripts who have completed their period of obligatory service. The Soviet Union in particular uses the Military District organization for recalling and placing reservists into skeleton formations for war. The limitations of Soviet internal communications might make it difficult to switch divisions from one part of the USSR to another, but the links between the central USSR and the borders are more than adequate for rapid movement towards potential battlefronts so long as they stay free from attack.

Within Europe many countries can mobilize in place, although very many distinctively different methods are adopted. In the case of Britain, movement to the mainland of Europe is less easy and is liable to interdiction. Those countries which must move reinforcements across the Atlantic clearly face the possibility of serious interruption. Finally,

It must be noted that the United States, Britain and Canada do not have a pool of trained reserve manpower comparable to that available to other nations which have universal conscription.

Commonality and Technology

The accompanying table shows that the Warsaw Pact enjoys numerical advantage in virtually all categories of weapons shown, the notable exceptions being in crew-served anti-tank missiles, a number of naval vessel types and some naval aircraft. What is not shown by these figures is a primary advantage enjoyed by the Warsaw Pact, namely that the weapons in service, and the tactical doctrines for their use, are common throughout the Pact. NATO, in marked contrast, suffers from doctrines which are by no means identical and from a wide variety of everything from weapon systems to support vehicles, with consequent duplication of supply systems and some difficulties of interoperability.

The question of technological superiority is impossible to answer without the test of combat. In general, however, Soviet equipment is thought to be rugged, relatively immune to mishandling and apparently reliable. However, crew comfort and safety standards are significantly lower than those demanded in the West. While these factors may not be detrimental to efficiency over the short term, under the stress of combat the accident rate could rise and efficiency decline rather severely.

Logistics

NATO's logistic system is based almost entirely on national supply lines, and the difficulties are compounded by lack of standardization between nations and by lack of central co-ordination. In these respects it is inferior to that of the Warsaw Pact. Certain NATO countries, too, still lack sufficient spares and ammunition. Some Pact nations may also suffer from shortages, but the fact that their equipment is standardized would enable them to restock more quickly. The Soviet logistic system, which uses a mix of rail, road and pipeline, has been greatly improved in recent years.

Air Power

The Warsaw Pact has long contemplated the use of surface-to-surface missiles to deliver high-explosive, nuclear and chemical warheads against targets deep in enemy rear areas. However, the Soviet Union is also increasing her inventory of modern fighter-bombers and these pose an increasingly significant long-range threat. In terms of Pact defence against air attack, a large number of interceptors must be added to an impressive array of surface-to-air missiles and artillery pieces. It is clear that in war NATO air forces would face a formidable task in maintaining air support for the NATO ground forces on the European battlefield.

The Warsaw Pact continues to enjoy the benefits of standardized aircraft servicing and handling facilities. Although its aircraft cannot generally operate from unimproved runways, there are a very large number of modern airfields available with hardened aircraft shelters. NATO, on the other hand, still suffers from too few airfields and too many types of aircraft, although considerable improvements have been made in interoperability and in hardening airfields. NATO probably still enjoys a measure of overall electronic superiority and may enjoy a somewhat greater flexibility in command and control in combat conditions, but electronic counter-measures are being emphasized by the Pact, and tend to negate NATO's advantage.

Summary

The numerical balance over the last 20 years has slowly but steadily moved in favour of the East. At the same time the West has largely lost the technological edge which allowed NATO to believe that quality could substitute for numbers. One cannot necessarily conclude from this that NATO would suffer defeat in war, but one can conclude that there has been sufficient danger in the trend to require remedies.

Assessing the balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact based on comparisons of manpower, combat units or equipment contains a large element of subjectivity. In the first place, the Pact has superiority in some areas and NATO in others, and there is no fully satisfactory way to compare these asymmetrical advantages. Tank superiority can be negated by combinations of many different kinds of anti-tank systems. Secondly, it is not possible to reduce to numbers such qualitative factors as training, morale, leadership, tactical initiative, terrain and geographical advantage, all of which are vitally significant in warfare. Thirdly, there is no agreement as to the form and scope that any hostilities which might break out would be likely to take. Such an assessment would have a vital bearing on the composition of the forces involved, resupply stocks, reinforcements and many other considerations. The table which forms part of this presentation attempts to distinguish between forces in being and those which might be made available over the longer term. It can pass no judgements as to the reliability of the forces or the political will and cohesion of the two alliances.

The overall balance continues to be such as to make military aggression a highly risky undertaking. Though tactical redeployments could provide a local advantage in numbers sufficient to allow an attacker to believe that he might achieve tactical success, there would still appear be insufficient overall strength on either side to guarantee victory. The consequences for an attacker would be unpredictable, and the risks, particularly of nuclear escalation, incalculable.

Comparison of NATO and Warsaw Pact Manpower and Equipment

	NATO (less US)				Rates			USSR	Non-Soviet Pact
	N. Europe ^a	S. Europe	US	Total	NATO Europe Pact	Total NATO Pact	Total		
Manpower (000)									
Total manpower in uniform	1,670	1,211	2,117	4,998	1:1.67	1.04:1	4,821	3,705	1,116
Reserves (all services)	2,050	2,129	900	5,079	1:1.71	1:1.41	7,138	5,200	1,938
Total ground forces	998	931	791	2,720	1:1.36	1.04:1	2,618	1,825	793
Total ground forces in Europe (incl Trans Caucasus)	975	931	219	2,125	1.15:1	1.28:1	1,664	871 ^b	793
Divisions^c									
Divs in Europe and manned in peacetime	Tk 18 Mech 11 Other 9 1/2	4 1/2 6 1/2 30	2 1/2 2 1/2 0	24 1/2 20 1/2 39 1/2			29 49 1	15 26 1	14 23 0
Divs manned and available for immediate reinforcement	Tk 1 Mech 0 Other 2 1/2	1 0 6	2 3 2 1/2	4 3 9			1 1 6	1 ^d 1 ^d 6 ^d	0 0 0
Extra divs available on mobilizing reserves	Tk 0 Mech 2 1/2 Other 22	0 0 8	3 3 1/2 8	3 4 38			25 1/2 59 4	23 ^d 44 ^d 0	2 1/2 15 4
Ground Force Equipment									
Main battle tanks	7,531	7,098	3,000	17,629	1:1.87	1:1.55 (1:2.64)	27,300 (+19,200)	13,000 (+19,200 ^h)	14,300
Arty, MRL	4,100 ^h	5,167	562	9,829	1:1.11	1:1.05 (1:2.07)	10,300 (+10,000)	5,000 ^h (+10,000 ^h)	5,300 ^h
SSM launchers	163	96	144	403	1:2.39	1:1.54 (1:3.24)	620 (+685)	272 (+685 ^d)	348
ATK guns	850	146	0	996	1:1.99 (1:3.74)	-	1,978 (+1,746)	678 (+1,746 ^h)	1,300 ^h
ATGW launchers (crew-served)	3,000 ^h	1,000 ^h	644	4,644	2.78:1	3.23:1 (2.55:1)	1,437 (+385)	287 (+385 ^h)	1,150 ^h
AA guns	3,500 ^h	1,587	120	5,207	1.42:1	1.45:1 (1:1.25)	3,586 (+2,900)	1,086 ^h (+2,900 ^h)	2,500 ^h
SAM launchers (crew-served)	1,202	280	180	1,662	1:2.13	1:1.90 (1:3.79)	3,151 (+3,142)	1,751 ^h (+3,142 ^h)	1,400 ^h
Naval Units									
Submarines: cruise missile attack	0 100	0 38	0 46	0 184	- 1.06:1	- 1.27:1	54 174	54 166	0 8
Carriers	6	1	6	13	1.75:1	3.25:1	4	4	0
Cruisers	1	2	12 ^b	15	1:9.00	1:1.80	27	27 ^b	0
Destroyers	42	32	35 ^b	109	1.36:1	2.06:1	53	52 ^b	1
Frigates	111	37	27 ^b	175	1.34:1	1.58:1	111	107 ^b	4
Corvettes/large patrol craft	56	67	0	123	1.03:1	1.03:1	119	60 ^a	59
FAC(M/T/P)	135	74	3	212	1:1.98	1:1.95	414	200 ^b	214
MCM ^c	214	83	3	300	1:1.36	1:1.35	405	264 ^b	141
Amphibious ^d	180	191	33	404	1.80:1	1.96:1	206	124 ^b	82
Naval and Maritime Aircraft									
Bombers	0	0	0	0	-	-	280	280	0
Attack	90	0	204 ^b	294	1:1.47	2.23:1	132	90 ^b	42
Fighters	31	0	126 ^b	157	-	-	0	0	0
ASw	16 ^b	20	60 ^b	96	1:3.47	1:1.30	125	125 ^b	0
MR/ECM	168	22	84 ^b	274	2.71:1	3.91:1	70	60 ^b	10
ASw hel	147	125	36 ^b	308	1.58:1	1.79:1	172	160 ^b	12
Land Attack Aircraft and Fighters^a									
Bombers	88	0	0	88	1:4.83	-	425	425	0
FGA	1,069	758	528	2,355	1.08:1	1.40:1 (1:1.10)	1,685 (+900)	1,100 ^b (+900 ^b)	585
Fighters	42	0	96	138	1:16.7	1:5.07 (1:12.3)	700 (+1,000)	700 ^b (+1,000 ^b)	0
Interceptors	407	207	0	614	1:7.14	-	4,382	2,880 ^b	1,502
Reconnaissance ^c	213	96	36	348	1:1.83	1:1.63 (1:2.79)	564 (+400)	400 ^b (+400 ^b)	164
Armed hel	460 ⁱ [+180 ^b]	5 ⁱ [+460 ^b]	330 ^b	795 ⁱ	1:1.63	1.05:1	756 (+650)	700 (+650 ^b)	56

^a Includes French forces and Canadian forces in Europe, but not Spanish forces.^b Estimated figures.^c 'Tk' includes tank and armoured divs; 'Mech' includes mechanized, motorized and motor rifle; 'Other' includes airborne, airborne, mountain, amphibious and light infantry. Structure, readiness have been re-evaluated since the 1981-2 edition.^d From western and southern European USSR.^e Field forces only; PVO-Strany would provide additional AD equipment.^f Includes support craft and inshore boats.^g All types.^h OcU aircraft are not included in these totals.ⁱ Includes ew/ECM aircraft.^j Known totals. Figures in square brackets show additional potential armed hel.