

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

LBJ LIBRARY

Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 97-285

Document # 316

Tassher  
316

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: MAY 2003

2 May 1968

SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM TO HOLDERS OF NIE 11-14-67: THE SOVIET AND  
EAST EUROPEAN GENERAL PURPOSE FORCES

THE ESTIMATE

Foreword

1. NIE 11-14-67 (16 November 1967) expressed uncertainty regarding the actual equipment holdings of Soviet line divisions, as follows (paragraph 14):

Hitherto we have estimated that all divisions in Categories I and II had a full set of equipment on hand or immediately available. It now appears that this may not be true of many divisions in the USSR, but we are as yet unable to determine with confidence the actual extent of the shortages that may exist.

2. An intensive study has been undertaken to resolve this uncertainty and, eventually, to reassess the combat and reinforcement capabilities of Soviet ground forces. This study is far from complete but our findings to date with regard to the actual

~~GROUP 1~~  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

holdings of major items of equipment by Soviet line divisions in East Germany and in the Belorussian, Carpathian, and Kiev Military Districts (MDs) in the USSR require the issuance of a Memorandum to Holders of NIE 11-14-67.

3. We take occasion to include, in paragraphs 11-12 below, an updating of the discussion of Soviet theater air defense in paragraphs 42-43 of NIE 11-14-67 and of new attack submarines in paragraph 56.

The Equipment of Soviet Line Divisions\*

4. We have very good evidence regarding the major items of equipment held by two divisions in the Group of Soviet Forces, Germany (GSFG); one a motorized rifle division, the other a tank

\* Maj. Gen. Wesley C. Franklin, the Acting Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believes the methodology utilized in the study has provided useful additional data. However, in his opinion, the findings must be regarded only as tentative indications of what major equipments may currently be held by Soviet divisions and may create an erroneous impression that the capabilities of line divisions have been reduced. Since the intelligence community cannot state with certainty the subordination and location of all divisional elements, unit holdings for any given division in the USSR so far considered in this analysis may be somewhat larger than indicated. Gen. Franklin believes the methodology employed in this analysis includes many judgments and assumptions which tend to minimize the estimates of divisional holdings and should not be used as the only basis for judging readiness of any given division. He believes that as more is known about the divisional equipment and the many as yet unsubordinated units located outside known divisional areas, the number of divisions which the Memorandum to Holders has designated as combat ready, will increase. He also anticipates that the total number of Soviet divisions throughout the USSR will rise during the conduct of this analysis.

- 2 -

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

division. Our analysis indicates that the motorized rifle division has about 2,300 major items of equipment, the tank division about 2,200. The provision of major items of equipment thus indicated is some 25 percent lower than we previously believed. The number of tanks and artillery pieces, however, remains essentially the same. The difference lies principally in the number of wheeled vehicles and major items of support equipment organic to the division. This difference would not affect either the firepower or the initial mobility of these divisions.

5. We have not examined the other 20 Soviet divisions in Germany and Poland sufficiently to be able to compare them with these two divisions, but we believe this particular motorized rifle division to be typical of the 10 Soviet motorized rifle divisions in Germany, and this particular tank division to be typical of the 12 Soviet tank divisions in Germany and Poland.

6. We have no doubt that the Soviets consider all of their line divisions in Germany and Poland to be "in a full state of readiness for immediate operations." We take the two divisions cited to reflect the Soviet conception of what is required to qualify as "ready for immediate operations" and have used their indicated holdings of major items of equipment as the criterion

- 3 -

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

by which to judge the readiness of the 34 other Soviet line divisions that we have examined to date.\*

7. On the basis of this criterion and good evidence, we conclude that nine divisions in the Belorussian and Carpathian MDs should be judged to be "in a full state of readiness for immediate operations." Five are motorized rifle divisions, four of them in a cordon close to the western frontier of the USSR. Four are tank divisions belonging to a tank army located not far west of Kiev.

8. We judge that the other 25 divisions in the Belorussian, Carpathian, and Kiev MDs (11 motorized rifle divisions and 14 tank divisions) fall short of the GSFG criterion in their holdings of major items of equipment. In most cases, their equipment amounts to 50-75 percent of that standard.

9. We must stress that our study to date has been directed solely toward determining the quantities of major items of equipment actually held by Soviet line divisions. We find these to be lower than we had previously supposed in the case of "combat ready"

---

\* Six of the line divisions in the Baltic MD and the five line divisions in the Moscow MD are also relevant to the reinforcement problem, but we have not yet examined them sufficiently to include them in this analysis.

divisions, and much lower in the case of other line divisions. This reduction in our estimate of the amount of equipment held by these divisions would imply some reduction in our estimate of their manning, but we have not as yet studied the direct evidence regarding manning and are as yet unready to present an estimate on that subject.

10. We must note also that we have not yet studied the army and front level supporting elements in the Soviet ground forces, and consequently are as yet unable to reassess the Soviet organization for combat as a whole. Neither have we studied what would be required to bring a "reduced strength" division up to combat strength, how that could be accomplished, and consequently how quickly such divisions could be made ready "to proceed to areas of concentration." These matters will be addressed in NIE 11-14-68.

Theater Air Defense

11. Since the publication of NIE 11-14-67, we have obtained firm evidence of Soviet efforts to strengthen their theater air defense particularly against low-altitude attack. The ground electronic environment has been improved. At most operational airfields aircraft revetments have been constructed, dispersed

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

aircraft parking patterns employed, and antiaircraft artillery positions occupied. The SA-3 missile system has been deployed to tactical airfields in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary. We now have evidence that the Soviets have begun deployment of both the mobile SA-4 missile system and the radar-controlled, quad-mounted 23-mm weapon system, ZSU-23-4, with their field forces.

12. We now have firm evidence of the construction of two new types of torpedo attack submarines in addition to the new class of nuclear-powered attack submarine noted in paragraph 56 of NIE 11-14-67. All three of these new types have streamlined hulls and large rounded bows suggesting high speed, lower noise levels, and improved sonar capability. At least two of the three new types are probably nuclear-powered. These two may be capable of speeds up to 30 knots and operating depths on the order of 1,300 feet. All three types will probably be operational by mid-1968. We continue to believe that some 45 to 60 new attack submarines will be in service by 1977.

- 6 -

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~