
Winter 1989

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Recommended Citation

Blackwill, Robert D., and Jeffrey W. Legro. "Constraining Ground Force Exercises of NATO and the Warsaw Pact." *International Security* 14, no. 3 (1989-1990): 68-98.

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Constraining Ground Force Exercises of NATO and the Warsaw Pact

Robert D. Blackwill
and Jeffrey W. Legro

Confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) have long been the neglected stepchild of serious arms control analysis. Some view CSBMs as "arms control junk food,"¹ frivolous, unworkable, or even detrimental. Others are so enamored of the concept that they expect proposals to be accepted as *prima facie* desirable. After all, the very term "confidence and security" connotes stability and peace. The problem with both positions is often the dearth of hard analysis in support of the ideas put forward and the abstract nature of the discussions of "security building."² As witnessed in the contrast between the quiet success of the 1972 Incidents at Sea Agreement and the disastrous Trojan Horse episode of ancient Greece, CSBMs can have good or bad results. It is necessary to sort out analytically which CSBMs make sense to enhance security in Europe. This study aims to do that in the case of one important type of CSBM: constraints on the military ground exercises of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO or Warsaw Pact).

Military exercises have been a focal point of CSBM efforts at least as far back as the Helsinki Accord of 1975 (see Appendix). They retain high visibility today as Gorbachev's artful diplomacy includes far-ranging proposals for limitations on military activities. Measures affecting exercises also deserve attention because both NATO and the WTO face substantial changes in their

The authors would like to thank the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation for supporting the preparation of this article.

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1. The term comes from Strobe Talbott's *Deadly Gambits* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 323. The focus of Talbott's book is on nuclear forces, but similar attitudes exist in the conventional realm.
 2. A conference of experts on security affairs noted the need to link operational military concerns to general security principles, particularly in the area of conventional warfare issues. See Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field," *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Spring 1988), pp. 22-24.

International Security, Winter 1989/90 (Vol. 14, No. 3)
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training patterns, opening opportunities and risks for European security. Would significant, verifiable constraints on the exercises of both sides enhance NATO's security, by improving its ability to respond effectively to Eastern aggression, more than these measures would degrade the West's capability to defend? An adequate answer to this question requires an examination of: 1) the purposes and nature of military exercises in Europe; 2) the goals and content of constraint proposals; and 3) the trade-offs involved in accepting mutual limitations on training.

The Purposes and Dimensions of NATO and Warsaw Pact Exercises

NATO and Warsaw Pact exercises have both military and political objectives. Each side aims to match its combat capabilities to its strategy while enhancing the unity and integration of its alliance. Beyond these general similarities, however, the two blocs' maneuvers have traditionally had different military and political aims which are described below in three categories: 1) alliance-wide reinforcement exercises; 2) national ground force exercises; and 3) multinational ground force exercises.³

NATO REINFORCEMENT EXERCISES. Timely reinforcement is an integral part of NATO's plan for forward defense. After the first week of mobilization, NATO reinforcements would come largely from America. At present the United States should be able to send six active-duty army divisions to Europe within ten days of notification; equipment for these units is to be stored at POMCUS (Pre-positioned Overseas Matériel Configured to Unit Sets) sites.⁴

The United States practices this reinforcement, usually in the autumn,⁵ by transporting one to two divisions (approximately 17–35,000 men) to Europe in the exercise "REFORGER" (REturn of FORces to GERmany). This movement, of primarily active-duty soldiers, is complex and involves much more than simple flights to the continent. First, some equipment such as helicop-

3. Unless otherwise noted, exercise data presented in this article is based on information made public pursuant to the exercise notification provisions contained in the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Helsinki Final Act and the 1986 Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) Stockholm Accord.

4. *Soviet Readiness for War: Assessing One of the Major Sources of East-West Instability*, Report of the Defense Policy Panel, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, 100th Cong., 2d sess., December 5, 1988, p. 10. The U.S. commitment calls for 10 divisions in ten days, but only six have most of their equipment pre-positioned in Europe.

5. In 1979 and 1986, REFORGER took place in the winter. REFORGER is also scheduled for winter in 1990.

ters and vehicles is sent by sea because pre-positioned weapons and supplies are incomplete for supporting heavy divisions.⁶ The soldiers are assembled in the United States, and airlift must be readied, loaded, and flown. The troops disembark in Western Europe, clear the airfield, and then must be transported to the POMCUS sites, where they draw weapons and equipment and load up with fuel and ammunition. In addition, the matériel that has been sealifted to Europe must be offloaded and joined with the military forces that will use it. Finally, the troops travel to the areas in West Germany where they will fulfill their designated combat missions, such as plugging a hole in the front line or acting as a strategic reserve.

In addition to testing these U.S. capabilities, REFORGER also exercises the personnel, facilities, and equipment of European countries that are central to the reinforcement effort. Under Host-Nation Support agreements,⁷ individual countries on the continent are committed to assisting arriving U.S. forces with transportation to POMCUS and staging area sites, providing accommodations for troops, and setting up communications and supply lines.⁸ REFORGER is important militarily because it annually tests U.S. and allied ability to carry out the transcontinental reinforcement on which NATO's security depends.

REFORGER's political goals are to promote extended deterrence and foster NATO cohesion. The exercise demonstrates to the Soviet Union the West's ability to carry out successfully the tasks that would significantly complicate, if not neutralize, an East bloc attack. Practicing the reinforcement of Europe is a vivid symbol of American solidarity with its European allies. In the post-INF (intermediate nuclear forces) Treaty period, with debates over burden-sharing and the possibility of unilateral U.S. troop withdrawals from Europe, many questions have been raised about the continuing viability of extended deterrence. REFORGER was instituted in 1968 specifically to meet similar concerns when U.S. forces were withdrawn from the continent in response to budget constraints and transfers to Vietnam.⁹ Today, REFORGER is equally

6. Karl H. Lowe, "U.S. Mobilization for Reinforcing Western Europe," in Jeffrey Simon, ed., *NATO/Warsaw Pact Force Mobilization* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1988), p. 104.

7. Host-Nation Support agreements are bilateral treaties between the United States and several European allies.

8. Robert R. Ulin, "Belgium: The Strategic Hub," in Simon, *NATO/Warsaw Pact Mobilization*, pp. 415–417, and p. 424 n. 25. Also see "Host-Nation Support," *Soldier*, January 1989, p. 44.

9. David C. Isby and Charles Kamps, Jr., *Armies of NATO's Central Front* (London: Jane's, 1985), pp. 455–456.

important as a tangible expression of America's determination to come to the defense of Western Europe.

The United Kingdom also conducts alliance-wide reinforcement exercises which serve essentially the same political and military purposes as REFORGER. In war, the British Army of the Rhine would expand from its current 55,000 soldiers to some 150,000. In fact, exercise FULL FLOW (part of LION-HEART '84) was larger than any REFORGER; it moved 57,700 British troops (23,450 by sea; 34,250 by air) to West Germany.¹⁰

NATO NATIONAL EXERCISES. A second category of NATO exercises includes those conducted by each country of its armed forces already deployed in Europe. These can be distinguished from one another by size: large (50,000 troops and above), medium (25–50,000), small (13–25,000), and those less than 13,000. These size distinctions are based on notification limits established in the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Helsinki Accord, which required public announcement of exercises with 25,000 troops or more, and the 1986 Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE) Stockholm Accord which, among other provisions, lowered the notification floor to 13,000 soldiers (See Appendix).

There have been no large single-nation Western exercises in the past ten years.¹¹ Those with more than 50,000 troops have all been multinational exercises involving at least some troops of a second NATO country. Infrequently the United States¹² and France¹³ have held medium-size national exercises in Europe that reach corps size (35,000). One purpose of these maneuvers is to test corps-level responsibilities such as command and control of several divisions. In addition, military leaders favor multi-division exercises because they better capture the "fog of war" effect, the confusion and chaos that characterize actual combat.¹⁴

The most frequent notifiable Western national exercises are those designated "small" (13–25,000 troops) that drill those division-size tasks related to command and control, logistics, and intelligence functions that cannot be

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 303–304.

11. Since 1975, the only single-nation Western exercise exceeding 50,000 troops was the U.S. "REFORGER 75" in 1975.

12. The U.S. exercises in West Germany are by definition not completely autonomous and there is always some sort of interaction with FRG personnel.

13. France is not a member of NATO's integrated military command.

14. Author interviews with U.S. Army officers.

replicated with fewer troops. In the final category of national exercises (less than 13,000), soldiers practice tactics, the essence of combat.¹⁵

NATO MULTINATIONAL EXERCISES. Multinational exercises involve two or more nations and have traditionally been run under the authority of national military headquarters.¹⁶ They can be similarly classified according to size: large, medium, small, and those with less than 13,000 troops. NATO holds one or two large exercises a year in West Germany. Normally one is linked with U.S. troops arriving as part of the reinforcement exercise REFORGER. Once these soldiers are in Europe they join U.S. units stationed on the continent and other NATO-country forces in field maneuvers. Periodically a British contingent will conduct a similar large exercise with troops from other Western countries. In 1987, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and France held a maneuver of this category in West Germany, which totaled some 80,000 troops.¹⁷

Large multinational exercises contribute to several objectives. One is to improve cooperation among allied armies that lack common structure, weapons systems, or equipment. NATO plans to fight with autonomous national units of at least brigade size. They would have integrated strategic goals, and would support one another in interrelated operations. This might require, for example, a German division to allow a British unit on the way to the FEBA (forward edge of the battle area) to pass through its position. Practicing coordination of formations the size of several divisions can best be done through a large exercise. Field training of this type also strengthens deterrence by demonstrating that NATO is prepared to fight as a unified body.

Medium and small multinational maneuvers serve essentially the same purposes as the large type, except that the training focus is on lower ranks of command and levels of organization. In 1987, NATO's multinational exercises were primarily of the large and small type, with only a few in the medium category. The amount of multinational NATO training with less than 13,000 troops is difficult to ascertain from the open literature. Nonethe-

15. For training soldiers to fight, smaller exercises are desirable; "squadron/company or battalion/brigade-size exercises are the right framework; it is only at lower command levels that the right intensity of activity can be maintained." "Exercise Autumn Forge '84," *NATO's Sixteen Nations* (September/October 1984), p. 107.

16. A recent exception was CERTAIN STRIKE, the field exercise phase of REFORGER '87, which was run by the commander of NATO's Northern Army Group. See Gen. Sir Martin Farndale, KCB, "Exercise Reforger 87," *The Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, January 1988, p. 11.

17. "French-German Exercise: FAR From Perfect," *The Economist*, September 27, 1987, p. 63.

less, there appears to be little joint activity in the field at this level, which is consistent with NATO's plans to fight primarily as national divisions.

An additional type of training, which may involve more or less than 13,000 troops (not necessarily in combat formations), consists of command post exercises, meant to test command and control operations by simulating actual field maneuvers; thus they require only a limited number of combat troops. The purpose of these exercises is to practice conflict management of both personnel and equipment. Commanders at various levels are trained to direct operations (many of which occur only on paper) while the necessary communications lines and headquarters facilities are checked out.

WARSAW PACT TROOP ROTATION. Twice a year the Soviets have rotated their conscript troops, primarily by air, from the Soviet Union's three Western military districts into the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. The transfer involves some 125,000 troops (roughly 25 percent of the 600,000 Soviet troops in Eastern Europe, each serving two years), or three times as many as NATO's largest reinforcement exercises. The troop rotations are not a reinforcement exercise in the same sense as REFORGER. The Soviet soldiers are new recruits; they do not travel in formal units or with equipment. They disperse to individual units when they arrive, and the entire rotation lasts at least three to four weeks.¹⁸

Nonetheless, the Soviet troop rotation serves some reinforcement exercise purposes. In addition to merely rotating troops, these transfers allow the Soviet Union to practice airlift procedures. This movement also concerns the West because it could be used covertly to increase troop strength. It is sometimes difficult to determine quickly if the outgoing troops have actually left. Given the relative state of readiness (about 80–85 percent manned) of Soviet Category I units in Eastern Europe, this potentially rapid method to increase manpower could add to Warsaw Pact capabilities to mount an attack by in-place forces with little warning. This is especially true if trained troops were brought in instead of new conscripts.

18. In contrast, REFORGER involves the transport of active duty army personnel, who are in structured formations and accompanied by at least some equipment; these troops move to concentration points when they land in Europe and do this all in a week's time. According to the Stockholm Accord requirements, because REFORGER exercises involve structured units which concentrate, they must be notified, while troop rotations do not require notification. "Final Act of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, Stockholm, 19 September 1986," in J.A.S. Grenville and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., *The Major International Treaties Since 1945: A History and Guide with Texts* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 482–489.

WARSAW PACT NATIONAL EXERCISES. Large Warsaw Pact exercises (50,000-plus troops) are relatively rare, and only the Soviet Union has held them.¹⁹ These exercises serve two purposes. They contribute to publicly stated Soviet goals such as "increasing cooperation between different branches of the armed forces,"²⁰ and improvement of command and control. The Soviet military places great value on, and frequently practices, procedures for formulating military operations and transmitting these plans to lower-level units.²¹ A second objective of large Soviet exercises has been to intimidate wayward allies or to prepare for intervention in Eastern Europe. This was the case in the spring of 1968 before the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and during the Polish crisis of 1980–81.²²

Medium-size unilateral Soviet exercises (25–50,000 troops) are relatively rare and in the past have been close in size to the Helsinki 25,000 notification floor (i.e., at the lower end of the 25–50,000 range). Since 1986, when the Stockholm Accord reduced the notification floor for exercises to 13,000 troops, most Soviet national exercises have been of the small type (13–25,000). Beginning in 1987, each of the East bloc countries (except Romania) gave notice of one national exercise. With the exception of several voluntary notifications given by Hungary under the Helsinki Accord, this is the first time that non-Soviet East European countries have announced national exercises.

WARSAW PACT MULTINATIONAL EXERCISES. The large multinational exercises of the Warsaw Pact, which are not common (just two since 1981), appear to have several aims. The first is cover for preparations related to military actions. It is a standard technique of deception to use exercises as a pretext for the massing of men and matériel before an attack. Prior to the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Warsaw Pact exercises served as a cover for concentrating forces in and around that country.²³

19. The Soviet Union has held three since 1980.

20. This is a standard description of the objective of exercises given in official notification. See for example the stated purpose of the exercise KAVKAZ in 1976 in Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Yearbook 1977: World Armaments and Disarmament* (New York: Crane Russak, 1977), p. 407; and ZAPAD 81 in *SIPRI Yearbook 1982: World Armaments and Disarmament* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1982), p. 61.

21. John Erickson, Lynn Hansen, and William Schneider, *Soviet Ground Forces: An Operational Assessment* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 129–131.

22. Jiri Valenta, *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia 1968: Anatomy of a Decision* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 73; Sidney I. Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), p. 51.

23. John M. Caravelli, "Soviet and Joint Warsaw Pact Exercises: Functions and Utility," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Spring 1983), pp. 411–412. Also see Christopher D. Jones, *Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 114–116.

If the Pact were planning to attack the West, exercises might be mandatory for training conscripts or reserves. Soviet military history writings have stressed the important role of exercises in preparing troops before major operations in World War II.²⁴ Soviet conscripts who rotate into Eastern Europe are normally green inductees; their basic military training (i.e., “boot camp”) largely takes place within active military units.²⁵ Many of the Soviet Union’s reservists might also require refresher training if they end up with an unfamiliar unit or equipment.²⁶

Even when military intervention has not been the chosen course of action, large Warsaw Pact exercises have also provided opportunities for political leverage or signaling in crises. During the Berlin crisis of 1961, Soviet troops held large-scale exercises in the GDR, and the first-ever combined Warsaw Pact maneuvers took place.²⁷ Along with the unilateral Soviet exercises mentioned above, Warsaw Pact maneuvers were also held around Poland during its political turmoil in 1980–81.²⁸

Another central purpose of the East bloc’s large, medium, and small multinational exercises is to integrate national military forces within the Soviet command structure. Improving command and control is a particularly important task at all levels because in wartime the Warsaw Pact and national command structures would be absorbed under Soviet authority.²⁹ This integration of forces has furthered two traditional Soviet objectives: 1) developing a more unified Warsaw Pact army; and 2) restricting the development of autonomous national East European military capabilities that might encourage efforts to attain political independence or to turn against Soviet forces.³⁰

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DIFFERENCES IN MANEUVER SIZE. Several reasons account for the differences in the size and types of exercises between East

24. See, e.g., Col.-General M. Gareyev, “About the Experience of Troop Combat Training,” *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 4 (April 1983), pp. 11–20. (Soviet article titles translated by the authors.)

25. The Soviet Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet (DOSAAF) military programs in all Soviet secondary schools also contribute to the experience and knowledge of these new inductees.

26. *Soviet Readiness for War*, p. 8.

27. Hannes Adomeit, *Soviet Risk-Taking and Crisis Behavior: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982). See pp. 213, 239.

28. Jeffrey Simon, *Warsaw Pact Forces: Problems of Command and Control* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 166–177; also Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis*, p. 44.

29. See Michael Sadykiewicz, *The Warsaw Pact Command Structure in Peace and in War*, R-3558-RC (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, September 1988).

30. Jones, *Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe*, pp. 106–131.

and West. NATO emphasizes large exercises, first, because the Atlantic Alliance must practice the massive reinforcement of Europe by sea and air from the United States and United Kingdom to offset the Soviets' shorter land lines of communication (LOCs), which give the Soviet Union easier access to Central Europe. In addition, continental forces (e.g., Belgian and Dutch) sometimes must travel hundreds of kilometers to reach General Defense Positions (GDPs) as NATO moves to wartime footing. Second, NATO's forward defense strategy requires shifting large formations flexibly and quickly along an extended frontier to reinforce areas of initial attack or attempted breakthroughs by the numerically superior East bloc forces.³¹ Third, NATO needs larger exercises because it has more countries to coordinate in combat operations. Finally, the West requires larger exercises because it has to cluster the bulk of its maneuvers in one or two months in the fall to avoid the crop and farmland damage that would occur at other times of the year in the densely populated FRG.

Two explanations can be offered for the Warsaw Pact's primary use of medium and small exercises. The traditional offensive strategy of the East bloc has been designed to seize the initiative. Tactical flexibility is not as important as getting the right forces to the right place in the time required. The efficient movement of forces would also be important under the Pact's declared new "defensive" doctrine where, it is said, the decisive "counter-offensive" will be mounted only after an initial period when defensive operations dominate.³² In both cases, the Soviet style of warfare makes command and control extremely important, and they can be improved through smaller exercises, primarily set-piece combination command post exercises and field training exercises, which mix actual maneuvers with simulations.³³

A second possible determinant of Soviet exercise patterns, especially today, is budgetary constraints. Large exercises are expensive and the Soviet Union may believe that it gets more for its resources elsewhere. There is some evidence that suggests that relative to NATO and the United States, the Soviet Union puts less of its money into training. For example, Soviet tank

31. See Senator Carl Levin, *Beyond the Bean Count: Realistically Assessing the Conventional Military Balance in Europe*, Report of the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Conventional Forces and Alliance Defense, 2nd ed., July 1988, pp. 6–14.

32. See Jeffrey W. Legro, "The Military Meaning of the New Soviet Doctrine," *Parameters*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (forthcoming, December 1989).

33. Roland Flor, "Major Exercises of NATO and Warsaw Pact Land Forces in Europe, 1984—A Comparative Analysis," *Defense Analysis*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1986), pp. 191–193.

gunners fire one-tenth the number of live rounds that U.S. gunners do.³⁴ Soviet fighter pilots fly about one-half as much as NATO pilots.³⁵

OTHER DIMENSIONS OF MILITARY EXERCISES

The dimensions of the military exercises of the two alliances can be compared in terms of their number, duration, location, timing and operational elements.

NUMBER. During the Helsinki CSBM agreement (1975–86), NATO gave notice of more exercises than did the East bloc. This, however, may simply reflect the fact that the Western alliance voluntarily included a greater number of small exercises in its public plans than did the Warsaw Pact: 36 of NATO's 69 announced exercises, and 4 of the Warsaw Pact's 28 declared exercises, were small (i.e., below 25,000 troops).³⁶

Under the more recent Stockholm Accord 13,000 notification limit, however, the Warsaw Pact held 36 announced exercises in 1987 and 1988, while NATO's total was 30.³⁷ The large increase in the number of Warsaw Pact notifications with the drop in the notifiable limit from 25,000 to 13,000 may suggest that many more Eastern exercises under the 25,000 Helsinki notification threshold were held in the 1975–86 period than were announced. It may also be the case that the Soviets have intentionally inflated the number of exercises notified in the past two years, for the political purpose of touting the "new thinking" in Soviet attitudes towards compliance.³⁸ What remains unclear is how many Pact exercises are now being held below the 13,000 notification floor. The size of a Soviet/Warsaw Pact division is under 13,000 troops (11,500–12,500); thus, maneuvers at the division level can be conducted without public announcement.

DURATION. Most NATO and Warsaw Pact exercises tend to run from four to twelve days.³⁹ Several times a year, however, NATO holds exercises that

34. David Evans, "Ill-Fed Strangers Without Maps—The Soviet Military," *The Chicago Tribune*, November 27, 1987, p. 19, as cited in Levin, *Beyond the Bean Count*, p. 49.

35. Rick Maze, "Soviets Get What They Pay for in Soldiers," *Army Times*, September 17, 1984, p. 7, as cited in Levin, *Beyond the Bean Count*, p. 49.

36. "Tables of Notification of Military Maneuvers Made Under Provisions of CSCE Final Act During the Period 1975–1985," Memorandum, John Gunderson to all Delegation Members, U.S. Delegation, Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, Stockholm, Sweden, June 23, 1986.

37. Based on the notification schedule in the *SIPRI Yearbook 1987: World Armaments and Disarmament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 371–381; and *SIPRI Yearbook 1988: World Armaments and Disarmament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 338–346.

38. U.S. government officials have claimed to have seen some evidence that unrelated Pact military activities have been grouped together so that they are large enough to be notified.

39. Duration averages hold true across size categories.

last longer, sometimes up to a month or more. Historically, those rare Warsaw Pact exercises that have gone beyond twelve days have coincided with political turmoil or Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe. This was the case in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1980–81.

LOCATION. The public data on the locations of NATO and Warsaw Pact exercises is sketchy and permits only a few broad generalizations. On the Western side, troops train on the territory they expect to fight on, primarily along the inter-German and FRG-Czechoslovakia borders, with a few exercises in northern Norway and Turkish Thrace. Warsaw Pact country exercises have most frequently been held in the northern and central parts of the GDR, the north and northwestern regions of Czechoslovakia, the western areas of Hungary, and the Western Military Districts of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ The political situation has often shaped which of the East European countries held the most exercises in any particular year. The Czech and Polish crises seem to have influenced the location of exercises in the corresponding time periods.⁴¹

The East does not appear to train in forward areas as frequently as NATO. There are several possible reasons for this pattern. One is that the terrain along the eastern side of the border is not well suited for exercises. A second explanation relates to the Pact's traditional offensive strategy. Eastern forces are less dependent on knowledge and preparation of their own terrain, as they expect to fight in Western Europe. It is unlikely that the Soviet-dominated Eastern alliance is committed to an operational strategy of forward defense if initially forced on the defensive. If history serves as a precedent, the Soviet Union would trade space for time in order to establish an effective defense.

TIMING. Another characteristic difference between the military exercises of the two blocs is in their timing. Although the annual REFORGER exercise and several ground maneuvers are infrequently held in the winter, NATO conducts the bulk of its maneuvers in September and October in the annual "AUTUMN FORGE" series. Of the 37 notified NATO exercises held in West Germany from 1980–88, only three—CERTAIN GUARDIAN (January 1985), CERTAIN SENTINEL (January 1986), and CARAVAN GUARD (February 1988)—have been held outside of the usual September–October field exercise

40. Flor, "Major Exercises of NATO," pp. 195–196.

41. See Simon, *Warsaw Pact Forces*, pp. 37, 44, 69, 177, 188.

period. Warsaw Pact exercises tend to be evenly spaced throughout the year, with a gap sometimes in the late November–January period.

OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS. The operational character of the two blocs' exercises is also different. The Warsaw Pact's combination command post/field training exercises involve movement of units in a rigid, sequential fashion at the tactical level (i.e., division-level and below). As a Soviet defector has described the choreography, Soviet soldiers walk through the exercise before they actually carry it out with weapons.⁴² The troops taking part have pre-set times to fulfill designated movements at pre-arranged locations.⁴³ These exercises clearly emphasize tight high-level command and control over flexibility and initiative in the field.

This does not, however, mean that the Red Army's actions would be predictable or rigid. Surprise and initiative are key principles of Soviet military art. Furthermore, in the Soviet system, flexibility is emphasized at the strategic and operational levels (such as switching units rapidly between different salients). In World War II, Soviet competence at the operational-strategic scale overwhelmed German forces that had superior tactical skills.⁴⁴ There are, of course, drawbacks to the Soviet method. Military writings recognize that the formalism of training is a problem because the modern battlefield will demand better leadership skills (creativity, flexibility, initiative) from lower-level commanders.⁴⁵

The traditional (i.e., pre-Gorbachev) scenario practiced in Eastern exercises begins with an enemy attack which achieves limited tactical success. The enemy offensive is soon contained as Pact forces regroup and are reinforced. But defense is considered only a transitory stage, and the Eastern side then undertakes counteroffensives which ultimately destroy the attacker. Any lost territory is regained and sometimes the exercises signal the intention to mount a deep offensive into enemy territory. Pact maneuvers focus on command and control, fast long-range attacks by armored units with the support

42. Viktor Suvorov, *The "Liberators": My Life in the Soviet Army* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1981), pp. 90–93.

43. Also see Levin, *Beyond the Bean Count*, pp. 49–50.

44. Christopher Donnelly, *Red Banner: The Soviet Military System in Peace and War* (London: Jane's Information Group, 1988), p. 85.

45. "New Quality Military Education," *Krasnaia zvezda*, January 27, 1989, p. 1; and interview with Army General B.V. Snetkov, Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, "Military Training: Parameters of Quality," *Voennyi vestnik*, June 1989, pp. 3–7.

of air forces, and rapid water crossings with the aid of airborne and heliborne troops.⁴⁶

As indicated above, one apparent omission in Soviet training is the scarcity of large exercises that undertake the massive logistical tasks necessary for an invasion. The Soviet Union does test some airlift capacity with the semi-annual rotation of troops into East Europe, but the more difficult task of moving large amounts of equipment to support troops in the field is rarely exercised.⁴⁷ A number of explanations might account for this pattern. First, the Warsaw Pact's land lines of communications provide a comparative logistical advantage over the sea lines of the United States to the Central Front, and thus reinforcement training does not require as much attention. Furthermore, the Soviets have traditionally maintained significant stocks of forward-based equipment and supplies, which would lessen logistical demands in at least the first phase of a war.⁴⁸ For example, the East could throw new units into battle when others wear down, while Western plans to reconstitute partially destroyed formations put greater stress on logistics. Nonetheless, before the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Soviet Union felt it necessary to carry out a massive logistical exercise, "NEMAN," which involved calling up reservists, mobilizing civilian resources, and deploying Soviet troops in the USSR and across Poland, along with the matériel needed to sustain them.⁴⁹ The Soviet reduction of forces in Eastern Europe under Gorbachev may mean that logistical tasks will be even more important in the future as more men and matériel would have to be moved forward in a conflict.

The operational elements of NATO's exercises contrast with those of the Warsaw Pact in terms of style, scenarios, and emphases. In terms of style, the NATO leadership establishes general operational level objectives and then permits a good deal of free play. Aspects of Western exercises are also staged, but relative to Eastern maneuvers, NATO's are less scripted and allow for greater initiative on the part of leaders of all ranks. This flexibility is an important part of the Western alliance's forward defense, which must respond rapidly to Soviet force concentrations and breakthrough attempts.

46. Flor, "Major Exercises of NATO," p. 200.

47. One important case is "NEMAN," the large logistical exercise that preceded the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.

48. David C. Isby, *Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army* (London: Jane's, 1988), p. 93.

49. Simon, *Warsaw Pact Forces*, pp. 49-50.

The scenarios that guide NATO exercises are in principle similar to those of the Eastern alliance, although Western forces traditionally do not simulate a significant counteroffensive, but only regain the territory that has been lost. Overall, the tasks emphasized in Western exercises are dominated by the logistical demands of bringing troops into Europe and moving them up to the front line.⁵⁰

CHANGE IN EXERCISE PATTERNS?

Today both NATO and the Warsaw Pact appear to be modifying their military exercises, and it is important to consider the sources and possible future direction of this evolution. NATO is moving towards holding smaller and less frequent exercises in Central Europe. Two considerations explain this development.

First, West German resentment towards the disturbances that exercises cause has crystallized in the wake of several recent events. The turning point was the August 1988 crash of an Italian aerobatics team at the Ramstein airshow where twenty-one spectators—mostly West German—were killed. Sensitivities aroused by this event were heightened by three lengthy ground exercises conducted in the same region that fall.⁵¹ In December, 1988, a U.S. A-10 plane crashed in the German city of Ramscheid killing five people and injuring dozens more. This led to a quick decision by the United States, Britain, Canada, and West Germany to halt low-level aircraft training for three weeks.⁵²

Second, Gorbachev's "new thinking" has contributed to a perception that the Soviet military threat to Europe is declining.⁵³ Soviet representatives have trumpeted the Soviet Union's new foreign policy themes of interdependence and mutual security backed up by a new "defensive" Warsaw Pact military doctrine. In December 1988, Gorbachev's force reduction pledge at the United Nations added weight to the Soviet declaratory position.⁵⁴ West Germans in

50. Flor, "Major Exercises of NATO," p. 200.

51. "Not Much Room for Manoeuvre," *The Economist*, December 10, 1988, p. 58.

52. "Low-Level Jet Training Halted in W. Germany," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1988, p. A11.

53. "The Gorbachev Effect," *The Economist*, February 17, 1988, p. 38.

54. A clarification of Gorbachev's United Nations speech, in an article by Defense Minister Yazov, indicates that Soviet forces in Eastern Europe will be reduced by 50,000 men and 5,300 tanks, and Eastern European countries' forces by another 56,000 men and 1,900 tanks; and that the Soviet Union will further decrease its forces in the Western military districts by 190,000 men

particular have begun to wonder why allied military maneuvers and movements, and the disruptions they cause, cannot be curtailed in light of improved East-West relations.⁵⁵

These developments have led Western governments to reassess NATO training practices. The West German army has already announced that it is planning to reduce significantly the number of its exercises held at the brigade level (5,000 men) or above, from twenty-one in 1987 to less than ten in 1990.⁵⁶ General John Galvin, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR), has expressed doubt about the military effectiveness and the economic efficiency of large maneuvers.⁵⁷ And most recently, Pentagon officials have announced that the size of REFORGER will be reduced and the scope of ground maneuvers in Europe scaled back. REFORGER 89, originally scheduled for September 1989, will be merged with REFORGER 90, which will take place sometime between January and March 1990.⁵⁸

While the number and size of exercises may decrease, the United States hopes to maintain its capabilities by "training smarter." Under the "REFORGER Enhancement Program," a new type of exercise known as a "CFX" is being developed, which is a combination command post-field training exercise that is further enhanced by use of computer simulation. The exercise reduces the overall number of men by simulating the battalion-level forces (which are trained more effectively in separate smaller exercises), while larger formations are simulated through putting more "flags" (division headquarters) into the field at one time. Thus, NATO can still run large exercises with less damage and disturbance to the FRG and its populace.⁵⁹ This is, of course, not a cost-free change. Much of the stress on logistical organizations and procedures (and ultimately commanders) will be difficult to recreate without the participation of actual soldiers who must be moved, sheltered, and fed.

and 4,860 tanks. In addition, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries will cut 9,130 artillery systems and 430 combat aircraft from the territories of the Western military districts to the West German border. See Army General D.T. Yazov, "Based on Principles of Realism and a Balance of Interests," *Pravda*, February 9, 1989, p. 4.

55. Robert J. McCartney, "Allied Army Maneuvers Irk Germans," *Washington Post*, January 2, 1989, p. A1.

56. See David Marsh and David White, "Bundeswehr Plans to Hold Fewer Big Manoeuvres," *Financial Times*, December 2, 1988, p. 4. (Clarification on the size of the maneuvers subject to reduction was provided by the FRG Embassy in Washington, D.C.)

57. Transcript of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General John Galvin's Remarks to the Dutch Atlantic Committee, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, December 6, 1988.

58. "U.S. to Cut Back Major Exercises in Europe," *Boston Globe*, February 2, 1989, p. 4.

59. Interviews with military officers at the J-5 (Strategic Plans and Policy) and J-7 (Operational Plans and Interoperability) branches of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 1989.

Eastern maneuvers also may change in the future because of Gorbachev's "new thinking" concerning military affairs.⁶⁰ Gorbachev's December 1988 United Nations speech stressed that, along with troop and weapon reductions, Soviet forces in Europe would be restructured to become "clearly defensive."⁶¹ Soviet Defense Minister D. Yazov has noted in his writings and speeches that Soviet military policy will now emphasize quality instead of quantity, including the need for better training.⁶²

Although it is uncertain whether these developments will actually lead to a more "defensive" Warsaw Pact strategy and force structure, they could affect Eastern exercises in several respects. Both General Yazov and Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, former chief of the Soviet General Staff, have directed Western attention to Soviet and Warsaw Pact exercises, which they say will increasingly reveal a more defensive orientation.⁶³ Exactly what this means is unclear, but Soviet writings indicate that more time will be devoted to training for defensive operations.⁶⁴ Marshal Akhromeyev, during his visit to the United States in the summer of 1988, claimed that the Red Army now plans to remain on the defensive for three weeks at the beginning of a war, a revision which will supposedly be reflected in Soviet exercises.⁶⁵

Reports from Western observers of Pact maneuvers have mostly been skeptical regarding the degree of the shift towards defensive operations. In the fall of 1988, observers were not shown any maneuvers which included defensive actions, with the exception of watching one fortified position overrun against little resistance.⁶⁶ In April of 1989, observers saw no new strides

60. See Stephen M. Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall 1988), pp. 124-163.

61. "Excerpts from Speech to U.N. on Major Soviet Military Cuts," *New York Times*, December 8, 1988.

62. Army General D.T. Yazov, "The Qualitative Parameters of Defense Building," *Krasnaia zvezda*, August 9, 1988, pp. 1-2.

63. See Michael Gordon, "U.S. and Soviets to Seek Ways to Avoid Fighting by Mistake," *New York Times*, July 12, 1988, p. A12; George Wilson, "Nicaragua Intrudes as Carlucci-Yazov Topic," *Washington Post*, March 18, 1988, p. A18.

64. One Soviet article indicates that up to 50 percent of total training time will be dedicated to defensive operations. Colonel G. Miranovich and Colonel V. Shitarenko, "How is Defense Strong? The Organizers of the Model Lesson Tried to Answer the Question," *Krasnaia zvezda*, December 10, 1987, p. 2.

65. See William Odom, "Soviet Military Doctrine," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Winter 1988-89), p. 130.

66. Bernard E. Trainor, "Soviet Maneuvers: A New Strategy?" *New York Times*, November 4, 1988, p. A8. Also see "The Soviets Practiced only Attack Type of Combat," *Die Welt*, November 12-13, 1988, p. 4, as translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report: Western Europe*, November 16, p. 11.

in offensive potential, but questioned the supposed defensive nature of the maneuver, as the defenders had not hidden their tanks well and had no anti-air guns.⁶⁷ Not all accounts, however are pessimistic. Admiral William Crowe, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported seeing military exercises and wargames that were “truly defensive” during his June 1989 visit to the Soviet Union.⁶⁸ Two explanations might account for these differing reports. Some Warsaw Pact officers had claimed that it would take time to implement the concrete changes implied by the new doctrine, and Crowe’s report might be evidence that this is now occurring.⁶⁹ However, the differing accounts may simply reflect the difficulty in determining whether offense or defense is the actual focus of the exercise.

In addition to scenarios practiced, the number of Warsaw Pact exercises also could change. The chief of the General Staff, Army General Moiseyev, has declared that the defensive doctrine has led to a reduction in the number of major exercises. Yet it is not clear that the overall quantity of training will decline. Moiseyev notes that more time will be devoted to the “qualitative training” of smaller units.⁷⁰ Thus, “public” exercises—those that must be notified under the Stockholm Accord—may decline, while training below the 13,000 troop level increases.⁷¹

Even after the force cuts announced by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries are implemented, Eastern military maneuvers and movements will demand the West’s attention because the Warsaw Pact will continue to have an advantage in important major ground systems (e.g., artillery) in Central Europe and, more importantly, the capability to reinforce forward areas relatively quickly from reserves in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals area.⁷² If

67. George C. Wilson, “Westerners Fault Soviet War Game: Observers Detect No Shift to Defensive Doctrine in Mock Battle,” *Washington Post*, April 20, 1989, p. A36.

68. Interview on “Good Morning America,” June 21, 1989, as reported in *Current News*, June 23, 1989, p. A2. Also see Michael Dobbs, “Joint Chiefs View Soviet Weaponry,” *Washington Post*, April 19, pp. A1 and A23.

69. See Trainor, “Soviet Maneuvers.”

70. “From Defensive Doctrine Positions,” *Krasnaia zvezda*, February 10, 1989, pp. 1–2.

71. The Soviet Union has announced plans to cut the size of some exercises in East Europe scheduled for the fall of 1989 to 13,000 or less troops, supposedly because of the force reductions and restructuring in that area. See “Fall Exercises to Reflect Troop Reductions,” Moscow TASS in English, July 22, 1989; in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, July 24, 1989, pp. 117–118.

72. This conclusion is based on a balance derived from subtracting the cuts announced by Warsaw Pact countries (see Yazov, “Based on Principles of Realism”) from figures given in IISS, *The Military Balance, 1987–88* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies [IISS], 1987). See also Phillip Karber’s figures in “The Impact of Gorbachev’s Reduction Plan,” *Armed Forces Journal International*, January 1989, pp. 54–64.

the quantity and quality of Warsaw Pact training and exercises were increased without further reductions in manpower and weapons, NATO's advantages in readiness and quality of personnel might be reduced, detracting from the West's security.

The Purposes and Content of Proposals to Constrain Military Exercises

The ideal purpose of constraining military exercises is to diminish the capability of large concentrations of ready military forces to attack rapidly and defeat the other side. Limiting the dimensions of exercises could provide for greater confidence that: 1) an attack is not being planned; 2) the other side has less potential to execute it; and 3) the defender will have a better chance to react and repel it.

Especially in a crisis, exercises could raise anxieties that military action is imminent, setting off a chain of events that could lead to war. The mobilization and counter-mobilization at the start of World War I are often cited as an example of this phenomenon.⁷³ Proposals to constrain exercises can also serve political purposes. For example, the West would like to dissuade the Soviet Union from pressuring or intervening in Eastern Europe. The Soviets, on the other hand, are interested in inhibiting the Atlantic Alliance's cohesion by limiting U.S. military involvement in Europe. Western and Eastern official proposals reflect these different concerns about the exercises of the other side.

NATO PROPOSALS

The United States has traditionally been wary of constraining maneuvers, fearing that such measures would harm NATO's relative position. For example, proposals to create zones along borders where military maneuvers are prohibited would impair NATO's policy of forward defense more than it would hinder the Warsaw Pact's offensive strategy. The United States has also been concerned that constraints on exercises would slow a NATO defensive response to aggression because the West would be hesitant to react to ambiguous warning by violating treaty provisions.⁷⁴ American proposals

73. This is the interpretation presented by Sidney B. Fay, *The Origins of the First World War* (New York: Macmillan, 1928). Disagreeing that the cause of World War I was inadvertence is Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: Norton, 1967).

74. John Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals: Negotiating Arms Control at the Stockholm Conference* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), pp. 12-13, 58.

have therefore focused, not on constraints, but instead on measures that provide for greater openness and transparency, such as notification and inspection of military exercises and activities.⁷⁵ The stated purposes of these U.S. proposals are: to reduce the risks of surprise attack and of conflict which results from misunderstanding, and to lessen the threat of force for political intimidation.⁷⁶

Most Western nations on the whole share U.S. concerns about exercise constraints. NATO did consider limiting the number of divisions out of garrison as part of the "Associated Measures" which accompanied its December 1979 proposal at the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks (MBFR). Ultimately, however, the proposal was shelved because of concerns on the part of FRG and NATO military authorities that it would hamper an effective Western defense by restricting the large-scale exercise of overseas reinforcement (e.g., REFORGER) and the movement of troops from garrisons to forward defense positions.⁷⁷

WARSAW PACT PROPOSALS

Until recently, the Soviet Union has also been slow to promote constraint measures, apparently because it has been equally hesitant to accept limitations on its military activities.⁷⁸ The exception to this record has been the Soviet proposal, first offered in 1979, to prohibit exercises with more than 40–50,000 troops.⁷⁹ This constraint appears to be aimed at limiting NATO's large maneuvers (two or three a year), which are more frequent than the Pact's (five since 1980). Yet it would also theoretically constrain the large Warsaw Pact exercises that have been used for military intervention or political leverage over Eastern European countries (assuming the limits could not be circumvented via a number of simultaneous small exercises). One should note, however, that the Soviet Union ignored Helsinki notification requirements during the 1980–81 Polish crisis.⁸⁰ In June 1986, the Soviet Union

75. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

76. See proposal SC.1, which the U.S. co-authored at the Stockholm CDE on January 24, 1984, reproduced in Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals*, p. 167.

77. Lothar Ruehl, *MBFR: Lessons and Problems*, Adelphi Paper No. 176 (London: IISS, 1982), pp. 26–27; Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals*, pp. 23, 58.

78. Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals*, pp. 13, 18–19, 58–59.

79. Brezhnev made the first proposal in 1979; see *SIPRI Yearbook 1980: World Armaments and Disarmament*, p. 498. The offer was repeated at the 1986 Stockholm CDE; see Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals*, p. 58.

80. Simon, *Warsaw Pact Forces*, pp. 169, 174.

offered to modify its size constraint proposal by allowing one exercise with over 40,000 troops every third year, but NATO remained uninterested.

The provisions of recent Soviet and Warsaw Pact proposals, however, are explicitly aimed at constraining military exercises. The meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee on July 15 and 16, 1988, produced a statement advocating zones of weapons reduction in Central Europe, which would be accompanied by measures limiting many of the dimensions of military exercises including size, number, duration, and location.⁸¹ On October 28, 1988, the Foreign Ministers Committee of the Warsaw Pact advocated restrictions, independent of other measures, on the scope and number of simultaneous exercises, the duration of exercises, movements of troops and equipment, and military activities close to the borders of other countries.⁸²

On March 9, 1989, at the Vienna Negotiations on CSBMs, four Eastern European countries (East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria) followed up on the October Warsaw Pact Ministers Committee meeting by proposing specific CSBMs related to the size, timing, number, and duration of military activities (exercises, transfers, and concentration of troops and equipment) in Europe. A size limit of 40,000 troops (also including alerts) is advocated. These countries would further limit any series of exercises taking place in close proximity to one another to not more than 40,000 troops each. The timing of exercises would be constrained to no more than three activities (as defined by current notification limits) held simultaneously on the territory of each participating state, with the total not exceeding 40,000 troops. The number of exercises with more than 25,000 troops would be restricted to no more than two per year for each participating state. Finally, these East bloc countries want military activities requiring prior notification to be limited to a duration not exceeding 15 days.⁸³

The motivation for the East's new interest in these constraints is not entirely clear. Certainly one reason is to contribute to the Soviet campaign to influence Western perceptions of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact military threat

81. "Warsaw Pact States' Statement on Talks on Armed Forces and Conventional Arms Reduction in Europe," *Pravda*, July 16, 1988, pp. 1, 2.

82. "Statement on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe," issued by the Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers' Committee in Budapest, *Pravda*, October 29, 1988, p. 4.

83. The full text of the proposal can be found in *Arms Control Reporter*, May 1989, pp. 402.D.61-64.

and to demonstrate the Soviet Union's new attitude on security issues. It is also conceivable that, in light of the East's announced unilateral reductions, the concentration of NATO troops for exercises in the FRG within the months of September and October each year might be of more concern to the Warsaw Pact.

There are also pragmatic military purposes behind these suggested constraints. As clarified below, many of them favor the Warsaw Pact's military position and training patterns at the expense of NATO's. These proposals are also aimed at taking advantage of West German domestic opposition to exercises. The East's suggested limits on the size, number, and duration of maneuvers within each country, rather than on a bloc-to-bloc basis, certainly recognizes that most of NATO's exercises take place in West Germany, while the Pact's are divided among the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary.

Another proposal by an Eastern country at the Stockholm CDE talks would limit the location of exercises. Rumania, concerned with the potential Soviet use of force against itself as well as with East-West conflict, has called for zones along borders in which there would be no maneuvers, military movements, or concentrations of armed forces and armaments.⁸⁴

Finally, a measure that might be used to limit exercises is a restriction on the type of activities practiced. The Soviet Union's new focus on defensive operations suggests the possibility that if a way could be found to prohibit offensive maneuvers, the ability to attack would be diminished, and the defender's position strengthened.

The Relative Merits of Constraints versus Flexibility in Military Exercises

The key issue for the West is whether exercise constraints would contribute to NATO's security by limiting the possibility of a successful Warsaw Pact attack *more* than they would inhibit NATO's ability to prepare for and respond to such an invasion. This calculation requires an assessment of how specific constraints would affect:

- 1) *Detecting* preparations for a Warsaw Pact attack: Would the constraint enhance the chances that Western intelligence would discover military preparations for either a short-warning or extended mobilization attack?

84. Rumanian proposal (SC.2), published in Borawski, *From the Atlantic to the Urals*, pp. 41–43 and 167–169.

Would it limit the possibility that the East would be able to use exercises as cover for an invasion?

- 2) *Decision-making* effectiveness within the Alliance: Would it contribute to a timely NATO decision on the use of force?
- 3) *Defending* West Germany successfully: Does it protect NATO's required exercise patterns and its training needs? Would it avoid inhibitions on the ability of Western forces to respond to warning?
- 4) *Diminishing* Eastern ability to attack: Would it limit the Warsaw Pact's training patterns and preparations necessary to support an offensive strategy?

An additional criterion by which Western analysts have traditionally judged exercise constraint measures is their effect on the costs of Soviet intervention in, and military intimidation of, Eastern Europe. The past record of the Soviet military activities concerning East bloc countries (e.g., Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland) indicates that certain proposed constraints such as size, duration, and location would have to be violated if the Soviet response to new crises were to be intervention. Such an obvious Soviet breach of an international treaty might increase the likelihood of a united Western response and the magnitude of any resulting sanctions. Thus some types of constraints on exercises might raise the costs of Soviet intervention. Yet given the history of tepid Western responses to such invasions in the past, these additional costs are likely to be minimal. During the Czech crisis, NATO not only did not respond to indications of an intervention, but in fact a West German exercise was relocated away from the border to avoid "provocation." In short, Western countries are unlikely to alter their response because a CSBM is technically broken when NATO security is not directly threatened. This consideration, therefore, is of secondary importance to the four outlined above, and is not addressed below.

The criteria of *detection*, *decision-making*, *defense* and *diminution* can be used to assess how Eastern proposals for constraints affecting the size, number, timing, duration, and location of exercises would affect the likelihood of success of two types of Warsaw Pact attacks against the West.⁸⁵ The first is a short-warning attack, where the Soviet Union would attempt to prepare and deploy ready and near-ready forces under the cover of exercises. The second is a mobilized attack, where exercises would be used to bring Category II and III troops up to acceptable readiness or move them forward before

85. The Warsaw Pact proposal did not include a constraint on activities, but because of the attention it has received recently, such a constraint is also examined below.

the onset of hostilities.⁸⁶ A significant Soviet jump in mobilization could be as deleterious to NATO security as a surprise standing-start Warsaw Pact attack, particularly in light of Gorbachev's force reductions.⁸⁷ The two scenarios are addressed separately only when the effect of the constraints is different for each. Although the proposals examined are specific ones, they reflect the costs and benefits to the West of their general categories of constraints on ground exercises.⁸⁸

LIMIT SIZE

The East Bloc's proposal to prohibit exercises with more than 40,000 troops has mixed effects on the four criteria. First, *detection*: In terms of NATO's ability to foresee Eastern surprise attack preparations, a size constraint would marginally help the West by allowing intelligence analysts to differentiate activities needed for an exercise (e.g., supply stockpiling) from those required for an invasion. The larger the exercise, the more troops and matériel would be gathered to conduct it, and the more difficult it would be to distinguish from actual preparations. It is generally recognized that NATO intelligence means would provide detection of significant East bloc war preparations.⁸⁹ Thus the 40,000 limit would merely provide a clearer line for judging intentions related to military preparations for attack. It would, however, be only one of many indicators used to assess the likelihood of an invasion. A size constraint would not significantly benefit detection of a mobilized attack, in that the training and exercises needed to bring Category II and III troops up to speed would primarily take place below a 40,000-troop limit.⁹⁰

86. Soviet divisions are maintained at three states of readiness. Category I troops are fully deployed formations (85 percent manned) which can go to war in a matter of hours. Category II divisions have 100 percent of their equipment but only 50–75 percent of their manpower and would take several days to one month to mobilize and become operational. Category III formations have most of their equipment, although it is older, but are only 15–30 percent manned and would take two months and upward to prepare for combat. For a discussion of Categories I, II, III (also referred to as A, B, and C), see *The Military Balance, 1987–88* (London: IISS, 1987), p. 34.

87. See James A. Thomson, *An Unfavorable Situation: NATO and the Conventional Balance*, N-2842-FF/RC (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, November 1988), esp. pp. 30–33.

88. This analysis is based on exercise patterns, force structure, and strategies as they appear at the present time. Change is of course apparent in these areas, yet its future form and direction remain vague.

89. James Blaker, "Transparency, Inspections, and Surprise Attack," in S. Windass and E. Grove, eds., *Cooperative Security* (Adderbury, U.K.: Foundation for International Security, 1987), pp. 1–25.

90. Donnelly, *Red Banner*, p. 159, describes how a Category III unit doing a practice mobilization spent two weeks training at the company and battalion level and ten days in a regimental exercise.

One of the main problems for NATO *decision-making* is responding in a timely fashion to a threat of a Warsaw Pact attack. Western officials, concerned with their domestic political standing or a desire to avoid conflict, might be disinclined to approve a disruptive mobilization. And officials are aware that such an act under certain circumstances could fuel the intensity of a crisis, contributing to the onset of conflict (as in World War I). A constraint on the size of exercises would enhance decision-making, by providing a means of judging intentions. Leaders who might otherwise wish to delay initiating military counter-preparations would have better information to convince both themselves and their publics that speedy action was necessary.

Several counter-arguments to this conclusion should be considered. First, a size constraint might be circumvented by holding many exercises below the 40,000 limit. Yet such activity in itself would be an indication of potential trouble. It might also be argued that a limit on the size of exercises would work to the disadvantage of NATO decision-making, since Western societies are more likely than Eastern ones to feel restrained by the "legal" limits of a size restriction. If warning were at all ambiguous, some maintain that NATO officials would be less likely to take the necessary preparatory measures because this would break the treaty "law." Nonetheless, intelligence means should be able to ascertain if such a constraint were being violated by the Pact. Given, then, that the ambiguity of a treaty violation would be minimal, this argument against a restraint is not very powerful.

A 40,000-troop limit would marginally hamper the West's *defense* capability. NATO relies on intensive training to maintain the readiness and reinforcement capacity to sustain a credible forward defense. Under a 40,000-troop limit, the Western alliance would have to reduce the size of its larger exercises that occur in the fall, particularly the field exercise in which forces arriving as part of REFORGER join allied troops already in Europe. In REFORGER 1987 (the largest ever), 35,000 troops were deployed from the continental United States to Europe. Once there, the troops combined with other allied forces in the exercise CERTAIN STRIKE, involving a total of 78,000 soldiers.⁹¹ This constraint would have prohibited the participation of the 35,000 REFORGER forces in that field maneuver. The result of such a limitation might

91. Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "Countering Soviet Encirclement Operations: Emerging NATO Concepts," *International Defense Review* (November 1988), pp. 1417-1418.

therefore be a reduction in NATO capability to integrate large reinforcements from the United States into the defense of Europe.

Two developments, however, make constraints on training in large numbers less damaging for NATO in the future. The first is that the West is unilaterally reducing the size of its exercises. The second is that new types of exercises are being developed that make use of computer technology to simulate large combat operations while using relatively few troops. SACEUR General Galvin argues that this will allow the West to "train smarter." Furthermore, it may give NATO a comparative advantage because its computer and software technology is ahead of the East's.⁹²

In terms of *diminishing* Warsaw Pact capabilities by limiting training for offensive operations, a size constraint would have only a minor effect. The East is less dependent than the West in peacetime on maneuvers of more than 40,000 troops: thus it would be able to meet most of its training needs within the boundaries of this measure.

In sum, there is a close trade-off between what NATO would gain and what it would lose under this restriction on size. It would benefit the West because it enhances detection and decision-making. Its main drawback is that it would restrict traditional NATO training, especially large field exercises involving European forces, the U.S. Army in Europe (USAREUR), and U.S. soldiers arriving as part of REFORGER. Nonetheless, the Western Alliance would still be able to conduct REFORGER and field maneuvers with corps-size formations. And given that NATO has both the need and the technology to move to less manpower-intensive exercises, some type of size constraint (not necessarily 40,000) could benefit NATO security.

LIMIT NUMBER

The Warsaw Pact proposes to limit the number of medium-size exercises (25–50,000) to no more than two on the territory of each participating state per year. In terms of *detection* and *decision-making*, the impact of this measure is essentially the same as that of a size constraint; both would benefit from having a firm standard by which to judge Warsaw Pact intentions.

This constraint would, however, be detrimental in terms of NATO's ability to use exercises in preparing an adequate *defense*. NATO holds several exercises each year with over 25,000 soldiers. Furthermore, these maneuvers all

92. General Galvin made this point in a presentation at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, March 13, 1989.

take place in West Germany because, as the only Allied state on the NATO-WTO central border, that is where most of the West's troops are located and where the forward defense strategy would be implemented.

Not only would this limit NATO's training, but it would provide a comparative advantage to the Warsaw Pact's *capabilities*. The East conducts fewer 25,000-plus exercises than the West, and those that are held could be distributed among the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. This measure would not have affected the Warsaw Pact's 1987 and 1988 exercises, while NATO would have had to give up seven out of its twelve exercises held in 1987 and 1988 with 25,000 or more soldiers. Thus, this constraint on numbers does not work to NATO's advantage.

RESTRICT FREQUENCY

The East's proposal affecting the timing of exercises would not permit more than three activities to be held simultaneously on the territory of any state (total troops in all must be under 40,000).

Both in terms of *detection* and *decision-making*, this limit would benefit NATO. It might aid intelligence somewhat by clarifying Warsaw Pact intentions if a build-up of troops either in East Germany and Czechoslovakia (short-warning attack) or in the Soviet Union (mobilized attack) were staged under the guise of simultaneous maneuvers. More important, this constraint could promote a NATO consensus to act, by providing Western leaders with ready evidence that the USSR had offensive intentions. To mount an attack, the Warsaw Pact would have to marshal forces in more than three locations in each state, or they would total more than 40,000 troops. Thus, if these guidelines were exceeded, firm evidence would be available that Western counter-preparations were necessary.

The problem with this measure is that it would prohibit the current Western practice of grouping many exercises in September and October. During September 1988, NATO held five exercises in West Germany alone, which totaled some 240,000 soldiers.⁹³ Restricting this practice would impair NATO's ability to *defend*. In addition, under this limitation, 80,000 troops could be concentrated on the East side of the central border (40,000 in each of the GDR and Czechoslovakia), but only 40,000 could be put into the field in NATO's one East-West border state, the FRG.

93. Based on figures of notified activities for 1987-88, supplied by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency on NATO and Warsaw Pact.

This proposal would not significantly *diminish* the impact of training on Warsaw Pact capabilities because its maneuvers would not be affected: they are more evenly spaced throughout the year. In 1988, the Warsaw Pact held maneuvers in nine out of twelve months with three or less in every month except April (which had four).⁹⁴ However, a constraint on timing (accompanied by the size restriction) might complicate the amount of training needed to prepare the large number of Category II and III troops that would be mobilized for an invasion, although undoubtedly much of this would take place below the 13,000-troop notification limit. All in all, this size and timing constraint does not serve NATO's interest. It would impair the West's defense preparations while leaving the East's peacetime practices essentially untouched.

LIMIT DURATION

The Warsaw countries have also advocated allowing no large exercise to run longer than 15 days. Such a constraint would benefit NATO early *detection* of a short-warning attack because the amount of war matériel that must be gathered for a fifteen-day exercise is significantly different than that for a maneuver of thirty days or, of course, an invasion. Thus, build-ups for military activities which exceed the duration limit would set off warning bells. This measure, however, might not enhance Western leadership *decision-making*, at least in the case of a pre-planned short warning attack, because an Eastern invasion could take place within 15 days; thus no provision would be violated before the actual attack occurred. In terms of mobilized attack, duration would also be relatively unimportant. A long series of shorter or non-notifiable training exercises could be used to bring Category II and III troops up to speed.

The impact on NATO *defense* preparations would be harmful. NATO's reinforcement exercises regularly run longer than 15 days and often up to a month. This amount of time is needed to transport troops and matériel from the United States to Europe, match them with pre-positioned equipment, and complete a maneuver. NATO could limit REFORGER to a reinforcement exercise without any accompanying activities in the field, but this would raise training expenses (because it is more efficient to train the troops once they are in Europe), and would lose the training synergy of the movement

94. Ibid.

of troops and matériel from the United States into action in the FRG's forward area.

A 15-day constraint on duration would but little *diminish* Soviet capabilities, as Eastern exercises rarely continue that long. Exercises have, however, lasted more than 15 days during times of political crisis in Eastern Europe. This suggests that a duration constraint would represent an obstacle for preparing significant military operations, such as those undertaken in Czechoslovakia, or exerting leverage via military exercises in extended crises. Overall, this constraint on duration would not be to the advantage of Western interests because it offers few benefits in comparison to the costs of restricting important NATO training practices such as REFORGER.

RESTRICT LOCATION

Romania's proposal, for a zone along borders in which maneuvers, movements, and concentrations would be prohibited, would not improve NATO security. This measure would not enhance *detection* because it would simply move what now occurs back toward the Soviet Union. Maneuver-free zones would increase the likelihood of a quick NATO *decision* to respond to aggression by establishing a clear measure of ill intent: a violation of the zone. But the central problem with this constraint is that it would seriously impede NATO's ability to train for and to mount an adequate forward *defense*. Unless the zone on the Eastern side of the inter-German and FRG-Czech borders were much wider than NATO's, Pact forces could cross it faster than NATO could assume its general defense positions.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the West's forward defense policy requires peacetime military activity in the region along the border in order to familiarize troops with territory and prepare positions. Moreover, eight of NATO's eighteen main exercise areas are located within the likely zone, 50 km from the inter-German and Czech borders.⁹⁶

The consequences of a location constraint on Warsaw Pact *capabilities* would be minimal, because the East is not tied to a forward defense strategy and does not depend on training along the border. In short, a limitation on location of exercises does not benefit NATO's security because, unless it is

95. See Robert D. Blackwill and William Jarosz, "Confidence-Building in Europe: An Assessment of Conventional Weapons Exclusion Zones," manuscript, 1989.

96. These eight NATO exercise areas are Nord-Munster, Sud-Munster, Bergen Hohne, Ehra Lessien, Wildflecken, Hammelburg, Grafenwohr, and Hohenfels.

highly asymmetrical, it works to the advantage of the Warsaw Pact's offensive military planning.

RESTRICT ACTIVITIES

A final constraint measure to be considered here involves limitations on the activities practiced in exercises. As noted earlier, Soviet maneuvers have traditionally focused more on offensive tasks, while the West concentrates on logistical tasks related to its reinforcements. The Soviet Union's recent statements, that its exercises will be increasingly devoted to defense, further suggest that in Moscow's view, activities in exercises can be categorized in terms of their offensive or defensive nature. The idea behind a constraint on activities, therefore, would be to limit those of the offensive type in order to impair the ability of one side to attack the other. This type of constraint would, in principle, benefit NATO security, because its implied asymmetry would limit the Soviet Union's offensive orientation more than it would affect the West's defensive plans.

In practice, however, the merits of this proposal are questionable because of definitional problems related to the terms "offense" and "defense." It is difficult to name offensive activities that might not also be a part of defensive strategies. Practicing river crossings connotes an offensive activity, yet armies on the defensive may need to cross over water obstacles to resupply the front lines, retreat, or counterattack. Tactical counteroffensives, even within a broader defensive strategy, are necessary to fend off an invasion. Thus, even though overall exercise scenarios might be judged offensive or defensive, the activities which take place within them cannot. This makes it problematic to constrain exercise activities in a way that would significantly limit the capability to attack, without also inhibiting defensive potential.

Conclusion

This analysis of constraint proposals indicates that most of those offered thus far would diminish NATO's security. Given current Warsaw Pact quantitative advantages, secrecy, and offensive potential, the Atlantic Alliance has good reason to be wary of restrictions on its training which could lower its readiness and ability to respond to aggression. The measures discussed above affecting timing, number, duration, and location are undesirable for the West because their harm to NATO's ability to defend would outweigh their benefit in areas such as early warning, decision-making, and limits on Warsaw Pact

capabilities. A constraint on the types of activities practiced in exercises appears unfeasible because of the problems of differentiating offensive activities from defensive ones. The one proposal that might be desirable, given indications that NATO will limit its exercises unilaterally, is a size constraint. However, it remains to be seen whether a measure can be developed which prohibits Eastern circumvention of its provisions (e.g., by holding several simultaneous maneuvers, each of sizes just under the limit), yet does not restrict NATO's grouping of exercises in the fall each year.

This pessimistic view of these specific exercise constraint proposals does not mean that all limitations would *a priori* be detrimental to the West. What it does suggest is that, due to important asymmetries between the Warsaw Pact and NATO in terms of strategy, force structure, number of allies, decision-making capacity, and geography, it is difficult to formulate pragmatic constraints that do not asymmetrically detract from NATO's capacity to defend itself.

A better starting place for CSBMs on military exercises would be to lower the notification floors below the present 13,000, and to increase inspection. The purpose of these measures would be to develop a clearer idea of the quantity and nature of each side's training, much of which takes place at the division level and below. Forces of this size generally do not represent a short-warning attack threat, but the overall quantity of training at this level can importantly reflect capabilities, if not intentions. As Gorbachev's unilateral cuts are implemented, the immediate threat of a surprise attack decreases, but the problem of a powerful offensive following mobilization remains. Lower notification levels, accompanied by more extensive inspections, would enhance confidence that the Soviet Union is not undertaking the necessary preparation efforts for bringing its large military potential to bear in Europe.

Appendix: Summaries of Helsinki Accord (1975) and Stockholm Accord (1986)

The Final Act of the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, August 1, 1975 (CSCE Helsinki Accord) *requests* of signatory nations, on a voluntary basis:

- a) prior notification of military activities exceeding a total of 25,000 troops, independently or combined with air or naval components;
- b) the designation, purpose, type of activity, numerical strength, and estimated duration of such activities;
- c) prior notification of 21 days of military activities, but in the case of a maneuver arranged at shorter notice, at the earliest possible opportunity prior to its starting date;
- d) special regard for those countries near the area of maneuvers with respect to notification of smaller exercises;
- e) that observers be invited on a voluntary and bilateral basis to attend military maneuvers, with special regard for those of countries near the area of such maneuvers; the inviting state determines in each case the number of observers and the procedures and conditions of other participation, and gives other information which it may consider useful.

The Final Act of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, September 19, 1986 (CDE Stockholm Accord) *requires*:

- a) an exchange of data on military activities exceeding 13,000 troops (3,000 if airborne or amphibious) or 300 battle tanks, by November 15 of each year; information on air forces when more than 200 sorties take place in conjunction with ground exercises;
- b) an exchange of preliminary data on any military activity involving more than 40,000 troops planned for the second subsequent year;
- c) notification at least 13 months prior to military activities with more than 75,000 troops;
- d) notification 42 days prior to military activities of a size greater than specified in (a), but military activities carried out without advance notice to the troops involved (i.e., alerts) are exempt;
- e) notification 42 days prior to transfers of forces from outside the zone to arriving points in the zone, and from outside the zone to points of concentration in the zone, to participate in military activities exceeding the sizes specified in (a);
- f) observation of military activities of at least 17,000 troops (5,000 if airborne or amphibious) by two observers from each member state;
- g) a maximum of three challenge inspections annually, although no state is required to accept more than one inspection from the same challenging state in one calendar year.

Thirty-five nations signed each of these Accords. The full texts can be found in J.A.S. Grenville and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., *The Major International Treaties Since 1945: A History and Guide with Texts* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 482–489.