

THE WARSAW PACT: SOVIET MILITARY POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

The USSR may wish to rely more in the 1980s on East European military forces to maintain or increase the present level of Soviet-controlled military power in Europe while minimizing the commitment of additional Soviet military resources to this region. Soviet military forces are subjected to increased competing demands while domestic Soviet economic tradeoffs between military and civilian production are posed more sharply. Yet in fact, the USSR will have to rely less, rather than more, on East European military forces. Operational, institutional, and socioeconomic factors that make a greater or even undiminished East European military contribution unlikely are discussed. The Polish crisis of 1980-1981 has dramatized the vulnerabilities inherent in the present level of Soviet reliance on East European military forces. Development of East European armies for "coalition warfare," emphasized by Khrushchev at the turn of the 1960s as a "quick fix," has reached the point of diminishing returns, irrespective of the outcome of the Polish crisis. The Soviet leadership must either dedicate relatively more of its own increasingly scarce military resources to Europe or permit a relative decline in Soviet-controlled military power in the region.

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THE WARSAW PACT: SOVIET MILITARY POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE

A. Ross Johnson

Eastern Europe is and will remain the principal Soviet sphere of influence.[1] Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe has many dimensions, including political, economic, and ideological factors. But most fundamentally, the Soviet stake in Eastern Europe involves security considerations and is based on military power. The external and internal aspects of that military power have been inextricably interlinked since Stalin extended Soviet influence to the region in 1944-1945. World War II demonstrated to Stalin and his successors the crucial importance of sufficient military power and secure border areas to counter opponents of the Soviet state. Security also implied, for Stalin, Soviet-style regimes in Eastern Europe. Soviet military power was responsible for the creation of the Communist states of Eastern Europe (except Yugoslavia, Albania, and in part Czechoslovakia); these

[1] This study is based in large part on materials contained in the author's Rand studies of East European military issues, particularly: A. Ross Johnson, Robert W. Dean, and Alexander Alexiev, East European Military Establishments: The Warsaw Pact Northern Tier, The Rand Corporation, R-2417/1-AF/FF, December 1980 (to be published as a book by Crane Russak and Company, 1981); A. Ross Johnson, Soviet-East European Military Relations: An Overview, The Rand Corporation, P-5383-1, August 1977. Material on the Romanian "military deviation" is based in part on Alexander Alexiev, Romania and the Warsaw Pact: The Defense Policy of a Reluctant Ally, The Rand Corporation, P-6270, January 1979. Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe: The Evolution of a Political-Military Posture, 1945-1964, The Rand Corporation, RM-5838-PR, November 1968, and Soviet Power and Europe: 1965-1969, The Rand Corporation, RM-5991-PR, July 1979 (published as Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1969, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), provide a comprehensive analysis from the Soviet perspective. Extensive documentation is contained in these studies. I am indebted to my Rand coauthors and colleagues. I am also grateful to Michael Checinski, a Rand consultant, Michael Sadykiewicz, and a number of other former East European military officers who wish to remain anonymous for sharing their insights.

states were born not of revolution but of Soviet military liberation and occupation, as Soviet and East European officials alike freely acknowledge. Polish Communist leader Wladyslaw Gomulka granted in 1945, for example, that the "transformation of Polish society" could begin in the absence of revolution because of the presence of the Red Army.[2] The reality of Soviet military power in Eastern Europe as a principal instrument of Soviet policy vis-a-vis Western Europe and as the ultimate guarantor of East European policies and regimes acceptable to the USSR has not changed--either in fact or in the minds of Soviet leaders. As Leonid Brezhnev, objecting to the liberalization in Czechoslovakia in 1968, told the Czechoslovak leadership at that time:

Your country is in the region occupied by Soviet soldiers in World War II. We paid for this with great sacrifices and we will never leave. Your borders are our borders. You do not follow our suggestions, and we feel threatened ... we are completely justified in sending our soldiers to your country in order to be secure within our borders. It is a secondary matter whether or not there is an immediate threat from anyone....[3]

The USSR has both deployed large-scale Soviet forces in the area and overseen the development of substantial national military forces in the respective East European countries. These military capabilities have served a variety of Soviet military and foreign policy goals vis-a-vis the West. In the late 1940s and 1950s, air defense forces in the region contributed importantly to defense of the Soviet heartland against American and British nuclear-capable bombers. More generally, Eastern

[2] Speech of December 7, 1945, as quoted in A. Ross Johnson, The Transformation of Communist Ideology: The Yugoslav Case, 1945-1953 (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1972), p. 14.

[3] Zdenek Mlynar, Nachfrost (Koeln, Europaeische Verlagsanstalt, 1978), pp. 300-301.

Europe constituted a military staging and buffer zone that could be used for either defensive or offensive purposes. While Stalin could not have had much confidence in the reliability or competence of the newly developed East European forces, their buildup, as a supplement to the buildup of the Soviet armed forces themselves, tilted the theater military balance in Europe in favor of the USSR. This made Western Europe a "hostage" for American nuclear restraint, while casting a long political shadow over the Western half of the continent.[4]

At the end of the 1950s, the USSR sought to improve its military posture, and presumably to expand its political influence, through the development of Soviet military forces in Eastern Europe capable of rapid, offensive, nuclear-supported operations against NATO. Corresponding changes took place in the East European military forces, which as a consequence evidently became more important to Soviet military planning for European contingencies.

Just how important is not easily determined. Calculating the weight of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact military forces in total Warsaw Pact military capabilities in Europe is difficult because information is sparse, common measures do not exist, and the share of total Soviet military forces applicable to various European contingencies is a matter of interpretation. By the mid-1970s, Western officials and analysts commonly assumed that over half of the initial Warsaw Pact forces that would be utilized for an offensive against Western Europe might be East European: Of the 58 Warsaw Pact in-place divisions commonly mentioned in Warsaw Pact attack scenarios, 31 are non-Soviet.[5] According to data

[4] See Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1969, p. 43.

[5] E.g., Annual Defense Department Report for Fiscal Year 1979, Department of Defense press release, p. 6

from the International Institute of Strategic Studies, 43 percent of the in-place (fully mobilized) divisions in Northern and Central Europe are non-Soviet; in Southern Europe, 81 percent are non-Soviet.[6] None of the ten Category 1 (up to three-quarters strength) reinforcing divisions are East European, but 40 percent of the Category 2 (up to half-strength) and 15 percent of the Category 3 (cadre) divisions are non-Soviet. East European armies provide 36 percent of the total Warsaw Pact main battle tanks in Northern and Central Europe and 63 percent of those in Southern Europe. Forty-four percent of Warsaw Pact tactical aircraft in Northern and Central Europe are East European; in Southern Europe, 61 percent.[7] These figures, however, may overstate the East European contribution: According to the calculation of a former East European officer utilizing Soviet categories, in the European Theater of War non-Soviet forces account for 39 percent of First Strategic Echelon divisions, 30 percent of Northern Tier First Strategic Echelon divisions, and 32 percent of total Warsaw Pact European divisions.[8]

Even if the latter figures are more accurate, the East European armed forces have clearly acquired a major role in Soviet military planning for European warfare, just as Eastern Europe has become a key staging ground for Soviet forces. Soviet military policy in Eastern Europe must be viewed primarily through this prism of East-West, Warsaw Pact-NATO relations. Yet Soviet policy has been influenced by other factors as well. Soviet military forces in Eastern Europe serve a very

[6] Data for Southern Europe include Romanian forces, which would be of questionable utility to the USSR in many circumstances.

[7] The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, 1980-1981 (London, IISS, 1980), pp. 110-115.

[8] Michael Sadykiewicz, personal communication, February 23, 1981.

real internal policing function, even though this role does not explain the numbers or (in most cases) the specific deployment of forces in the region. Soviet military power is the ultimate--indeed, the only real--guarantor of the stability and the very existence of the East European Communist regimes. The USSR threatened or used military force or military ties in Eastern Europe for intra-bloc policing functions nine times between 1945 and 1980.[9] In all these cases, it had to be concerned with the behavior of the respective national military establishment it was responsible for creating in the pursuit of security objectives vis-a-vis the West but which was subsequently integrated into the respective East European political system. In the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, the USSR successfully involved some of its allies in intra-bloc "policing" with military forces that were militarily unopposed. But it was unsuccessful in its evident efforts to marshal symbolic East European military support against the People's Republic of China after 1968. Indeed, this issue was evidently a source of some Soviet-East European friction in the 1970s.[10] Nor has the USSR been able to rely on Eastern European national armed forces to insure political orthodoxy or stability in the region; it has had to utilize Soviet military forces for this purpose.

[9] Soviet forces guaranteed the Communist takeover of Eastern Europe in 1945-1947; indirectly supported the coup of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1948; exerted pressure on Yugoslavia in 1949-1952; suppressed worker demonstrations in East Germany in 1953; attempted to influence the choice of Poland's leadership in 1956; suppressed the Hungarian Revolution in 1956; sought to influence Albania in 1960-1961; forced a reversal of liberalization in Czechoslovakia in 1968-1969; and brought pressure to bear against Poland in 1980-1981.

[10] See Robin Remington, The Warsaw Pact (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1971), pp. 116, 142-145.

East European military resources have been used to reinforce Soviet initiatives in the Third World, as these expanded in the 1970s. East Germany and Czechoslovakia, especially, assisted in promoting Soviet interests by providing arms, training, military technicians, and advisers to Third World countries. Yet, in the context of total military efforts in the Third World by the USSR and its principal proxy, Cuba, the East European contribution is minor.

In the 1980s, increased competing demands on Soviet military resources at home and abroad give the Soviet leadership a strong incentive for developing an enhanced East European contribution to total Soviet-controlled military power in Europe. Yet even before the outbreak of the Polish crisis in 1980, there were operational, institutional, and socioeconomic reasons that made Moscow unable to count on even a continuation of the East European military effort of the 1970s. This study will argue that over the present decade, Moscow will have to rely less rather than more on the East European armies and will have to devote more, rather than fewer, Soviet military resources to Europe, or it will be forced to accept a reduction of its military capabilities in the region.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF EAST EUROPEAN FORCES IN SOVIET STRATEGY

The East European military establishments first became important to Moscow as international tension mounted in the early 1950s. The post-1949 expansion of the Soviet armed forces stationed in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and the USSR itself was soon extended to the fledgling East European Communist military establishments as well. Conscription was introduced in all the East European armed forces

(except in the GDR, where conscription occurred only in 1962), and by 1953 the resulting buildup had brought some million and a half men under arms and created some 65 East European divisions. Soviet equipment flowed in to replace obsolete World War II armaments.[11]

Harnessed to Stalin's foreign policy in the early 1950s, the East European military establishments were internally "Stalinized" as well. Military command positions were filled with Communist and pro-Communist officers, usually of "low" social origin and with little or no prior military experience, but with postwar training in Communist military institutions. The internal organization, training patterns, military doctrine, tactics, and even the uniforms of the East European armed forces were modified to conform to the Soviet model. Each Communist Party established triple channels of political control over the national armed forces; the command channel, secured through the replacement of prewar officers by Party loyalists, was complemented by extending the networks of the Central Committee-directed Political Administration and the security service, each with its own chain of command, to the regimental level or below.

Dependency of the East European Communist Parties on Moscow notwithstanding, consolidation of national Party control over the respective East European armed forces was for Stalin an inadequate guarantee that those forces would be fully responsive to Soviet directives. Direct Soviet channels of control were required. Thus, the newly appointed, Communist-trained East European commanders were subordinated to Soviet officers of respective national origins who had

[11] See Johnson, Dean, and Alexiev, East European Military Establishments, Sec. 2, and the references and documentation therein.

served, sometimes for years, in the Red Army as Soviet citizens and who now formally resumed their original citizenship. This was most evident in Poland[12], but the practice was almost as widespread in the Hungarian Army and was followed to a lesser extent in the other East European armed forces. Equally important, thousands of Soviet "advisers" were placed within the East European armies, constituting a separate chain of command. An informal but unified Soviet command and control system over "integrated" East European armed forces was in effect established. By means of the senior Soviet officers and the Soviet "advisers" in each East European army, the Soviet high command was, in practice, able to administer the East European armed forces as branches of the Red Army.

Following Stalin's death and with a partial easing of tensions in Europe, the Soviet leadership sought to relax the most extreme forms of forced mobilization and subservience to Soviet control in Eastern Europe--essentials of the Stalinist interstate system that became Soviet liabilities with the removal of the system's personal linchpin. Economic considerations were cardinal in the Soviet effort to rationalize what was now viewed as Stalin's misallocation of military-related resources in Eastern Europe. Because it so overstretched the East European economies, the military burden in Eastern Europe had serious destabilizing political ramifications. So in an atmosphere of relaxing East-West tensions, defense spending was reduced and military manpower cut in Eastern Europe, just as in the

[12] In the early 1950s, the posts of defense minister, chief of the general staff, commander of the ground forces, heads of all the service branches, and commander of all four military districts were held by former Soviet officers.

USSR, and the Stalinist approach to military mobilization was condemned by East European leaders as primitive and wasteful.

As Soviet military thought was freed from Stalin's emphasis on traditional "permanent operating factors of war," East European military doctrine was modified in turn. Stalin had resisted the technical advantages of greater mechanization and concentration of ground forces; these were now accepted, and motorized divisions replaced infantry divisions in the East European armed forces. Soviet military doctrine now embraced the realities of the nuclear age; a decade before they were to acquire systems capable of delivering nuclear warheads, the East European armed forces received instruction from their Soviet mentors on nuclear warfare.[13]

The founding in 1955 of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (or Warsaw Pact) as the formal multilateral security alliance of the states within the Soviet orbit was not principally a consequence of this process of rationalizing the Soviet and East European military establishments. The creation of the Warsaw Pact was, rather, explained in political terms. Externally, it was a political response to the incorporation of West Germany in NATO. In intra-bloc terms, it was an effort to establish a multinational political organization that, together with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and other specialized bloc organizations, could provide an institutionalized substitute for the personalized Stalinist system of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe.

Article 5 of the Warsaw Treaty did provide for a joint military command, which was formally established in Moscow in early 1956. Yet in military terms, the Warsaw Pact remained a paper organization until the

[13] Soviet-East European Military Relations, p. 5.

1960s.[14] At the outset, it served one concrete Soviet military purpose: It provided an alternate source of legitimization for deployment of Soviet forces in Hungary and Romania after ratification of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955. It also provided the Soviets with a mechanism to contain the renationalization of the East European military establishments that began after Stalin's death. A multilateral alliance framework, no matter how devoid of substance, could serve to formally recognize an East European voice in alliance matters and thus promised to help defuse potentially explosive national feelings and to legitimize Soviet control.

The crisis of 1956 in Eastern Europe greatly enhanced the role of the Warsaw Pact as a multilateral institution that could channel and limit East European nationalism. One consequence of Soviet military pressure on Poland and Soviet military suppression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was the increased sensitivity of East European leaderships to the forms of national sovereignty, in the military as in other realms. Formal renationalization of the East European armed forces, begun in 1953, was completed after 1956. Most of the former Soviet officers who had commanded the East European military establishments in the early 1950s returned to the USSR, and national military uniforms were rehabilitated. More important, the USSR (in the Soviet Government declaration of October 1956) professed willingness to review the issue of Soviet troops stationed in Eastern Europe. Despite Soviet military suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the USSR concluded a status-of-forces agreement with Poland in December 1956 specifying the

[14] In common Western usage, "Warsaw Pact" refers to any military entities or activities of the USSR and its East European client-states. Here and elsewhere throughout this study, discussion of the Warsaw Pact pertains to the formal Pact structure, embracing a number of multinational bodies.

terms of the stationing of Soviet forces on Polish territory and pledging their non-interference in Polish affairs. Status-of-forces agreements were also concluded with Hungary, Romania, and East Germany early in 1957. In what might be interpreted as a final Soviet gesture to East European national sentiments, perhaps as a specific result of Romanian economic concessions and Chinese support, Moscow acceded to a Romanian request, advanced even before 1956, and withdrew all Soviet forces from Romania early in 1958.

After 1956, Khrushchev sought to construct a viable "socialist commonwealth" that would ensure Soviet control over the broad outlines of domestic and foreign policies of the East European states: The USSR sought to utilize the Warsaw Pact and COMECON as institutional mechanisms for ensuring Soviet hegemony in the region while dismantling or mitigating the more onerous forms of direct Soviet control and (in contrast to the Stalinist period) permitting room for some domestic autonomy. But little headway was made in translating wish into policy. Indeed, in the military sphere, Khrushchev's initial presumptive effort to use the Warsaw Pact as an organization for Soviet-dominated institution-building in Eastern Europe was not pursued vigorously. Until 1961, the Warsaw Pact as such lacked political and especially military substance. The supreme Warsaw Pact organ, the Political Consultative Committee (PCC), met only four times between 1955 and the spring of 1961, even though its statute called for two meetings per year. The fact that the PCC failed to meet at all between January 1956 and May 1958, a very turbulent period, testifies that the Warsaw Pact

was not invested with crisis-management prerogatives. There was no visible attempt to promote military integration in a Warsaw Pact framework.

Imperatives of Soviet military strategy, rather than Soviet alliance politics, were responsible for greater Soviet attention to East European armed forces in the early 1960s. Beginning in 1960, Khrushchev sought to initiate a revolution in Soviet military organization and doctrine by emphasizing nuclear missile forces at the expense of the traditional Soviet military strength, ground forces in Europe, and by recasting ground forces doctrine to emphasize blitzkrieg offensives of mobile forces at the expense of Soviet mobilization capabilities. Khrushchev's concept evidently postulated that Soviet ground forces could be further reduced if East European armed forces could be made to assume a more substantial role in Soviet military planning for Europe. A part of the Khrushchevian vision was implemented: The Strategic Rocket Forces were organized in 1960, and the goal of strategic equality with the United States was vigorously pursued. But while overall Soviet military forces for conventional conflicts were reduced after 1960, the combination of heightened East-West tension in Europe associated with the Berlin crisis of 1961 and traditionalist institutional opposition within the Soviet military establishment resulted in a practically undiminished level of Soviet ground forces in Eastern Europe.

Nonetheless, apparently as a direct consequence of the original Khrushchev vision, the USSR began to place more emphasis on an East European military contribution to Soviet power. The Soviet military developed in the early 1960s the concept of "coalition warfare," which redefined and expanded the role of East European national forces in

Soviet military planning. The post-1956 quiescence in Eastern Europe made this possible; and heightened East-West tensions and the emerging Soviet security problem portended by the worsening Sino-Soviet split made it urgent. The Warsaw Pact provided a suitable multilateral framework.

Emphasis on the military as well as the political functions of the Warsaw Pact was first apparent at the March 1961 meeting of the PCC, where the member-states evidently agreed on regular consultative meetings of national defense ministers, joint multinational military maneuvers, and Soviet-assisted modernization of East European forces. The first of these multilateral exercises, "Brotherhood in Arms," was held in the fall of 1961 in connection with the Berlin crisis of that year. Symptomatic of Soviet priorities in building up the East European military establishments in the 1960s, the exercise involved the USSR, on the one hand, and the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia--the "Northern Tier"--on the other. While the initial exercises of the early 1960s could be interpreted as largely political demonstrations intended to display Soviet-East European military fraternity, by the mid-1960s they had become serious combat training activities. Moreover, the East European armed forces were now supplied by the USSR with modern T54 and T55 tanks, MiG-21 and SU-7 aircraft, and other new weapons. Some East European armed forces were also being supplied with nuclear-capable delivery vehicles (beginning with surface-to-surface missiles, although the warheads themselves presumably remained under sole Soviet control) and were being trained in their use. Standardization of armaments within the Warsaw Pact was enhanced as East European states abandoned some indigenous arms-production capabilities; a nascent East German

military aircraft industry was dismantled in 1961, while Poland renounced further development of advanced combat aircraft in 1969. Soviet and East European military theorists developed the doctrine of "coalition warfare," which called for the participation of the East European armed forces, in conjunction with Soviet forces, in rapid offensive mobile military operations against NATO. This joint combat training, modernization, specialization, and doctrine suggested that in the mid-1960s the USSR had come to view the East European armed forces as an important contribution to Soviet military power. Not only did the East European forces extend the Soviet air defense system and constitute a buffer (as they had since Stalin's day), but they were now earmarked for an active mechanized ground-and-air combat role in military operations in Europe.

This Soviet emphasis on the military capabilities of the East European military establishments in the 1960s notwithstanding, there was little indication of military integration through military institutions of the Warsaw Pact itself. The only integrated armed forces branch in the Soviet bloc was air defense, and that was created not under Warsaw Pact auspices but by incorporating East European air defense systems in the command system of the Soviet air defense system, PVO Strany. Despite its elaborate formal structure, the Warsaw Pact lacked functional operational military organs. It lacked integrated command and control and logistics systems such as NATO had created. Even the Joint Command's staff lacked continuity. In the 1960s, Soviet military planning for a European war envisaged East European armed forces, like the Groups of Soviet Forces stationed in Eastern Europe, incorporated in Fronts commanded by the Soviet General Staff via theater or field

headquarters, rather than subordinated to the Warsaw Pact Joint Command. As Malcolm Macintosh suggested,[15] the Warsaw Pact seemed to function as a multinational analogue of a traditional European war office, with administrative duties for mobilization, training, and equipment, but without direct responsibility for the conduct of military operations.

In the mid-1960s, the Warsaw Pact military institutions came under attack from some quarters in Eastern Europe for being excessively Soviet-dominated. Such criticism emanated primarily from Romania, which under Ceausescu had launched an autonomous national course that brought it--within clear limits--into conflict with Soviet interests on a broad range of issues. In late 1964, Romania, acting alone, reduced its term of military conscription from 24 to 16 months; this resulted in a cut of 40,000 men in the Romanian armed forces. Romania sought to reduce what it viewed as an excessive contribution to the collective military strength of the Warsaw Pact and to turn to a smaller, more domestically oriented military establishment. Simultaneously, however, Romania sought to increase its national voice in Warsaw Pact military affairs and hence reduce the degree of Soviet control over Romanian defense. In 1966, Ceausescu obliquely called for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe. Bucharest evidently subsequently proposed that the position of Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief (always occupied by a marshal of the Soviet Armed Forces) rotate--and may have succeeded thereby in forcing a delay in the naming of Ivan Yakubovskii to replace Grechko as Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief in 1967. Further, Romania argued that East European military expenditures in general were excessive, brought

[15] Malcolm Macintosh, The Evolution of the Warsaw Pact, Adelphi Papers, No. 58, June 1969, pp. 11-15.

about a dramatic reduction in the size of the Soviet military liaison mission in Bucharest, claimed at least a consultative voice in matters related to nuclear weapons in the Warsaw Pact, expressed concerns about the Non-Proliferation Treaty derived from these sensitivities, refused to permit Warsaw Pact troop maneuvers on Romanian soil, and generally abstained from joint maneuvers involving combat forces in other countries as well.

Unambiguous as it was, the Romanian military deviation alone[16] does not account satisfactorily for the evident lack of progress after 1965 toward the Soviet goal of creating a permanent political coordination mechanism within the Warsaw Pact or for the lack of progress in upgrading Warsaw Pact military institutions in a manner strengthening Soviet control. That lack of progress would also seem to indicate uncertainty or division in Moscow and neutrality or support for the Romanian position in other East European states. The controversy over the role of the Warsaw Pact evidently strengthened aspirations on the part of elites in other East European countries to achieve a more equal position in Warsaw Pact military affairs as well. Nationalist tendencies appeared in the Polish military. Czechoslovak support for some of the Romanian grievances can be documented as early as 1966, both from the Czech press and from the testimony of former Czechoslovak military officers. In 1968, as the reformist political movement headed by Alexander Dubcek gained ground in Czechoslovakia, dissatisfaction with Soviet domination of the Czechoslovak armed forces and Warsaw Pact military institutions was voiced more openly (as will be described below). These military grievances, and especially the bluntness with

[16] Discussed further later in this study.

which they were expressed, were doubtless one factor in the Soviet decision to intervene militarily in Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia was a watershed in the development of bilateral and multilateral military relationships in the Soviet bloc. The Soviets demonstrated that they were able to mobilize their loyalist allies (Romania abstained) to use military force to impose loyalty on a deviant client-state. This was not a Warsaw Pact operation; the Soviet, Polish, Hungarian, East German, and Bulgarian units that constituted the invasion force were mobilized and deployed by various specialized Soviet commands, and the invasion of August 21, 1968, was directed by General Pavlovski (commander of Soviet ground forces) from a forward headquarters of the Soviet high command. Although the invasion was not opposed by the Czechoslovak armed forces and thus revealed nothing about the utility or reliability of the East European armed forces in combat, the USSR did pay a price in terms of the effect of the operation on the East European military establishments. That price included the complete demoralization of the Czechoslovak armed forces and considerable soul-searching in the Polish, East German, and Hungarian militaries as well. One consequence was more relative emphasis by the USSR on Soviet, rather than East European, forces in the area. This implied a recognition that there were limits to the reliance the USSR could place on East European forces to supplement Soviet military power in Europe--limits which could be increased suddenly by developments in Eastern Europe itself.

SOVIET MILITARY POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE SINCE 1968

Five Soviet divisions remained in Czechoslovakia after the 1968 invasion, although none had been stationed there previously. A general buildup and modernization of Soviet forces elsewhere in Eastern Europe occurred in the 1970s, with Soviet ground forces personnel being increased by one-third, to 590,000 in 1977. T-72 tanks, BMP combat vehicles, MIG-25s and other aircraft, new artillery pieces, rocket launchers, mobile air defense weapons, and other new weapons systems were acquired by Soviet operational units.[17] With the deployment of the SS-21 by Soviet forces in the GDR[18], a new generation of theater nuclear missiles was located in Eastern Europe, underlining the value of the area to the USSR as a forward staging ground.

This increase in Soviet military strength in Europe occurred during a decade when the major emphasis of Soviet conventional-forces development was the military buildup on the Chinese border.[19] Simultaneously, the Soviet leadership emphasized the expansion of Soviet presence in the Third World: In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, deploying 5 to 8 Soviet divisions in that country. While the stationing (and even the positioning) of Soviet divisions in Czechoslovakia after 1968 could be explained in terms of internal policing, the buildup of Soviet forces elsewhere in Eastern Europe in

[17] CIA and DIA testimony, Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China--1978, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Priorities and Economy in Government, of the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Ninety-Fifth Congress, Second Session. Part 4--Soviet Union (Washington, GPO, 1978).

[18] Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, April 21, 1979.

[19] The 15 Soviet divisions in the Far East in 1968 had increased to 46 by 1980, while the number of divisions in the interior of the USSR declined (IISS data).

the 1970s could not. Given the competing claims on Soviet manpower and economic resources, both domestically and in other parts of the world, the Soviet military buildup in Europe in the 1970s is testimony both to the continued centrality of Europe in Soviet geopolitical concerns and the key role the Soviet leadership imputes to military capabilities in advancing Soviet interests.

In the 1970s, the Soviet leadership evidently continued to ascribe to East European military forces an important role in the supplementing of Soviet military capabilities for use in a war in Europe. Defense spending increased significantly in Eastern Europe, as the East European armed forces were modernized with Soviet-supplied T-62 tanks, advanced MiG-23 and Sukhoi aircraft, SA-4, SA-6, and SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, and other weapons. These efforts were concentrated in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Poland to such an extent that this region--the "Northern Tier"--became almost synonymous with "Warsaw Pact." Hungarian and Bulgarian armed forces constitute a much more limited increment to Soviet military capabilities, while the Romanian armed forces serve to counter Soviet capabilities more than to reinforce them. Yet, following the expansion of the 1960s, East European armed forces remained relatively constant in the 1970s at about one million regulars. As compared to the late 1960s, the balance sheet of the 1970s is one of less, rather than more, relative Soviet reliance on East European military forces.

The Warsaw Pact Northern Tier: A Soviet Priority

The East German, Polish, and Czechoslovak armed forces continued to be developed during the 1970s for the primary military mission defined for them in the early 1960s: participation in a Soviet-led, rapid, massive, offensive strike into NATO territory in the event of a European war. The doctrine of the Northern Tier armies assumes such a "coalition warfare" role. As Polish doctrine (the most highly developed) stipulates, "defense must be viewed in coalition dimensions, [Poland having the] obligation to subordinate the national defense system to the fundamental principles and strategic assumptions of the [Soviet] camp as a whole." The doctrine postulates an "external front," on enemy territory, to which the entire operational army is dedicated. Its task, which generally assumes a nuclear battlefield environment, is to destroy enemy forces at home and "thwart their invasion of the territory of the socialist countries." [20] This doctrine assumes that Polish forces will fight abroad in support of a primarily Soviet military offensive, in contrast to Romanian doctrine (discussed below), which envisages reliance primarily on national armed forces fighting within national borders. East German and Czechoslovak doctrines contain postulates similar to Polish doctrine (in the Czechoslovak case, in contrast to the late 1960s, when Czechoslovak reformers attempted to counterpose to "coalition warfare" a concept of national defense that would have confined operations of the Czechoslovak armed forces to Czechoslovak territory). Modernization and training have buttressed this offensive orientation of the Northern Tier armed forces.

[20] East European Military Establishments, pp. 31-35.

Given the competing claims on their own military resources, the Soviet leadership may nonetheless have wished for an even larger Northern Tier contribution to Warsaw Pact military capabilities in the 1970s. The obstacles to such a greater East European contribution, however, were both socioeconomic and institutional. East Germany, in spite of a declining population, made the largest proportional contribution to "coalition defense." Its total military forces were increased from 190,000 to 230,000 between 1967 and 1978, resulting in the largest number of soldiers per capita in the Warsaw Pact (43 per 1000). At the same time, its overt military expenditures increased from 3.9 to 5.1 percent of national income in 1975 (the last year for which data were computed), the highest absolute level in Eastern Europe, and the only case in Eastern Europe of a relatively increasing defense burden in the 1970s. Poland's armed forces increased in the same period from 315,000 to 401,500, but most of this increase was in the home defense forces intended for operations on Polish territory: overt military spending in Poland declined from 4.4 to 3.5 percent of national income and official Polish sources admitted that Poland's economic problems in the late 1970s precluded any dramatic increase in military expenditures. In Czechoslovakia, the post-1968 demoralization of the armed forces (and the Soviets' lack of confidence in them) was reflected in overall military capabilities: Total military forces declined from 265,000 to 195,000, while overt military expenditures fell from 4.5 to 3.7 percent of national income.[21]

Soviet control over the Northern Tier (and other East European) military establishments is now, by and large, exercised indirectly, via

[21] East European Military Establishments, Appendixes B and C.

the East European military elites, rather than directly, via Soviet commanders or "advisers," as was the case in the 1950s. Direct controls were totally absent in the 1970s in Poland, the last Soviet-Polish general having retired in the late 1960s. Although two Soviet divisions remained stationed in Poland, the direct Soviet military representation in Warsaw itself was reportedly limited to some dozen Soviet officers (formally, representatives of the Warsaw Pact High Command).[22] Nor has there been evidence of direct Soviet influence on military promotions since the early 1960s (when at Soviet insistence a number of officers of Jewish origin were removed from their positions). This pattern of indirect Soviet influence applies to Hungarian and Bulgarian forces as well.

In Czechoslovakia, however, the Soviet-led invasion of 1968 and the subsequent disintegration of the Czechoslovak armed forces led to a reestablishment of direct Soviet supervision--which in the early 1970s reportedly included a shadow General Staff at the headquarters of the newly established Central Group of Forces. In the GDR, Soviet influence, while more direct than in Poland, is more institutionalized than in Czechoslovakia. Because of the German past, the National People's Army is the only element of the Warsaw Pact armed forces formally subordinated to the Warsaw Pact Joint Command in peacetime. There are Soviet representatives in many GDR military bodies, and the senior Soviet general, nominally the Warsaw Pact representative, is reportedly located in the GDR Defense Ministry, along with 80 other Soviet officers.[23] GDR regimental and division commanders evidently

[22] Interview with a former Polish officer, 1978.

[23] East European Military Establishments, p. 83.

have more contact with their Soviet counterparts from the 19 Soviet divisions stationed in the GDR than do other East European commanders.

While there are thus important vestiges of direct Soviet control over East European armed forces, in the region as a whole and vertically within each national military establishment, Soviet influence is principally exerted via the East European military elites. These elites are the key to the utility and reliability of the East European armed forces for Soviet purposes--both in Soviet calculations and in our own. These elites have, since the mid-1950s, been composed of nationals of the respective East European countries and are subordinated directly to national military and political leaderships. But they are linked to the Soviet military through a network of professional relationships stronger than analogous links between other East European elites and their respective Soviet counterparts. This system of Soviet-East European military relationships includes East European participation in the institutions of the Warsaw Pact, bilateral military agreements, and a variety of informal ties: training of senior officers at Voroshilov Academy, joint meetings of senior officers and experts, joint command-staff exercises, and innumerable exchanges of military visits at lower levels. These ties, carefully cultivated in the 1970s, keep East European officers closely attuned to Soviet military doctrine and practice.

Overall, the Soviet leadership probably has more confidence in the East German military establishment than in any other in Eastern Europe. It is a "young" organization, established first in the late 1950s and developed in the 1960s after the Berlin Wall enabled the GDR to halt its manpower drain and begin internal consolidation. It has not experienced

the internal conflicts that weakened the Czechoslovak and Polish military establishments but rather has exhibited stability, continuity, and consistent responsiveness to the GDR Party leadership. Developed by the USSR after the Stalinist era--and thus without the national resentment against the USSR generated by the blatant disregard of national sensitivities that occurred in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe in the early 1950s--the East German military elite has been subordinated consistently, relatively directly, and apparently without friction to the USSR.[24]

After the mid-1960s, the Czechoslovak military establishment proved to be the most troublesome for Moscow. Nationalist sentiments emerged in the Czechoslovak army in the mid-1960s, as part of the officer corps became a cutting edge of the reform movement that brought Alexander Dubcek to power. Indeed, in 1968 a majority of officers appeared to support the Dubcek reforms, with a (vocal) minority opposed. The Soviet invasion--which the armed forces, following orders from the Dubcek leadership, did not resist--resulted in a demoralization and disintegration of the officer corps on a scale comparable to that experienced by the Hungarian military in the wake of the Soviet military suppression of 1956. Perhaps half the officer corps either was purged or resigned in the wake of the invasion. Since 1975, there has apparently been some progress in rebuilding an officer corps loyal to the Husak leadership and the USSR, but this recent history and the obvious professional deficiencies of the Czechoslovak military (which in the mid-1970s was accepting officers with only two years of education past high school) must make it highly suspect in Soviet eyes.[25]

[24] Ibid., Sec. 4.

[25] Ibid., Sec. 5.

The Soviet attitude toward the Polish military establishment was perhaps most ambivalent in the 1970s. As noted earlier, Soviet domination of the Polish armed forces in the early 1950s was particularly heavy-handed, and the nationalist reaction in 1956 was therefore intensified. This reaction confronted both Gomulka and the Soviet leadership with the complicated task of rebuilding the Polish armed forces as an integral part of both the Polish Communist system and the Soviet-led military coalition. Tensions in the military elite throughout the 1960s that derived from continuing nationalist sentiments and from internecine Party conflict probably lowered Soviet estimates of the success of this rebuilding effort. Consolidation of a homogeneous, stable, professional military elite in the 1970s doubtless reduced some Soviet concerns about the Polish military, but it gave rise to others, which were magnified enormously by the Polish crisis of 1980-1981. In the 1970s, the Polish military, reacting to its "Soviet" past and its use (albeit on a limited scale and reluctantly) for internal repression during the December 1970 unrest, partly revived its traditional ethos as the guardian of national values. Without overtly challenging Party supremacy--indeed, in part by default--it achieved a degree of institutional integrity and even autonomy that challenged the traditional Soviet-Leninist forms of Party control of the military that the USSR originally imposed throughout Eastern Europe after 1945. Both the national and institutional aspects of this development must have given the USSR pause in the 1970s,[26] well before the emergence of the Polish military as a key, institutionally distinct, moderate political force in the Polish crisis of 1980-1981.

[26] Ibid., Sec. 3.

None of the East European military elites, or elements thereof, has served the USSR as a reliable "pro-Soviet instrument" within an East European Communist Party leadership since the early 1950s (when Marshal Rokossovsky played something of this role in Poland). Even if a group of officers within a military establishment was inclined to such a role (as appeared to be the case in Czechoslovakia in late 1968 and early 1969), this would be a mixed blessing to the Soviet leadership: Such a role would foster military autonomy of Party leadership that might serve Soviet purposes in some circumstances but--with subsequent changes in the military elite or if emulated by other groups--could raise the specter of "Bonapartism," or undue military influence, and call into question the Party's "leading role." It was perhaps this consideration that led Moscow to ignore the blatantly "pro-Soviet" hard-line element of the reconstituted Czechoslovak General Staff in 1969, which appealed to Soviet backing it failed to have or win in calling for a more rapid and radical reestablishment of political orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion.

Hungary and Bulgaria: Secondary Concerns

In contrast to the emphasis the USSR has placed on the Northern Tier since the early 1960s, considerably less attention has been paid to the armed forces of Hungary and Bulgaria. This relative neglect of the "Southern Tier" is understandable, given the priority of Western Europe in Soviet foreign policy and the Central Front in Soviet military planning. As an illustration of this emphasis, only 9 of 50 multilateral Warsaw Pact exercises observed between 1955 and 1976 occurred in the Southern Tier.[27] Throughout this period, Hungary and

[27] East European Military Establishments, p. 16.

Bulgaria devoted lower percentages of their national income to defense spending than did the Northern Tier states.[28]

Hungary has figured more prominently than Bulgaria in Soviet military policy. Since the military suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by 8 Soviet divisions in 1956, the USSR has maintained the Southern Group of Forces, numbering 4 divisions, in Hungary. These troops have a clear domestic function, and in addition, they would contribute to a Soviet offensive in Central Europe or could be used for contingencies in Southern Europe, for example, intervention in Yugoslavia.

Complementing these Soviet divisions are the Hungarian armed forces, numbering 93,000 regulars. Although Hungary is not a Northern Tier country, since the mid-1970s its armed forces have joined frequently with Northern Tier forces in Warsaw Pact exercises. Soviet military planners may ascribe to Hungarian forces a combat role in support of Soviet forces in some Central Front conflict contingencies.[29]

Yet the utility and reliability of Hungarian forces (as compared to other East European armies) in support of Soviet military objectives in a European conflict would appear to be diminished substantially by lasting scars of the 1956 Revolution, when the Hungarian armed forces virtually collapsed. Soviet control of the upper echelons of the military, similar to that exercised through Marshal Rokossovsky in Poland, prevented the Hungarian military from supporting the revolution. But while Moscow could neutralize the army, it could not use it to

[28] Soviet-East European Military Relations, pp. 13-14.

[29] Graham H. Turbville, Jr., "Warsaw Pact Forces in Hungary: A Key Element in Pact Contingency Planning," Rusi, December 1976, pp. 47-51.

suppress the revolution; the army disintegrated, and many officers as well as conscripts joined the uprising. Once Soviet forces had suppressed the revolution, the Hungarian army had to be rebuilt almost from nothing. The near decimation of the Hungarian officer corps in 1956-1957 was a harbinger of what would occur in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

In the 1960s and 1970s a new Hungarian officer corps took shape--like its counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe, increasingly professional.[30] But recovery from the trauma of 1956 was slow; Hungarian forces were evidently the last to receive new generations of Soviet weapons, and today the Hungarian armed forces are still less than half of their 1956 size. Since the early 1960s, the Soviet Union has forced the Hungarian military elite to embrace the concept of "coalition warfare," whereby Hungarian forces would join a massive, rapid offensive onto enemy territory in the event of a European conflict. In terms of national interests, this defense concept is even less viable in Hungary than in Czechoslovakia, and there is some evidence that even Hungarian officers view this mission with skepticism. A Hungarian military publication criticized viewpoints held within the Hungarian army which maintained that:

... the Soviet army should fight the battles instead of us
..., that we cannot be engaged in main front-line operations,
but will only secure the communications and base areas of the
Soviet army, or that the Soviets will in any case deal with
the problems[31]

[30] See Ivan Volgyes, "The Political and Professional Perspectives of the Hungarian Armed Forces," Journal of Political and Military Sociology, Fall 1977, pp. 279-294.

[31] As quoted in R. Rubin, "The Hungarian People's Army," Rusi, September 1976, pp. 59-66, note 36.

Given the history of the Hungarian army and the morale problems created in 1968 by its participation in the occupation of Czechoslovakia, its use in quelling domestic repression seems questionable, as is its utility in military suppression of unrest elsewhere in Eastern Europe, or as part of a Soviet-led invasion of Yugoslavia.

The Bulgarian armed forces, although larger than those of Hungary, are even less central to the USSR: Bulgaria, with regular armed forces numbering 149,000, has been only a marginal participant in multilateral Warsaw Pact exercises. Its geographic isolation has been compounded since the mid-1960s by Romania's deviant position within the Warsaw Pact. This has effectively precluded the large-scale transfer of Soviet troops to Bulgaria for exercises or for a military buildup--a seldom-appreciated cost for Moscow of Romania's independent policies. It also inhibits use of Bulgarian troops in Central Europe, as demonstrated in 1968, when no Bulgarian ground forces (and only token airborne forces) participated in the occupation of Czechoslovakia. This constraint has been only partly overcome by the initiation of large-capacity ferry service between Bulgaria and the USSR in 1978.

By necessity more than by choice, the USSR has favored bilateral military relations with Bulgaria over multilateral relations in the context of the Warsaw Pact. The extent of top-level military exchanges and the introduction of new weapons systems in Bulgaria sooner than in some other Warsaw Pact countries[32] suggest Soviet confidence in the Bulgarian military, as a potential complement to Soviet military power,

[32] In 1978, Bulgarian forces reportedly received MIG-27s (Aviation Week and Space Technology, April 3, 1978).

for any military contingencies in Southern Europe involving Turkey, Greece, or Yugoslavia. The anomaly of the absence of stationed Soviet forces in Bulgaria may perhaps be explained by both Bulgaria's secondary geographic position and its political and military reliability. Given Bulgarian-Yugoslav national animosities, the Soviet leadership may view the Bulgarian army as the one East European army that might contribute significantly to Soviet military intervention in Yugoslavia. But since 1971, in line with its policy of wooing Yugoslavia more than threatening it, the USSR has refrained from holding joint Bulgarian-Soviet maneuvers that would be intended--or interpreted in the West as intended--to exert pressure on Yugoslavia.[33]

The Romanian Military Deviation

While Hungary and Bulgaria have been of secondary military importance for the USSR in the past decade, Romania has continued to be an irritant in military as well as political terms, detracting from the concept of Warsaw Pact unity espoused by the USSR, setting a "bad example" for other East European military establishments and, for some purposes, constituting a subtraction from overall Soviet military capabilities in Europe.

Romania's "deviation" in the military sphere was initiated shortly after conflict between Romania and the USSR on developmental policy within COMECON came to a head in the early 1960s and Romania began to define for itself an autonomous position within the Soviet orbit. Early manifestations of the Romanian military deviation have been traced

[33] Such maneuvers were falsely reported (and interpreted as pressure on Romania and Yugoslavia) in early 1979. See Neue Zurcher Zeitung, February 28, 1979.

above. Romania's autonomous stance on military affairs was probably the catalyst for Soviet acceptance in the late 1960s of the formal Warsaw Pact bodies (such as the Joint Staff of the Warsaw Pact Joint Command) that provided at least the semblance of greater East European representation and participation. Romanian policy was also a source of encouragement for nationally inclined elements in the military establishments of other East European countries--demonstrably so in the case of Czechoslovakia, and perhaps in Poland and even Hungary as well. Romania's independent course in military affairs was clearly demonstrated in 1968, when it abstained from participating in the Soviet-led military occupation of Czechoslovakia. Thereafter, Romania further widened, rather than limited, its sphere of autonomy. This was one sign, among many others, that the Soviet-imposed "normalization" in Czechoslovakia after 1968 was not accompanied by a successful, wide-ranging reimposition of political orthodoxy throughout the Soviet bloc.

While the other East European military establishments copied or refined the Soviet "coalition warfare" doctrine in the 1970s and adapted their forces and weaponry to this end, the Romanian military developed a nationally based concept which maintained that defense was solely the prerogative of the nation-state and was valid only within national territory. The doctrine thus explicitly rejected the concept of "coalition warfare" and a strategy of rapid massive offensives into enemy territory. According to Romanian doctrine, any aggression against Romania will be turned into a "people's war"--a concept similar to, and clearly in part inspired by, the Yugoslav doctrine of "total national defense." This concept is unprecedented in the Warsaw Pact, although

Czechoslovak military theoreticians began to espouse such notions in the mid-1960s. Emulating the Yugoslavs, to some degree, in practice as well as in theory, Romania reorganized its defense system in the 1970s to stress a smaller but well-trained regular army and compulsory civilian involvement in defense, including a network of "Patriotic Guard" and other paramilitary organizations.

Romania has also decreased its dependence on the USSR for armaments. It has entered into agreements with a number of non-Warsaw Pact countries to co-produce weapons--some of them rather sophisticated--including jet fighters (Yugoslavia), helicopters (France), jet engines (Great Britain), and missile boats (China). It has also developed an extensive program of exchanging military visits with a variety of non-Warsaw Pact countries, including NATO countries.[34]

At the same time, Romania has remained active in Warsaw Pact affairs on issues and occasions of its own choosing. It has sought to have the best of both worlds: to minimize its obligations yet maximize its influence on Soviet bloc-wide military affairs. Romania continues to abstain from Warsaw Pact maneuvers and has allowed no such maneuvers (except for limited staff exercises) on its own territory since 1962. Nor has it agreed to Soviet troops transiting Romania (as noted, an important constraint on Moscow's ability to deploy Soviet forces in Bulgaria, or Bulgarian forces in Central Europe). But its presence in Pact councils has prevented the USSR from achieving the unanimity it has sought on military-related issues. This was demonstrated best in November 1978, when Romania evidently resisted (and publicized) Soviet

[34] See Romania and the Warsaw Pact, pp. 18-21.

demands that the East European states increase their defense expenditures. On that occasion, just as earlier, its actions reportedly encouraged other East European representatives to speak out in a similar vein.

Party leader Nicolae Ceausescu led Romania to embark on an autonomous course in matters of defense. But refinement and implementation of that course has been the responsibility of the Romanian military elite. In Romania, even more than was the case in Czechoslovakia in the mid-1960s, an outwardly uniformly loyal pro-Soviet officer corps was harnessed to the cause of a national military deviation without internal conflicts.[35]

Today, Moscow lacks any substantial influence over the Romanian military elite. Soviet forces have been absent from Romania since 1958, while the Soviet military representation in Bucharest (formally, the Warsaw Pact representation) was reduced to a minimum at Romanian insistence in the mid-1960s. Romanian officers have evidently ceased attending Soviet military schools, while formal military exchanges with the USSR are now outnumbered by those with NATO countries. The top military leadership has remained loyal to Ceausescu in his defiance of Moscow; there has been no evidence in Romania of pro-Soviet generals (like those in Czechoslovakia in 1969) who could have served as a potential counterelite for Soviet purposes.

The Romanian military deviation has constituted an important challenge to Soviet concepts of how the Warsaw Pact should organize military affairs throughout Eastern Europe. It has contradicted Soviet

[35] See Alex Alexiev, Party-Military Relations in Romania, P-6059, The Rand Corporation, December 1977.

claims to unanimity within the Pact on numerous occasions; detracted from Soviet military capabilities in southern Europe; contributed to the isolation of Bulgaria; created a basis for Romanian military resistance in the event of Soviet military invasion; and shown both the USSR and outside observers how quickly an apparently reliable military elite can become "unreliable" (from the Soviet perspective) in response to changes in national policies.

Soviet toleration of the Romanian military deviation for over fifteen years is part and parcel of Soviet toleration of Romania's autonomous course generally. That toleration is usually assumed to be based on Romanian respect for certain limits--especially domestic political and economic orthodoxy and continued formal membership in the Warsaw Pact--and on a lesser Soviet stake in Romania, given its location, than in the East Central European countries. It should also be noted that the Romanian deviation developed gradually, and so presented the Soviets with no clear-cut, dramatic challenge that could catalyze a Soviet decision to intervene. In military terms, Romania is far less important to the USSR than are the Northern Tier countries. And yet when all the "logic of the situation" arguments are marshaled, it must be said that the Soviet leadership has tolerated in Romania a remarkable degree of departure from Soviet preferences for the organization of military affairs in Eastern Europe.

RELIANCE ON THE UNRELIABLE: KEY ISSUES FOR THE 1980S

In the early 1980s, the USSR will evidently continue to rely in its planning for European military contingencies on a significant contribution from East European military forces that, on many counts,

would appear to be unreliable. The East European armed forces are manned by conscripts who, as such, are a rough sample of their societies. However good their military training and discipline, East European soldiers lack commitment to Communist Party values and Soviet interests. Anti-Soviet attitudes are perhaps strongest among Czechoslovak and Polish conscripts, but they evidently exist among other East European conscripts as well. In the wake of Pope John Paul's triumphant return to his native Poland in 1979, Stalin's query, "How many divisions has the Pope?" assumed a new relevance. Is this evident paradox of Soviet reliance on unreliable East Europeans the consequence of Soviet illusions? Or does it signify a Western failure to appreciate the dynamics of the Soviet-East European military relationship? The latter possibility is more persuasive, although the Soviet leaders are likely to have more cause for concern with the utility and reliability of East European forces in the 1980s in the wake of, and regardless of the outcome of, the Polish crisis of 1980-1981.

Soviet military planning takes into account the partial coincidence of the state and national interests of the East European Communist states with those of the USSR. GDR and Soviet interests coincide most closely, given the geographic situation of the GDR and its continued political insecurity as the smaller and weaker part of a divided nation. Poland's national rationale for fidelity to the USSR, which was strong in the early postwar period, declined with the fading of German irredentism. Yet Poland's geopolitical position perforce would involve it in any European war. Poland's numerous regional disarmament proposals, beginning with the Rapacki Plan, served Soviet policy interests but originated from this Polish security imperative.

Czechoslovakia's geopolitical incentives to minimize involvement in a Warsaw Pact-related conflict, so prominent in the late 1960s, are presently suppressed, and Bulgaria's historic conflict with Yugoslavia reinforces its ties with Moscow. Throughout the region, the Communist Party-dominated political systems rest fundamentally on Soviet support. For all the Party leaderships in Eastern Europe (with the exception of that of Romania), adherence to the Warsaw Pact and fulfillment of the ensuing military tasks stipulated by Moscow is a fundamental alliance obligation. The same is true of loyal adherence to Soviet viewpoints in East-West negotiations such as the MBFR talks. Indeed, it was understood in Poland and Hungary after 1956 and in Poland again in 1980 (but not in Czechoslovakia in 1968) that loyalist fulfillment of alliance military obligations was a condition for a degree of internal autonomy.

On the other hand, the East European countries have not shared Soviet global security concerns and have sought with considerable success to limit their involvement in Soviet military activities outside of Europe. They have successfully resisted the evident Soviet desire to expand the Warsaw Pact to include extra-European members and to apply to military contingencies outside Europe. They have not responded to the Soviet wish to station at least token East European contingents on the Sino-Soviet border. While all the East European countries have been involved in some fashion in Soviet policy toward the Third World, their contribution to Soviet military activities in the developing countries has been (in terms of total Soviet-sponsored efforts) marginal, consisting mainly of Czechoslovak arms sales (a traditional Czechoslovak export) and East German security advisers. In Europe, the more distant

an East European country is from the Central Front, the more nationally based defense concepts have come to the fore, most dramatically in Romania, but also at times in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Soviet military planning is also premised on the character of the East European military elites and officer corps, generally well-trained professionals who--both because of the directives of their national political leadership and through their links to the Soviet military--are imbued with and evidently committed to Soviet-defined concepts of warfare. They command well-trained and well-disciplined armies.

Given these premises, Soviet military strategy is designed to optimize the possibilities for utilizing East European armed forces to serve Soviet military purposes in a Warsaw Pact-NATO conflict. As described above, the Soviets first placed greater emphasis on non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces in the early 1960s, as Soviet military thought and strategy were transformed. The resultant emphasis on rapid advance of quantitatively superior Warsaw Pact forces onto enemy territory at the outset of a European war, along with a concept of "coalition warfare" that provided for East European forces to fight in conjunction with Soviet forces rather than autonomously, served to increase the utility of the East European forces. Indeed, Soviet "lightning war" offensive strategy may constitute the strongest Soviet lever for ensuring substantial and reliable East European military participation in support of Soviet objectives in a European war. In such circumstances, it would be to Soviet advantage to achieve quick multinational involvement of forces and early battlefield success. It would also be in the Soviet interest to minimize consultation with the East European leaderships. In such a contingency, one could hardly expect a repetition of

Khrushchev's diligent personal consultation with the East European leaderships in their own capitals prior to Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. Still less likely is multilateral consultation, such as in the Cierna and Bratislava meetings prior to the occupation of Czechoslovakia. Given Warsaw Pact offensive strategy and a high state of readiness, there may even be some circumstances when operational considerations would require East European military commands to undertake action on Moscow's directive, before national political decisions were made. But more fundamentally, the Soviet leadership can calculate, probably realistically, that the motivations and opportunities for political and military leaders in Eastern Europe to "opt out" of a Soviet war would be quite limited. For whatever the likely horrors of a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict for any East European country, East European leaders may conclude (not without cause) that these would only be magnified by any attempt to "opt out" or participate less than wholeheartedly in a Soviet campaign.

In such circumstances, the Soviets can also calculate, again possibly realistically, that nothing would succeed like success. East European military units advancing in Western Europe would probably fight--if they continued to advance, and because Soviet forces would be behind and around them.

It is in these terms that we should probably view the considerable reliance that Soviet political and military leaders evidently place on East European armed forces in planning for European military contingencies. This strategic calculus is likely to hold in the 1980s. Because the Soviet leadership will undoubtedly find itself faced with more competing claims for scarcer military resources, both at home and

in other parts of the world, it will be motivated to rely even more on East European military forces as a supplement to Soviet military capabilities. Yet in fact, the USSR is unlikely to command a greater East European contribution to Warsaw Pact military capabilities in the 1980s--nor would it be comfortable with such an enhanced East European role. For the considerations that led the USSR to increase its relative share of European-oriented Warsaw Pact military capabilities after 1968 are likely to be compounded in the 1980s.

Operational considerations alone argue against an enhanced East European role. The Soviet concept of "coalition warfare" assumes that Soviet military forces must play the primary role in all military operations, with no primary military task entrusted to any East European army on its own. East European units cannot replace Soviet military units. To diminish significantly the relative Soviet contribution to Warsaw Pact capabilities--even assuming a greater East European contribution could be forthcoming--would mean a more important operational role for East European forces, a situation that Soviet generals would find intolerable.

Rising professional military consciousness in Eastern Europe may reinforce such Soviet concerns. Military professionalism is a two-edged sword for the USSR. It has increased the combat effectiveness of the East European armies, but it has given rise to a new set of grievances vis-a-vis the USSR. As the East European military establishments became more modern and professional, their military elites expected the USSR to grant them the status of junior partners in Warsaw Pact affairs. Yet the evidence is that the Soviet Union has yet to do this: The USSR continues to dominate the operations of Warsaw Pact military

institutions; new weapons systems are often made available to the East European armed forces only after they have been supplied to Soviet client-states in the Third World; and Soviet officers clearly display a patronizing attitude toward their East European counterparts. Moscow must be particularly concerned with the fact that professional grievances of the East European countries are likely to be linked to national feelings, as has been the case in Czechoslovakia, Romania, and--at least incipiently in the 1970s--Poland. Barring a fundamental change in Soviet behavior, the issue of rising professional military expectations in Eastern Europe is likely to be increasingly troublesome for the USSR in the 1980s.

Nor can the Soviet leadership fail to be concerned by the domestic political role of some East European military establishments. It has seen first in Yugoslavia and then in Czechoslovakia how the Soviet concept of the proper "leading role of the Party" in the armed forces was undermined.[36] By the turn of the 1980s, the military establishment in Poland had become master of its own house to a degree inconsistent with Soviet-defined, Leninist notions of the proper Party-army nexus. In the early 1980s, Soviet attention to the East European political systems has been focused on the challenge of the workers--the organization of a mass independent trade-union movement in Poland and the actual and potential ramifications elsewhere in Eastern Europe. But developments in Poland even before 1980 also raised the possibility of a "Bonapartist" challenge to Party rule from the military in the region.

[36] For the Yugoslav experience, see A. Ross Johnson, "The Role of the Military in Yugoslavia," in Andrzej Korbonski and Roman Kolkowicz (eds.), Soldiers, Politicians, and Bureaucrats (London, Allen Unwin & Co. 1981).

Domestic socioeconomic resource constraints on increased defense spending in Eastern Europe are likely to be more severe than those in the USSR itself in the 1980s. Only the GDR increased its defense burden in the 1970s. Socioeconomic constraints were especially pronounced in Poland in the late 1970s and were then multiplied manyfold by the Polish crisis of 1980-1981. Whatever the course of developments in Poland, one consequence of the Polish crisis of 1980-1981 is that both Soviet and East European leaderships will be forced to pay closer attention to potential disruptive social consequences of economic policies, and they will have to reconsider the extent to which the military burden is compatible with social stability and economic viability in individual East European countries. In Poland itself, and perhaps elsewhere in Eastern Europe, economic problems might become severe enough to cause Soviet leaders to consider a neo-"New Course" in economic policy necessitating, as in 1954-1955, a partial reduction in the military burden. It is difficult to imagine that even under optimistic assumptions, the USSR can count on any significant increase.

Moreover, East European political stability is a prerequisite for Soviet reliance on East European military forces in its planning for European military conflict. It was in a period of East European political quiescence in the early 1960s that Khrushchev and Marshal Grechko first promoted an enhanced military role for East European forces within the Warsaw Pact. Today no Soviet leader anticipating the course of the 1980s can count on such stability. Indeed, as the Polish crisis of 1980-1981 unfolded, and irrespective of its outcome, Soviet estimates about the utility and reliability of the 15 Polish divisions for any military purposes must surely have been lowered sharply.

Domestic and Intra-Bloc Considerations

The East European military establishments--originally alien, Soviet-dominated entities--were integrated into their respective national political systems after 1956. This meant that for all practical purposes they could no longer be employed by the Soviet leadership for domestic political purposes in Eastern Europe, either to serve as a "pro-Soviet" faction within a Party elite or as a coercive military force in the pursuit of Soviet aims. In 1956, Khrushchev could command Marshal Rokossovsky to move his divisions toward Warsaw in an attempt to intimidate the new Gomulka leadership. Such Soviet use of East European military forces is inconceivable in the 1980s.

The East European armed forces--the regular units, as opposed to elite internal security forces generally (except in Poland) under the command of the Interior Ministry--are also by and large unsuited for domestic repression. This has evidently been well understood in Eastern Europe and the USSR alike; there has in fact only been one instance in which regulars were used successfully in such a mode: They were used in Poland in 1970 to suppress worker unrest, and that was on a very limited scale and with such a demoralizing impact on the Polish officer corps as to virtually preclude a repetition.

Policies are often choices among unsatisfactory alternatives--and Soviet military policy toward Eastern Europe is no exception. In fostering the development of East European armed forces since the early 1960s as a supplement to Soviet military capabilities that could be used in "coalition warfare" against NATO, the USSR accepted their renationalization. While it is true that the East European military

elites have closer ties with the Soviet military than do other elites with their respective Soviet counterparts, these ties have their limits. East European military establishments are today components of their respective domestic political systems: they are not alien, Soviet-imposed bodies. As a consequence, the Soviet Union has lost whatever capability it enjoyed in the 1950s to use the East European armies for surrogate domestic influence or repression. The Brezhnev leadership could not use the Czechoslovak army as a coercive political presence in 1968. A Soviet leadership calculation that Polish forces could not be relied upon for massive internal repression and that Soviet forces would have to be used to this end was arguably a major factor in the initial Soviet restraint toward Poland in the 1980-1981 crisis. Soviet and not Eastern European military forces are likely to be required in the future for political coercion or repression in Eastern Europe.

These conclusions are not contradicted by the participation of Polish, East German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian contingents in the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. That invasion was predicated on the near-certain knowledge that there would be no organized Czechoslovak resistance. Even so, there is evidence that the operation gave rise to severe morale problems in the Polish, Hungarian, and even the East German armed forces; the GDR contingent, moreover, was small and kept well away from population centers. Unsited as the East European armies are for domestic repression within their own countries, the Soviets would appear to have little grounds for optimism that these forces could be utilized effectively in such a role elsewhere in the region. In any intra-Soviet bloc policing operation, the Soviet

leadership would have to weigh the benefits of utilizing other East European forces to provide an "internationalist" cover against the risks that those forces might not only prove useless in military terms but could, in some circumstances, end up siding with the invader. Should the USSR consider using military force in Yugoslavia, where protracted resistance is a near-certainty, it would have cause to be even more concerned about the utility and reliability of East European contingents.

The Polish crisis of 1980-1981 raised anew the prospect of yet another role for East European military forces--that of defending their country against Soviet military invasion. This role, "unthinkable" in normal times, has become "thinkable" in past crises, and corresponding military preparations have been made. Some Czechoslovak politicians and officers proposed (but did not implement) such resistance in 1968. This possibility was very real in Poland in 1956, when internal security forces loyal to Gomulka were prepared to forcibly resist Rokossovsky's troops marching on Warsaw, and major Navy and Air Force units were prepared to fight Soviet forces. As Khrushchev recounted,

Marshal Konev and I held consultations with [Polish Defense Minister] Rokossovsky, who was more obedient to us [than the Polish political leadership].... He told us that ... if it were necessary to arrest the growth of these counterrevolutionary elements by force of arms, he was at our disposal.... That was all very well and good, but as we began to ... calculate which Polish regiments we could count on to obey Rokossovsky, the situation began to look somewhat bleak.[37]

This history, like the history of the Polish army's domestic role in

[37] Strobe Talbott (ed.), Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament (Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1974), p. 203.

1970, arguably affected the perceptions of the Soviet leadership, as it affected all elements in Poland in 1980-1981, and was a major reason for Moscow's decision not to invade Poland in the initial stages of the crisis. Throughout Eastern Europe, Soviet influence over and access to military institutions is probably sufficient to enable the USSR to neutralize any unified military resistance commanded by the General Staff. Yet in Poland in 1980-1981, many observers inside Poland and abroad felt that any Soviet military occupation would be met with lower-level military resistance.

CONCLUSIONS

In the 1980s, Europe is certain to remain a central preoccupation of Soviet foreign and military policy. Central Europe will remain the key area of interest to the USSR, even though Southern Europe may become increasingly important, in view of Soviet involvement in the Middle East and Persian Gulf and developments in Turkey, Yugoslavia, and perhaps other Southern European countries that may present Moscow with opportunities or challenges.

The USSR may wish it could rely more in the 1980s on East European military forces to maintain or increase the present level of Soviet-controlled military power in Europe while minimizing the commitment of additional Soviet military resources to this region. Soviet military forces are being subjected to increased competing demands in the Far East, Central Asia, and other areas; and at the same time, domestic Soviet economic tradeoffs between military and civilian production are being posed more sharply. Demographic changes in the USSR involving the relative increase of the non-Slavic populations at

the expense of the Slavs portends a "yellowing" of the Soviet armed forces that is yet another constraint.

Yet the USSR will have to rely less, rather than more, on East European military forces. No significant increase in the East European military contribution to Soviet military power is to be expected in the 1980s. Moreover, it will be difficult for the USSR to maintain the present level of East European military preparations. Operational, institutional, and socioeconomic factors that make a greater or even undiminished East European military contribution unlikely have been discussed above. The Polish crisis of 1980-1981 has dramatized, for the Soviet leadership just as for the rest of the world, the vulnerabilities inherent in the present level of Soviet reliance on East European military forces. Development of East European armies for "coalition warfare," emphasized by Khrushchev at the turn of the 1960s as a "quick fix," has reached the point of diminishing returns, irrespective of the outcome of the Polish crisis. In its military policy toward Eastern Europe in the 1980s, as in so many other policy areas, the Soviet leadership will have to make hard choices: It must either dedicate relatively more of its own increasingly scarce military resources to Europe or permit a relative decline in Soviet-controlled military power in the region.

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THE WARSAW PACT: SOVIET MILITARY POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE

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