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# Intelligence Information Report

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# Intelligence Information Report



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COUNTRY Poland/Warsaw Pact

SUBJECT 1) Relationship of Military Exercises to War Plans  
2) Wiosna-69 Exercise  
(DOI: Late 1981)

SOURCE

**SUMMARY:** Warsaw Pact military exercises contain important elements of actual operational war plans; however, many aspects of the exercise are deliberately distorted. Large-scale exercises of the type announced under the Helsinki Accords are carefully rehearsed demonstrations of Pact unity and strength, and bear little relation to war plans. The Wiosna-69 (Spring-69) scenario accidentally included information from Soviet war plans.

1. Analysis of Warsaw Pact Theater of Military Operations, FRONT- and army-level exercises can provide good insights into some aspects of Pact plans for the conduct of a war against NATO in Central Europe. In particular, Pact normative war-fighting functions such as command and staff operations, doctrine and combat tactics can be expected to be largely identical in exercises and war. Additionally, most Pact exercises contain other elements of war plans from time to time; however, the fact that the elements are actual reflections of war plans is known only to a few personnel--high-level commanders and key staff officers. (Source Comment: For security reasons, exercises involving thousands of troops cannot be closely patterned after war plans.)

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2. Although Warsaw Pact exercises do feature important aspects of war plans, many elements of information associated with an exercise usually are deliberately distorted for security purposes. Some of the informational items usually distorted are:

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- mobilization and readiness times
- locations of alert/assembly areas
- numerical designations of units
- personnel strengths of units
- command post sites
- locations of logistical bases
- zones of action/operational axes. (Source Comment: In Zapad-77, however, Soviet forces operated "close to" their actual frontal axes.)

-- Nuclear capabilities--most often, ranges of systems and numbers of warheads. (Source Comment: Nuclear yields for exercise play were provided by the Soviets and were used precisely as they were received. The validity of such yield data was unknown to Polish exercise planners and participants; however, the yields given closely approximated the ones used in academic drills and presentations at the Soviet General Staff Academy.)

-- Threat (NATO) capabilities. These data usually were inflated, particularly in exercises which were prepared by the Soviets.

3. Polish exercises in recent years have contained the following specific examples of deliberate distortion:

-- The use of inaccurate personnel and equipment strength figures. For example, one division may actually have had 194 tanks, but been credited with 214 for exercise purposes. In such a case, however, another division's total would have been changed so that the overall number of tanks in the exercise would remain approximately accurate.

-- Commitment of one Polish army as part of an operation along the Dresden-Frankfurt/Main axis, even though there are no operational war plans to employ Polish forces there. In this instance, the play of Polish forces in an unfamiliar zone also was intended to provide variety and a stiffer challenge for Polish participants long accustomed to exercise routines along the the traditional northern axes of the Polish FRONT.

-- Addition of five to all unit designations. For example, the 12th Mechanized Division was shown in an exercise as the 17th.

4. In addition to distorting exercise elements, Poland also routinely conducted separate communications deception exercises in conjunction with Front-level ("Lato"- "Summer") exercises. These

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deception exercises were given cryptonyms from the Greek alphabet. (Comment: Source recalled alpha, beta, and gamma being used.) Such radio-electronic efforts were specifically designed by Department IV of the Operations Directorate (DTE-1) of the Polish General Staff and were intended to confuse and deceive Western electronic intelligence collectors by simulating the communications of FRONT-, army-, and lower-level headquarters.

5. Circa 1976-77, Poland began using projected personnel and equipment data in exercise scenarios. The primary purpose of this innovation was to test new concepts and to condition commanders and staff officers for future operations by using projected force levels, organizational structures and future items of equipment. The rule applied by Polish exercise planners was to use projections five years ahead of the exercise year.

6. Large-scale, highly publicized Warsaw Pact exercises of the type announced under the Helsinki Agreement (principally "Shield") do not reveal much about operational war plans. Such exercises are showpieces designed primarily to demonstrate Pact unity and conventional military strength and to promote military equipment upgrade and standardization programs within the Pact forces. These exercises are organized and rehearsed months in advance and are designed for VIP consumption. (Source Comment: Even most of the exercise critique is written 2-3 months in advance.) Such showpiece exercises, conducted under ideal conditions, are much less realistic and valuable than less visible, smaller, usually unnamed, command and staff exercises with designated troops. These more frequent, less visible exercises usually involve only national forces and are carried out by one FRONT- or army-level headquarters and selected combat or combat support units. The primary purpose of such exercises with selected units is to test a specific element of the operational war plan. In these exercises the selected units are alerted, mobilized, deployed and exercised thoroughly in the aspect of the operational war plan which is to be tested.

7. In 1969, the Polish General Staff was tasked to write and direct Wiosna-69 (Spring-69), a Warsaw Pact communications command post exercise. Polish staff officers, faced with a shortage of background information on the NATO threat and lacking adequate insight into the overall Warsaw Pact strategic concept of operations, sought help through official channels from the headquarters staff of the Group of the Soviet Forces, Germany (GSFG). (Source Comment: The only reference materials available to Polish exercise writers at that time on the NATO threat were the publications of the London-based Institute of Strategic Studies-primarily The

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Military Balance.) A combined Polish, Czechoslovak and East German delegation visited GSFG to discuss strategic concepts in preparation for Wiosna-69 and came away well satisfied. The delegation was received royally at GSFG and GSFG staff officers opened their planning files to the visitors.

-- Following the liaison trip to GSFG headquarters, Polish officers drafted the exercise materials, which were then approved by the Polish General Staff and the headquarters of the Combined Armed Forces (CAF) in Moscow. CAF then passed the materials to the Soviet General Staff for review. Meanwhile, the exercise got underway.

-- On the final day of Wiosna-69, the exercise control group received an urgent message from the Soviet General Staff directing that the exercise be terminated at once and that all exercise materials be destroyed. Polish authorities officially complied-- a brief critique was conducted, and the exercise structure was dismantled.

-- Soviet authorities held an inquiry into the exercise to determine how elements of actual operational war plans found their way into the scenario and to ascertain if Pact intelligence materials had been used (they had not). Polish officers involved in the incident, however, were not punished or reprimanded.

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