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# Czechoslovakia

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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Armed Forces

## NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY PUBLICATIONS

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# Czechoslovakia

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# Armed Forces

## A. Defense establishment

The armed forces, known as the Czechoslovak People's Army, consist of ground and air elements under the federal Ministry of National Defense. A militarized security force, the Frontier Guard, is also administered and controlled by the federal Ministry of National Defense. There is no navy in the usual sense. (C)

Total personnel strength of the armed forces as of January 1974 was 210,300, including 143,000 in the ground forces and 57,800 in the air and air defense forces. Major combat elements included 10 ground forces divisions (five motorized rifle and five tank) and about 500 combat aircraft. There were in addition some 9,500 in the Frontier Guard (including 500 in the quasi-naval Danube Defense Guard). This force, although organized primarily for border security, is equipped and trained to augment the ground forces in wartime. (S)

Because Czechoslovakia is a participant in the Warsaw Pact, the Czechoslovak armed forces are expected to play a role that is consistent with Soviet war aims. Prior to the 1968 invasion, Soviet influence over the armed forces was exercised through a small Soviet military mission in Prague and through the Warsaw Pact unified command in Moscow. Now, however, since Soviet tactical units are stationed in Czechoslovakia, the armed forces are subject to more direct Soviet influence; in wartime, they would be under Soviet control. (S)

The Czechoslovak preoccupation with the maintenance of its independence and territorial integrity against any resurgence of German aggression was a major factor favoring continued close relations with the U.S.S.R. Fear of German incursions, coupled with Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, suppressed Czechoslovakia's desire to regain its prewar eastern territory of Ruthenia, ceded to the Soviet Union in 1945. Because of this, but mainly because of the Warsaw Pact invasion of the country, there is considerable bitterness toward the Soviet Union throughout the country. (C)

In wartime, Soviet leaders would determine the scope and nature of the Czechoslovak contribution to the total Warsaw Pact effort. Strategic objectives planned for the Czechoslovak forces against NATO probably remain the same as they were prior to the 1968 intervention. (C)

The armed forces are deployed mostly in the west, where the terrain lends itself to defense. At the same time this western position—bordering on Austria and West Germany—provides a natural staging area for launching offensive operations against NATO forces in Europe. (S)

The position of Poland, astride the main routes of travel from the U.S.S.R. to Western Europe, and the positions of East Germany and Czechoslovakia, confronting West Germany, have caused the combined forces of these three countries to have a close relationship with the U.S.S.R. Any changes in NATO, and particularly any substantial increase in the role of West Germany, would also give impetus to a strengthened relationship among Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, and the U.S.S.R. (C)

The armed forces are organized, trained, and equipped largely along Soviet lines. The ground and air forces are the third largest among the Warsaw Pact nations, ranking behind those of the Soviet Union and Poland. The ground forces rank with those of East Germany and Poland as the most effectively organized Warsaw Pact forces outside the Soviet Union. In training and equipment, the armed forces are generally on a par with or superior to those of other European countries of comparable size. (S)

### 1. Military history (C)

The first Czechoslovak armed forces were formed in 1919 from personnel of the former Austro-Hungarian Army. The nucleus of the armed forces was the Czechoslovak Legion formed during World War I from men captured by the Russians on the eastern front. The legion was created to fight against the Central Powers but attained its greatest fame against the Bolsheviks in Siberia.

The French Army maintained a training mission in Czechoslovakia, which was a member of the French-

sponsored Little Entente, from shortly after World War I until 1926. Dominant French military influence was apparent in the construction of Maginot Line-like fortifications near Czechoslovak frontiers. By 1938 the armed forces were regarded as among the best prepared in Europe. At the time of the Sudeten crisis in September 1938 the Czechoslovaks rapidly mobilized over a million men. However, as a result of the Munich Pact, the Czechoslovaks were compelled to abandon permanent fortifications in the Sudeten lands in October of 1938. German occupation of the rest of Bohemia and Moravia followed in March 1939. Poland and Hungary were ceded Czechoslovak territory. Dismemberment of Czechoslovakia was complete with the creation of a pro-German autonomous Slovak state. The armed forces were not ordered into action in conjunction with these events and were subsequently disbanded by Hitler.

In World War II, Czechoslovak units were formed outside the country by both the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. An independent armored brigade group and air units, organized, equipped, and trained along British lines, fought on the western front in 1944 and 1945. An independent Czechoslovak battalion formed in the Soviet Union in 1943 was expanded to a brigade and finally to a corps by the end of the war. This force entered Czechoslovakia with the Soviet troops and participated in the liberation of the eastern part of the country from the Germans.

After World War II the armed forces were reestablished essentially on the prewar basis around the nucleus of United Kingdom- and Soviet-sponsored forces. Before the coup in 1948 an efficient army had been developed and was one of the first European postwar armies to conduct corps-level maneuvers.

The influence of the forces trained in the U.S.S.R. was predominant in the postwar period. Their commander became the first postwar Minister of National Defense and was instrumental in keeping the army from taking effective action during the Communist coup. Subsequently, direct Soviet influence dominated all phases of the military program. Officers and enlisted men considered politically unreliable were purged, and the effectiveness of the armed forces was allowed to deteriorate.

Since about 1950, with extensive Soviet direction and support, the armed forces have been steadily rebuilt. The Czechoslovak People's Army has been reorganized and reequipped, has regained its pre-1948 level of training, and has increased its capabilities. The Sovietization of the armed forces is complete, and

troops continue to receive intensive Communist political indoctrination.

Military traditions in Czechoslovakia date from the Hussite movement of the first half of the 15th century, when the Czechs won *de facto* independence from their German overlords. Present military installations and units often bear the name of a hero from this golden age in Czechoslovak history. Exploits of the Czechoslovak Legion against the Bolsheviks formed the basis for further military traditions during the interwar period. However, once the military establishment became Sovietized, traditions founded by the Legion were replaced by those based on military victories won by Czechoslovak units under Soviet control during World War II. World War II battles at Dukla Pass and Jaslo in which Soviet and Czechoslovak troops participated together have been idealized, and the role of the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovak Communists in the Slovak uprising against the Germans in 1944 has been magnified in the development of Communist military traditions.

## 2. Command structure (S)

Under law, the President of Czechoslovakia is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. With the support of the legislature, he can declare war, proclaim a national emergency, and institute partial or general mobilization. He is advised on military matters by a small personal staff, known as the Military Office of the President. Despite the constitutional provisions, the real authority over military affairs is wielded by the Communist Party leadership in the form of policy guidance and overall direction. Routine decisions affecting normal military developments are made by the Council of Ministers (cabinet). The federal Minister of National Defense (MOND), a prominent member of the council, exercises full and direct operational and administrative control over all military headquarters, units, and installations (Figure 1). He is assisted by a General Staff, four main directorates, and various directorates for the arms and services and specialized functions. There are seven Deputy Ministers for National Defense, two of whom are designated First Deputies. One of these is apparently a general deputy and the other is the Chief of the General Staff. The chiefs of the four main directorates are also Deputy Ministers. The functions of the remaining Deputy have not been ascertained, although it is possible that the Chief of Artillery and Rocket Forces has this title. Command authority, however, is vested in the Minister of National Defense or the Chief of the General Staff in



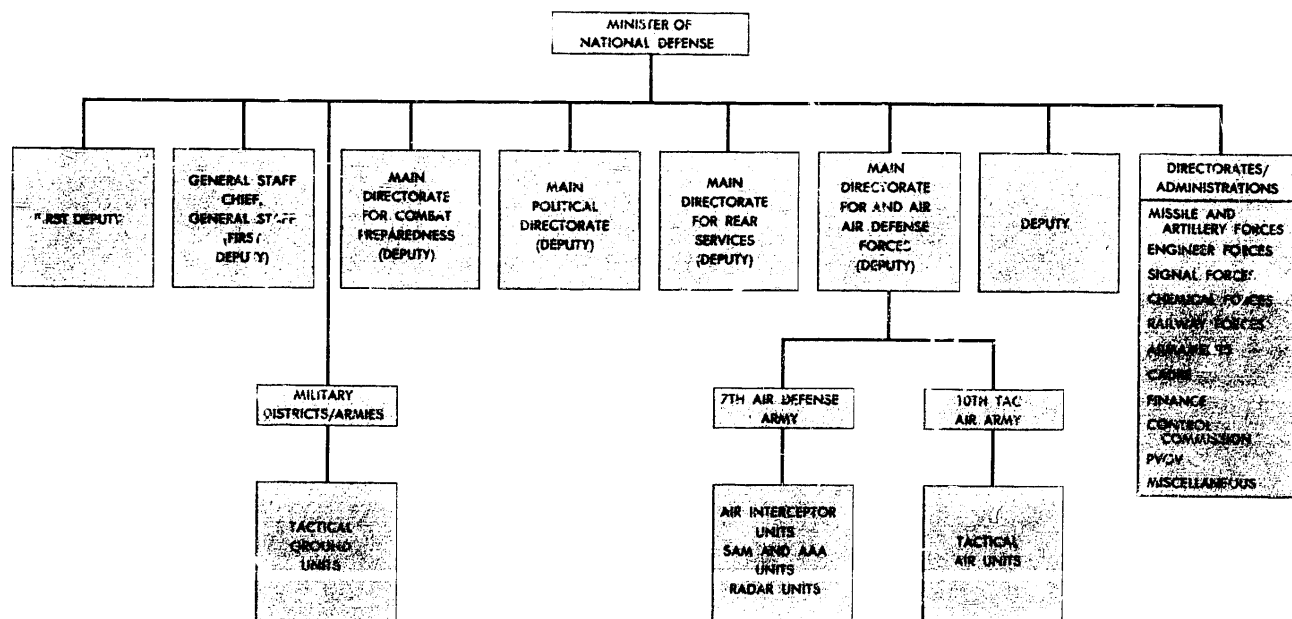


FIGURE 1. Armed Forces High Command (S)

his capacity as a First Deputy. The Deputy Ministers exercise only administrative control over those elements subordinate to their directorates. The Minister of National Defense exercises his command authority over most tactical ground units through the military districts and/or field army headquarters. He may also exercise this authority over air and air defense units through his Deputy for Air and Air Defense Forces. The Ministry directly commands some combat and service units that constitute general headquarters elements.

The Czechoslovak Communist Party's control of the armed forces is maintained by the Main Political Directorate, which extends its influence to all levels of command independent of normal command channels. This directorate's subordination to the Minister of National Defense was nominal only until late July 1968. Until that time, its subordination was to the Party Central Committee which exercised its direct control over military affairs through the Office of the State-Administrative Section of the Central Committee. This State-Administrative Section had been created during the Novotny regime as a means to exercise tighter political control over the armed forces. This section was abolished when Lieutenant General Prehlik was relieved as its head in July 1968 as a result of the "liberalization" program. Since that time the Minister of National Defense probably has exercised more direct control over this directorate.

### 3. Military manpower and morale (S)

#### a. Manpower

As of 1 January 1974 there were approximately 3,660,000 Czechoslovak males between the ages of 15 and 49. Of these, about 2,820,000 were fit for military service. An estimated average of about 130,000 males annually will reach military age (18) during the period 1971-75, of whom 110,000 probably will meet Czechoslovak fitness standards.

The following tabulation is a breakdown by 5-year age groups of Czechoslovak manpower as of 1 January 1974:

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MALES	MAXIMUM NUMBER FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE
15-19	618,000	525,000
20-24	648,000	535,000
25-29	599,000	490,000
30-34	483,000	383,000
35-39	407,000	303,000
40-44	452,000	307,000
45-49	453,000	274,000
Total, 15-49	3,660,000	2,820,000

The armed forces are supported by a compulsory military service system similar to that of other Warsaw Pact countries. The 1960 constitution states that "the defense of the country and its socialist system is the supreme duty and a matter of honor for every citizen." Conscription is accomplished under the provisions of the 1949 defense act, as amended in 1958 and 1968. All male citizens must register in the spring of the year in which they reach the age of 18. Under normal circumstances the bulk of the men would be inducted in the autumn of the same year. Since the invasion, however, the Minister of National Defense has announced a change from an annual to a semiannual induction system. The ground forces receive approximately 56,000 men per year, the air force about 3,800, and the militarized security forces some 3,600. The basic term of service is 2 years, although the term for certain individuals is extended, on a voluntary basis, for 1 or more years.

Volunteers are accepted only in special branches such as the airborne and armored troops and the air force. Both conscripts and volunteers may extend their terms of service if they meet the required military, political, moral, and physical requirements.

After release from active duty, conscripts pass into the reserve. Based on their usefulness to the armed forces, reservists are divided into the following categories:

**Emergency Technical Reserve**—Consisting of all officers and enlisted men with special military or civilian skills. This group has an unlimited term of service and receives special pay when on active duty; men are called to active duty when their skills are required.

**First Reserve**—Consisting of all officers and enlisted men physically capable of active duty but who have no special military or civilian skills. Personnel in this group are generally released at the age of 35 to the Second Reserve. Personnel in the First Reserve are called to active duty for short periods every 2 years.

**Second Reserve**—Consisting of all officers and enlisted men who have been released from the First Reserve duty; there appears to be no training obligation for this group.

**Third Reserve**—Includes all men over age 50 and men with severe physical deficiencies; acts as an emergency replacement pool for the Second Reserve.

Trained ground forces reserves are estimated at 1.5 million. Of this number, approximately 400,000 have completed active military service since 1965. The total comprises conscripts discharged from the ground forces since 1951, most of whom have since received periodic refresher training.

Mobilization proclamations are distributed throughout the country by all available means.

Explicit orders are sent by cable or radio to all headquarters and administrative offices concerned. These orders specify the date and type of mobilization (total or partial), the individuals who must report for duty, property that is to be diverted to military use, and special laws and regulations that are to be used during the mobilization period. Once the reservist becomes aware of the mobilization proclamation, he proceeds according to instructions contained in his service book to the mobilization point indicated.

Because of high physical and educational standards and the prevalent technical aptitudes of the people, the Czechoslovaks provide basically excellent military manpower. The Czechoslovak soldier does not normally exhibit a martial spirit comparable to that of most other East European soldiers, though he responds well to discipline. The Czechs and, to a lesser degree, the Slovaks, are relatively passive in temperament and generally submit to authority without active resistance, although there is a strong tradition of *Schweikism* or passive resistance. In general, personnel of the air force and the security forces are of a higher caliber—with better education and greater political reliability—than those of the ground forces.

#### **b. Morale**

The Communist regime is constantly striving to make military life more attractive to the youth of the country. During the period from 1948 to 1956 many officers were brought into the armed forces more for their political reliability than their military proficiency, and they have since been replaced by competent officers trained in the improved military school system. Better food and living quarters, more recreational facilities, and a more liberal pass policy have been provided. In addition, the law on service conditions in the armed forces, passed and made effective in 1960, provides for annual leave for all members of the armed forces and overhauls the noncommissioned officer grade structure; these changes are designed to provide more incentive for qualified NCO's to remain in service. Recent changes have eliminated most of the Soviet characteristics in military apparel, and the uniform is now more in the Czech tradition. Although these measures helped to create pride in the service and have had some impact on raising morale of the troops, there has been a definite lack of leadership during the postinvasion period, particularly among junior officers and NCO's. In an attempt to overcome this weakness, a system of cash incentives was initiated in 1970 for reservists and young volunteers who would enter the career service. Morale ranges from good in the air force to fair for

men in their basic 2-year term of service in the ground forces; military service never has been popular with the Czechoslovaks.

Building morale within the armed forces is complicated by the multinational composition of the country. Nationalism, which is usually considered a cohesive force within other Eastern European countries, tends to be divisive in Czechoslovakia. For the most part the Slovak minority within the armed forces does not react with fervor to Czech symbols and objectives. Instead there is some Slovak resentment of Czech preeminence, based largely on historical and socioeconomic factors. Political concessions and economic development in Slovakia appear to have reduced Slovak resentment, and the Soviet invasion and occupation of their lands has tended to have a unifying effect on the armed forces. There is no apparent organized resistance to the present regime among the military. The troops have lived under communism most of their lives and continue to receive intensive indoctrination. Although the armed forces are politically reliable with regard to the Czechoslovak regime, the 1968 invasion casts some doubts on their reliability as a Warsaw Pact force. The armed forces are capable, however, of effective military action.

#### **4. Strength trends (S)**

In the initial period following the Communist seizure of power in February 1948 the ground and air forces were allowed to deteriorate. Many of the more efficient officers and noncommissioned officers were purged and replaced by less skilled but more politically reliable individuals. By 1950, however, emphasis was being placed on reconstructing a fairly sizable and militarily effective force. A strength of 234,000 was reached in mid-1953 after a buildup because of the strained world situation and the Korean conflict. The ground forces strength leveled off by 1954 and remained fairly constant at an estimated 170,000 men until 1961 (Figure 2). By the end of 1961 the ground forces were expanded to 220,000 in response to the Berlin crisis. This strength was maintained by increased reserve induction and early callup of some conscripts. By mid-1962 the ground forces strength was reduced to 200,000, and, after 1963, estimates indicated ground forces strength to be approximately 175,000. In January 1974 these forces were estimated to number 143,000.

The strength of the air force has continued to grow since 1955. Only the period following the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 showed a decline of air force personnel. Total air force personnel in the air and air defense system now stands at about 32,100.

FIGURE 2. Armed forces personnel strengths (S)

YEAR (1 JANUARY)	GROUND FORCES*	AIR FORCE	TOTALS	SECURITY FORCES*
1955.....	170,000	18,000	188,000	45,000
1956.....	170,000	22,000	192,000	45,000
1957-59.....	170,000	23,000	193,000	45,000
1961.....	155,000	24,000	179,000	45,000
1963.....	200,000	26,000	226,000	47,500
1965.....	175,000	28,000	203,000	40,000
1966-67.....	175,000	30,000	205,000	30,000
1968.....	175,000	32,000	207,000	20,000
1969.....	146,500	31,000	177,500	13,000
1970-71.....	154,000	34,000	188,000	13,500
1972.....	155,000	36,000	191,000	9,500
1973.....	155,000	38,000	193,000	9,500
1974.....	143,000	**57,500	210,300	9,500

\*Until 1970 there were 500 quasi-naval river personnel in the regular ground forces. Since 1970 these personnel have been in the Frontier Guard.

\*\*Includes 32,100 air force and 25,700 air defense force personnel. Prior to 1974 the latter were included in the ground force total.

The Frontier Guard has reduced its strength from 30,000 to about 9,500 since 1965. Reductions were predicated on basic realignment and the deactivation of several border brigades formerly responsible for areas along the East German and Polish borders. These border responsibilities were turned over to Czechoslovak Customs Police.

### 5. Training (S)

Training in the armed forces is patterned generally on that of the Soviet Armed Forces. Nearly all recruits receive some form of preinduction training in various state-controlled paramilitary organizations known collectively as *SVAZARM* (*Svaz pro Spolupraci s Armadou*—Union for Cooperation with the Army). This preinduction training is especially important to men interested in the airborne units and the air force; it constitutes an almost mandatory requirement.

All military training is supervised by the military district headquarters under the direction of the General Staff at the federal Ministry of National Defense. Guidance in shaping the military training program is provided by the Soviet Military Mission, and the Czechoslovak training schedule is coordinated with the overall Warsaw Pact plan for combined training of the Eastern European Warsaw Pact forces.

Schools for officers, officer candidates, reservists, and specialists are maintained by the various branches. In addition to a number of specialized branch schools for officer candidates, instruction for field-grade officers of all services is provided by a

command and staff college, the Zapotocky Military Academy in Brno. The main training facilities for the air force are located at the air academy in Kosice.<sup>1</sup> In addition to training at these in-country facilities, selected officers from the ground and air forces are sent to high-level military schools in the Soviet Union.

Joint air-ground training exercises, in which ground units are provided tactical air support, are frequently conducted. Helicopters are employed in limited air assault roles and reconnaissance. Air defense exercises, aimed at perfecting the coordination of surface-to-air and conventional antiaircraft elements with fighter aircraft, continually test the effectiveness of the air defense system.

The armed forces have participated in major Warsaw Pact exercises, including the most recent exercise, "Shield," in 1972. Combined Czechoslovak air defense exercises provide practice in the operation of the integrated air defense system of the Warsaw Pact. Within 3 months after the 1968 invasion, the Czechoslovak armed forces were training on a large-unit scale after having been at a full operational and training stand-down.

Czechoslovak participation in the training of foreign military students is apparent both at in-country facilities and abroad. Students from Afro-Asian countries as well as from Cuba have been reported to be training at Czechoslovak ground and air forces installations. Civilian technicians usually sent abroad in conjunction with arms shipments have in some instances been accompanied by Czechoslovak military officers. In at least one Asian country Czechoslovak military officers are known to have served as advisers on nearly every facet of military science and tactics. Occasional visits by high-ranking Czechoslovak military officers to Afro-Asian nations and Cuba serve to maintain ties with these countries. Among Warsaw Pact nations, Czechoslovakia's participation in training of foreign military students and in military advisory programs is exceeded only by the Soviet Union.

### 6. Economic support and military budget (S)

#### a. Economic support

The Czechoslovak economy is able to supply the armed forces with food, quartermaster items, most ground forces equipment, and trainer aircraft. It is the most nearly self-sufficient of the Eastern European Communist countries in armaments production, but

<sup>1</sup>For diacritics on place names see the list of names on the apron of the Summary Map and the map itself in the Country Profile chapter.

fighter aircraft, missiles, and a variety of electronic equipment are imported.

Czechoslovakia has the most important army materiel production industry among the Eastern European Communist countries, based on significant native design capability and a highly industrialized economy. It manufactures the largest quantity and variety of military equipment among the Warsaw Pact countries, except for the Soviet Union. Although much of its plant capacity was converted to civilian production after its peak military output was reached in 1957, the variety of army materiel produced has not been substantially altered. Production of ground forces materiel includes pistols, assault rifles, recoilless guns, antiaircraft artillery, multiple-rocket launchers, medium tanks, and tracked and wheeled armored personnel carriers. Ammunition of all types and enough explosives and propellants are produced to meet indigenous requirements and to provide modest quantities for export.

A range of other types of materiel is produced, including signal, quartermaster, engineering, fire-control, optical, and photographic equipment. Assault guns, mortars, and a variety of medium artillery are no longer in production, but replacement parts and ammunition continue to be made for this obsolescent equipment. Chemical warfare materiel production includes small quantities of toxic agents, tear gas, smoke munitions, flamethrowers, protective masks and canisters, protective clothing, and decontamination and detection equipment. An excellent capability exists for large-scale production of biological warfare (BW) agents, but the current output consists of only small amounts for research and testing. Production of BW defense-related antibiotics and pharmaceuticals is more than adequate for domestic consumption and easily could support a BW defensive program.

Second only to the Soviet Union as a Communist exporter of military materiel, Czechoslovakia was the first Communist country to supply arms to some of the Arab countries under agreements concluded in 1956. A major export item in recent years has been the OT-62 TOPAZ tracked armored personnel carrier. From 1955 through 1972, Czechoslovakia provided \$1,790 million in military assistance to other Communist countries and \$920 million to non-Communist countries.

Czechoslovakia has no naval force in the ordinary sense but maintains a small Danube Defense Guard. Adequate facilities exist for the construction and repair of the river-patrol craft used by this command.

The aircraft industry is the leading one among the Eastern European Communist nations. There are

three significant airframe plants, two large aircraft engine plants, and a large and well-equipped aircraft research and development complex. Military jet trainers are produced in quantity, as well as several types of light civil aircraft. The industry can and has produced jet fighters in quantity and has the capability to develop and produce virtually all types of light aircraft. Most of the aircraft not produced domestically are obtained from the U.S.S.R.

Czechoslovakia has established, with Soviet assistance, a production capability for small missiles (air-to-air and antitank). The Czechoslovaks have produced under license from the Soviets a version of the AA-2 (ATOLL) air-to-air missile and are now producing the AT-3 (SAGGER) wire-guided antitank missile. With the exception of the current production programs, Czechoslovakia has been dependent on the Soviet Union to supply other missiles. Plans exist for Czechoslovakia to produce a follow-on antitank system, and there is a possibility that Czechoslovakia will move on into the production of larger, more sophisticated systems, e.g., surface-to-air and short-range, surface-to-surface ballistic missiles in the future.

#### *b. Military budget*

The military budget is prepared by the Minister of National Defense on the basis of recommendations of the General Staff and other defense ministry elements. It is coordinated with the federal Ministry of Finance and included in the overall national budget for approval by the Council of Ministers and the parliament. As in other Communist countries, the announced military budget figures are not believed to include all actual military expenditures. Some expenditures, particularly those for military research and development, are no doubt concealed among other budget categories. Research and development funds, however, are believed to account for a relatively small proportion of total military expenditures. The announced budgets for 1968-72 are shown in Figure 3. The budget for 1973 has not been announced but it is described as having grown more slowly than the national income.

#### *7. Logistics (S)*

The general classification of materiel is similar to that of the Soviet Armed Forces. Items of materiel in common use among various branches of service, such as individual clothing and equipment, POL, and transport vehicles, are considered general supplies. Items unique to a specific arm of service are each

FIGURE 3. Defense budgets (U/OU)

ANNOUNCED	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Defense budget (billions of korunas).....	13.2	14.3	14.9	15.9	17.1
Defense as a percent of national budget.....	8.4	8.1	7.7	7.2	6.6
Defense as a percent of estimated GNP.....	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.2

identified, such as artillery, armor, signal, engineer, or chemical.

The Main Directorate for Rear Services, the primary authority over logistic matters within the armed forces, is directly responsible for the procurement, storage, and distribution of all common-use items of supply and equipment. Although counterpart logistic agencies in arms and services are responsible for handling matters unique to their particular organizations, their activities are closely coordinated by the Main Directorate for Rear Services. Rear Services officers are assigned to every level of command down through regiment. They employ a special channel of communication for supply matters, separate from normal command channels.

The technical administration of the general staff also has the basic responsibility for research and development of new equipment within the armed forces, in coordination with nonmilitary government agencies. This function is under a deputy for technology on the general staff. Czechoslovakia is the only Eastern European Warsaw Pact country that conducts a significant amount of independent research and development for military equipment.

The Czechoslovak Government and Communist Party are the final authorities on types and quantities of materiel issued to the armed forces. The military procurement program, based on requirements of the armed services, is considered part of the national program at the ministry level. The placing of orders is the duty of the chiefs of the branch commands at the Ministry of National Defense. Each arm and service operates its own supply system.

Each agency in the high command that has a responsibility for procurement also maintains its own systems of storage and distribution. The system of depots, which extends from military district level to the small tactical units, is controlled at every echelon by the rear services apparatus at that particular level of command.

Wartime supply requirements and movements are to be coordinated at lower levels by the Chief for Rear Services in accordance with the plans of the area

commander. The Chief for Rear Services is charged with the movement of all supplies except those carried by air. The rear services system provides a direct channel for supply matters from the lower tactical units directly to the high command.

Rail and road networks, especially those in western Czechoslovakia, and large quantities of motor transport provide excellent bases for supporting the movement of military supplies.

## 8. Uniforms and insignia (U/OU)

### a. Uniforms

The Czechoslovak armed forces include ground and air elements only; there are no naval forces as such. Uniforms of the ground and air forces are identical in color and style. Officers and warrant officers have three basic uniforms: dress, service, and field; enlisted men have two: service-dress and field. All uniforms are designed for year-round wear. Dress and service-dress uniforms are illustrated in Figures 4 and 5.

The dress uniform for officers and warrant officers consists of an olive-drab, single-breasted, four-button coat with two lower pockets, matching trousers, khaki shirt and tie, or white shirt and black tie, and service cap.

The service uniform for officers and warrant officers consists of an olive-drab, single-breasted, four-button coat with four pockets, matching trousers, and khaki shirt and tie. The buttons are gold for officers and silver for warrant officers. Headgear worn with the uniform include garrison or service caps and a pile cap for wear in winter. Either brown shoes or black combat boots may be worn with the uniform.

The service-dress uniform for enlisted personnel is similar in style and color to the officers' and warrant officers' service uniform, except that the buttons are brass, and the tailoring and material from which it is made are of lesser quality. It is worn with a khaki shirt and tie or a white shirt and black tie. For summer wear, all personnel, including officers and warrant officers, are authorized an optional service uniform which includes a gray open-collar jacket with waistband, and olive-drab trousers.

The field uniform worn by all personnel consists of a light-green coat and trousers that are patterned with short, narrow, dark-brown vertical stripes. It also serves as a camouflage uniform and is chemically treated to be anti-infrared. Rank insignia are displayed on a loop of cloth above the upper right-hand pocket of the coat. Headgear worn with the

## GROUND FORCES



## AIR FORCES



FIGURE 4. Officers' uniforms and insignia (U)

## GROUND FORCES



SENIOR  
WARRANT  
OFFICER



WARRANT  
OFFICER



JUNIOR  
WARRANT  
OFFICER



MASTER  
SERGEANT



SERGEANT  
1ST CLASS



STAFF  
SERGEANT



SERGEANT



CORPORAL



PRIVATE  
1ST CLASS

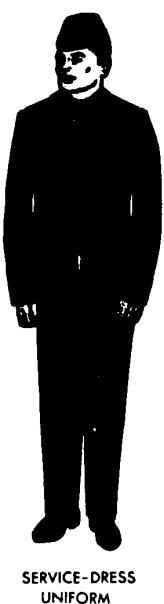


PRIVATE



CAP INSIGNIA

## AIR FORCES



SENIOR  
WARRANT  
OFFICER



WARRANT  
OFFICER



JUNIOR  
WARRANT  
OFFICER



MASTER  
SERGEANT



SERGEANT  
1ST CLASS



STAFF  
SERGEANT



SERGEANT



CORPORAL



PRIVATE  
1ST CLASS



PRIVATE



CAP INSIGNIA



COLLAR  
INSIGNIA

FIGURE 5. Warrant officers' and enlisted men's uniforms and insignia (U/OU)



uniform include a field cap of the same material as the uniform, steel helmet, and a pile cap for wear in winter. Summer and winter field uniforms are similar in style and differ only in that the winter version has a warm inner lining.

In winter, all personnel wear a double-breasted belted overcoat, made of a light-weight fabric, that has a warm snap-in lining and detachable fur collar. Officers', warrant officers', and enlisted men's overcoats differ primarily in the quality of the material and tailoring.

Branch distinctions as reflected in uniforms apply to three types of organizations. Armored troops wear dark-blue coveralls and a black beret; airborne troops wear a gray-green uniform which includes a single-breasted coat with four regular pockets and small, narrow sleeve pockets, and a red beret. Border guards are recognized by a bright-green band on the service cap or by a bright-green garrison cap.

#### **b. Insignia**

The ranks of ground and air forces' personnel are indicated by varying numbers and sizes of stars or metallic buttons worn on shoulderloops of the same material as the uniform. General officers display large gold stars; field and company-grade officers smaller gold stars. Warrant officers and senior noncommissioned officers are identified by small silver stars and junior noncommissioned officers by silver buttons. Insignia of rank are illustrated in Figures 4 and 5.

Branches of service are indicated by distinctive metallic devices, displayed on the shoulderloops by generals (other than four-star) and on the coat collars by all other ranks. General officers are additionally identified by a metallic ornamentation (lime leaves) worn on the collars of coats and overcoats. In general, insignia of the arms are gold; those of the support troops or services are silver, except for the Medical Service which is gold.

A replica of the national emblem (a rampant lion) is displayed on headgear, belt buckles, and incorporated in the design of various awards and decorations. The cap device worn by officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers down to the rank of sergeant, has a silver emblem on a red background; that worn by corporals and privates is all brass. Air force officers also display a winged aviation emblem with a star above the cap device on the service cap.

### **B. Ground forces (S)**

The 143,000-man ground forces are well-organized, well-trained, and well-equipped. The ground forces

could give a good account of themselves, at least in the initial stage of conflict, and could make a significant contribution to the overall Warsaw Pact capabilities. The probable initial wartime mission would be to commit at least eight motorized rifle and tank divisions against NATO forces in Bavaria. The force, consisting of the two existing field armies, probably would be under Soviet *front*<sup>2</sup> control.

Czechoslovak troops along the Austrian border are a valuable adjunct to the Warsaw Pact military posture, for they serve as an immediate influence on Austrian neutrality. Should Soviet war plans call for the violation of this neutrality, an additional strategic mission for Czechoslovak troops could be a diversionary action or flanking movement through Austria aimed at NATO troops in the southern part of West Germany.

#### **1. Organization**

The federal Minister of National Defense controls the high command and exercises operational control over the ground forces units through military districts and/or field armies. An airborne brigade, a probable surface-to-surface missile brigade, and engineer and signal units are GHQ elements directly under the Ministry of National Defense.

For the purpose of military administration Czechoslovakia is divided into two military districts: Western Military District, with headquarters in Tabor; and Eastern Military District, with headquarters in Trencin. The role of the district headquarters is to perform administrative and logistical functions and supervise all military activities within their respective territories, including conscription and mobilization. Exact military district boundaries are not known; however, the Western Military District, which contains two field armies, controls and supports the ground forces elements in Bohemia and most of Moravia. The Eastern Military District Headquarters controls ground forces elements located in Slovakia and northern Moravia. Although the Eastern Military District does not contain an active field army headquarters, one could be activated rapidly in wartime.

Organization of Czechoslovak line divisions, i.e., motorized rifle and tank, generally follows that of their Soviet counterparts.

<sup>2</sup>A tactical and administrative unit consisting of several ground armies, one or more air armies, airborne elements, and supporting combat and service units.

## 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>3</sup>

The strength of the ground forces is estimated at 143,000 officers and enlisted men. Of these, about 35% are officers and noncommissioned officers who make up the regular cadre. The remainder are conscripts, most of whom serve on active duty for 2 years and then are transferred to the reserves. In addition to the active force, there is a trained ground forces reserve estimated at 1.5 million men. Of these, 282,000 have completed active service in the last 5 years. Five motorized rifle divisions, five tank divisions, one airborne brigade, one artillery and one antitank artillery brigade, and one artillery and one antitank artillery regiment constitute the basic combat strength of the ground forces. In addition, there are various service and support units ranging in size from company to brigade.

Five motorized rifle divisions and three tank divisions are in the Western Military District and two tank divisions are in the Eastern Military District.

The greater density of units is in Bohemia, where better logistic and administrative facilities are located. These units are considered combat ready and could be rapidly deployed against NATO forces. The two tank divisions in the Eastern Military District and one motorized rifle division in the eastern part of the Western Military District are held at relatively low strength, although they are believed to have the required combat equipment on hand and lack only general-purpose vehicles.

The eight divisions in the Western Military District each have a surface-to-surface (FROG—free rocket over ground) battalion, and one division maintains an extra FROG battalion which will be organic to a newly activated division upon mobilization. Three surface-to-surface (Scud) missile (Figure 6) brigades are available for field army support.

## 3. Training

Ground forces training has improved during the last several years, and present standards are high by Soviet and other European country standards. Division-level maneuvers have been held regularly for many years, with the possible exception of 1969, and army-level exercises have been conducted periodically. Regular participation in Warsaw Pact command post exercises and maneuvers, particularly in the last few years, has aimed at developing and perfecting command and control procedures in combined operations.

<sup>3</sup>For current information see *Order of Battle Summary*, Foreign Ground Forces, DI-220-1-4 series, published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Regular active duty training follows the comprehensive and well-tested Soviet training program which emphasizes the year-round readiness of the ground forces. Training, therefore, no longer begins with small unit exercises in early winter, progressing to division- or army-level maneuvers in the autumn. Small unit training is conducted throughout the year at close-in training areas when units are at home station, with battalion- and regiment-size units rotating to larger training areas. Large-scale exercises may be held at any time throughout the year and during various weather conditions. In such exercises, regiments frequently represent divisions in simulated combat operations. In this way the readiness of the basic tactical maneuver element is maintained. Frequent command-post exercises and communications exercises are held, and Czechoslovak forces participate in combined training with the Soviet Central Group of Forces as well as in major Warsaw Pact exercises.

Reserve training is mandatory for conscripts who have completed their national service requirements and for those who have participated in ROTC-type programs in the higher schools and colleges. This training can take the form of periodic, short active-duty tours, during which reservists are usually integrated with regular army units. Another method for reserve refresher training became effective 1 July 1964; reserve noncommissioned officers and other enlisted men may fulfill reserve training requirements and avoid a call to active duty by participating after working hours in military training in paramilitary organizations. Almost all reserve officers, however, remain subject to active-duty refresher training.

Political indoctrination constitutes as much as 15% of troop training. This training is conducted by political officers attached to tactical units. Its impact on the overall training program is difficult to assess because—although it takes time that might otherwise be devoted to military training—it also serves to inform the conscript of the regime's policies, gives direction to training, and augments military discipline. Physical training, in the form of regular calisthenics, running of confidence and obstacle courses, and participation in various off-duty sports activities, is also integrated into the field training program.

In close adherence to Soviet doctrine, tactical training stresses offensive combined-arms combat. Emphasis is placed on rapid rates of advance, frequent river crossings, and various aspects of chemical, biological, and radiological training. Training is conducted under varied environmental and climatic conditions, and at least one-third is at night. Special

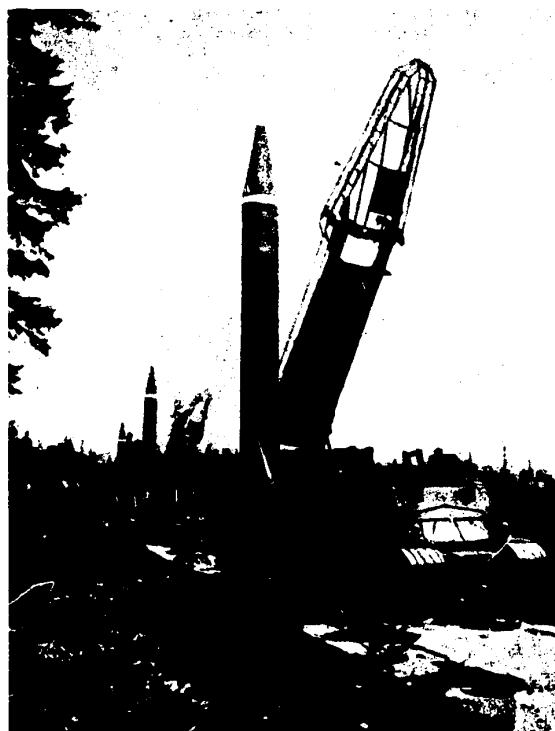


FIGURE 5. SCUD (A) in launch position (U/OU)

attention is focused on deep reconnaissance and target acquisition, using mockups of NATO rockets and missiles for target recognition. Engineer combat support, especially during river-crossing exercises, is in evidence in most large-scale training activities. Tactical communications and staff procedures are tested periodically by command-post exercises. The comprehensive and repetitive nature of the training, especially with crew-served weapons (Figures 7 and 8), permits the units and their leadership cadres to develop familiarity and skill in tactical employment under various conditions and in varying combat situations.

The military school system is based largely on that of the U.S.S.R. Translated Soviet instructional material is used and Soviet methods of instruction are applied. The school system includes training facilities for all arms and services, and instruction is given at all levels—academic, enlisted specialist, noncommissioned officer, officer candidate, branch specialty, and command and staff. Combat units of regimental and larger size also maintain unit noncommissioned officer schools where promising recruits are trained as NCO's, technicians, and specialists. Politically reliable and promising field-grade officers may be sent to the

U.S.S.R. for additional training in Soviet higher military schools and academies.

#### 4. Logistics

Organization of the ground forces logistic system is similar to that of other elements in the armed forces with the Main Directorate for Rear Services having primary authority in logistic matters. The Chief of the Main Directorate for Rear Services is represented by rear service officers at all levels of command down through regiment. The rear service system maintains supply depots throughout the country to facilitate the issue of rations, fuel, clothing, medical and veterinary supplies, and other general-issue items. Requisitions are usually initiated by the lower units and are then routed through regiment to the division rear service officer who places the requirement on the depot. Procurement of specialized equipment peculiar to any one branch of service is handled by technical and supply elements within the branch. Branch technical representatives are assigned down through division level to assist the unit rear service officers. Branch



FIGURE 7. Training on a 122-mm M1938 howitzer (U/OU)

supplies are requisitioned through separate channels. Depots for general and special supplies are located throughout the country, with a greater density in western Czechoslovakia. Equipment is usually stored near each major unit to augment the unit or, in some cases, to supply new units in the event of mobilization.

Maintenance is performed at various organizational levels and is excellent in quality. At the individual level the responsibility of the soldier for proper care of his equipment is stressed, and—because the Czechoslovaks have high mechanical aptitude—the standards of individual use and care of equipment generally are better than those of other Warsaw Pact ground forces.

### C. Air and air defense forces (S)

The mission of air defense of the country and tactical air support of the ground forces are the responsibility of the Directorate for Air and Air Defense Forces (referred to in open sources as Air Force and Forces of Air Defense—LVPVOS). This directorate is on a command level with the Czechoslovakian ground forces. The commander of the LVPVOS is a Deputy Minister of National Defense and is directly subordinate to the Minister of Defense.

The LVPVOS is divided into two operational commands—the 7th Air Defense Army (7th ADA) and the 10th Air Army (10th AA). The 7th ADA is comprised of fighter interceptors, surface-to-air missiles, antiaircraft artillery, and aircraft control and warning (ACW) radars. The mission of this command is to defend Czechoslovakia's territorial airspace against penetration by hostile aircraft and cruise missiles. Czechoslovakia is also charged with the defense of the air approaches to the U.S.S.R. under the overall supervision of Soviet Air Defense of the Homeland (PVO *Strany*). The primary mission of the 10th AA is to provide air support to Czechoslovakian ground forces through air superiority, interdiction, and close air support operations. In wartime this air army would operate as an extension of Soviet tactical aviation in a southwest *front*. The 10th AA probably also has the responsibility to support all air force operational units in training, administrative, and personnel matters. In addition, logistical, transportation, meteorological, and other air force support services are under the supervision of this Air Army.

Overall, the air defense of Czechoslovakia is good at medium to high altitudes. As the altitudes of penetrating aircraft are decreased, the problems of detection, tracking, and interception become greater. The reason for this weakness at low altitudes is the lack

of effective low-altitude detection radars, surface-to-air missiles, air-intercept radars, and air-to-air missiles.

The ground support capability of the Czechoslovakian Air Force (CAF) is good. Within the CAF, priority for aircraft modernization has gone to air superiority, fighter-bomber, and reconnaissance regiments. As a result, Czechoslovakia has the most modern tactical air force of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries, although it is numerically smaller than the Polish tactical air force.

### 1. Operations

For the purpose of air defense, Czechoslovakia equates to a Soviet air defense district and is a part of the overall Warsaw Pact air defense system. The country (district) is divided into two air defense divisions, the 2d Air Defense Division headquartered at Brno, and the 3d Air Defense Division with headquarters at Zatec. These divisions are arbitrarily designated the Eastern and Western Air Defense Zones, respectively. The Eastern ADZ encompasses the provinces of Moravia and Slovakia, and the Western ADZ covers the province of Bohemia. Subordinate to each zone are fighter and SAM regiments. The zonal headquarters coordinates all defense operations in its zone and provides communication facilities and warning information. The decision whether to utilize

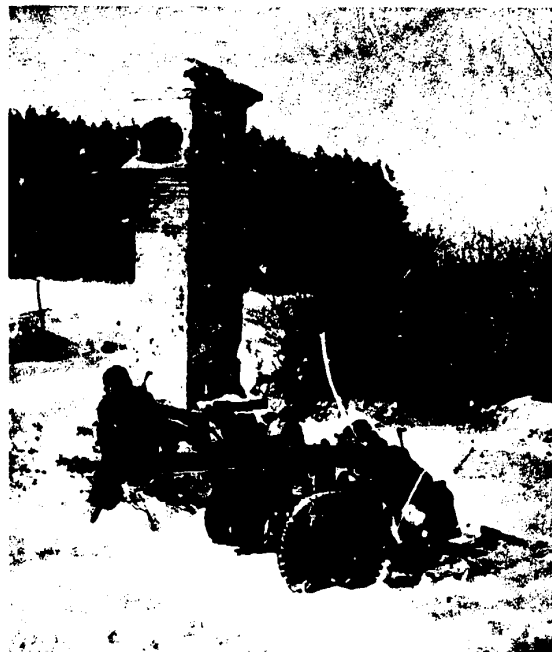


FIGURE 8. Training on 82-mm M59 recoilless rifle (U/OU)

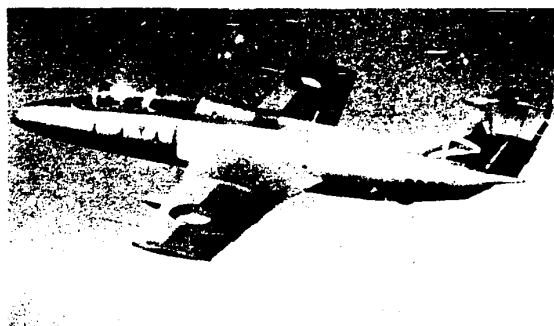


FIGURE 9. Czechoslovakia-produced MAYA (L-29) trainer jet (U/OU)

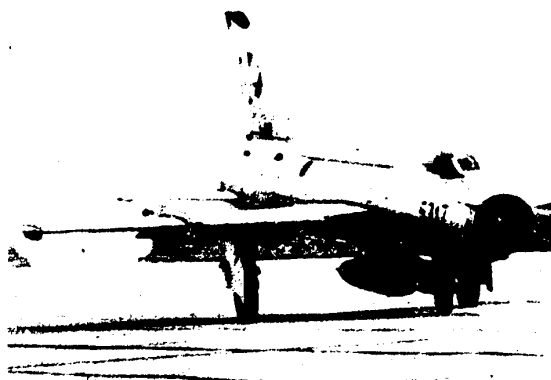


FIGURE 10. FITTER aircraft deploying chute on landing (U/OU)

fighter interceptors, SAM's, conventional AAA, or a combination of the three is usually delegated by the district headquarters to zonal authorities.

Tactical air elements are organized into tactical fighter, fighter-bomber, reconnaissance, transport, and helicopter regiments. While the tactical fighter regiments of the 10th AA have a secondary mission of air defense, their primary role, and the role of all tactical elements, is to provide support for the ground forces. This tactical force would be expected to move forward with its supported ground forces under the direction of the *front* commander. The aircraft assigned give the tactical air force a capability to support a ground force commander with strikes in the immediate forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), as well as relatively longer range attacks against targets which have an effect on the ground battle.

## 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>4</sup>

The total aircraft strength of the air forces is slightly more than 700. Included are some 486 combat aircraft, 34 transports, and 187 helicopters. Personnel strength of the air and air defense forces is about 57,800 including 1,200 pilots. About 32,100 of this total are air force personnel assigned to nonair defense functions; the other 25,700 are in the air defense force.

Air defense elements consist of three jet fighter regiments. A little more than 50% of the 132 aircraft in these regiments are the all-weather FISHBED D and F. The remaining aircraft include FISHBED C and E

(MiG-21), FAGOT (MiG-15), and MAYA (L-29) (Figure 9). The tactical air elements are the best equipped. There are three tactical fighter regiments with a total of 132 aircraft, the majority of which are the FISHBED J Export. The four fighter-bomber units are equipped with nearly equal numbers of FITTER A (Figure 10) and FAGOT—a total of 144 aircraft. In addition, there are two reconnaissance regiments and one transport regiment in the tactical force. The reconnaissance regiments are equipped with FISHBED H (MiG-21R), MAYA (L-29), BEAGLE (Il-28), and CRATE (Il-14). Support aircraft include CRUSTY (Tu-134), COKE (An-24), and CRATE transports, HARE (Mi-1), HOUND (Mi-4), and HIP (Mi-8) helicopters.

There are four SA-2 surface-to-air (SAM) brigades and one separate SA-2 SAM regiment, consisting of 24 firing battalions. These SAM units are deployed to provide a vital area defense of the principal cities of Prague, Brno, Ostrava, and Bratislava, and one regiment provides area coverage for the country's western border area. Additionally, the national air defense forces have one SA-3 regiment deployed to provide low-altitude defense of the western approaches to Prague. The integrated air defense system has conventional antiaircraft artillery, 62 early warning radar sites, and 12 aircraft-control radar sites. The total personnel strength of the air defense force is estimated to be 25,700—of which approximately 10,700 and 15,000, respectively, are air force and ground forces personnel assigned to air defense functions.

CAF combat units are located at the following airfields: Pardubice, Dobruška, Hradec Králové, Přerov, Bechyne, Čáslav/Chotusice, Namest nad Oslavou, Mosnov, Zatec, and Ceske Budejovice.

<sup>4</sup>For current information see *European Communist Aircraft Order of Battle* (DI-240-1C-73 series), published by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Information on Czechoslovak airfields is provided in this General Survey, under Transportation and Telecommunications.

Transport units are based at airfields near Mosnov and Prague (Kbely). There are helicopter units at numerous airfields which support the ground forces. In addition, there are 39 airfields capable of supporting jet fighter deployment/dispersal activities. Hardened hangarages have been constructed at seven jet fighter airfields of the CAF.

### 3. Training

The Union for Cooperation with the Army (SVAZARM) is the most important single organization for the dissemination of military-associated technical skills to the nation's youth. SVAZARM is a civilian organization formed in 1952 under the direct control of the federal Ministry of National Defense with the aim of attracting and educating young people in military skills. Although there has been renewed emphasis in premilitary training in recent years, the typical conscript enters upon his tour of military duty with less training and with less service-oriented physical conditioning than is usual in the Eastern European Communist countries.

Formal flying training is conducted at the Kosice/Barea Air Force Higher School, upgraded in 1971 to a four-year degree-granting institution. The first phase of pilot training includes military studies, general education, and theory of flight. The second phase, begun toward the end of the second year, involves flying training on the L-29 basic jet trainer, the MIGET (U-MiG-15), and the FACOT. The last phase is conducted at Prerov with the supersonic MONCOL (U-MiG-21) and FISHBED. After completion of this training, the candidate is graduated with an engineering degree and a Third Class Pilot rating, and is assigned to an operational unit. Conversion to newer or different jet fighter aircraft is normally undertaken at operational units.

The requirements for Second Class Pilot consist of a demonstrated ability to handle an operationally configured aircraft under all weather conditions in daytime and clear weather conditions at night. The pilot must also be able to perform detailed preflight planning for cross-country and operational training flights and then to execute them satisfactorily.

A First Class Pilot must have demonstrated proficiency in all weather conditions, both day and night, with visibility minimums at 1 kilometer and ceiling of 50 meters. Certification in any one of these three proficiency classes is not contingent upon the number of hours flown nor the time spent in the lower category, but upon actual tested abilities. To maintain this proficiency rating, each pilot must undergo a

series of tests twice a year, with the exception of First Class Pilots who are examined only once a year.

Operational training has increased in scope since the air force was reorganized into the ground support and air defense units. Training includes all phases relative to ground support and air defense missions with the capabilities of the aircraft assigned.

Intracountry mobility exercises are numerous and include deployment to grass fields as well as to other operational airfields. Mobility flights to other non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries have become more prevalent in the past few years.

Pilots average about 70 to 80 hours of flying per year, as do most of the Warsaw Pact pilots. By Western standards this is not adequate; however, their extensive preflight preparations may help to offset this limitation.

Czechoslovakia has been providing flight and parachute training for some years to personnel from less-developed nations. Students from Cuba, Ghana, Guinea, and Indonesia have undergone both primary and advanced training with the air force. Air force personnel, including pilots and aircraft mechanics, have instructed Syrian and UAR air force pilots and technicians in their home countries since 1955. These programs can probably be expected to continue and possibly even expand as a result of the overseas sales of the L-29 jet trainer system.

### 4. Logistics

The logistic system is outstanding among the Eastern European Communist countries because it is supported by a high level of manufacturing and significant armament industries, including a civil aircraft industry. Nevertheless, the country's capability to support its air force logistically has been gradually decreasing since the production of combat aircraft was stopped. The air force now imports all newer type fighters from the U.S.S.R. In terms of producing and repairing parts, as well as overhauling complete aircraft, the logistic system is capable of effectively supporting only the older, domestically produced aircraft. Czechoslovakia retains, however, an excellent capability to supply its air force with ground equipment, general spare parts, common-use items, vehicles, and ammunition. The supply of aviation fuel is adequate for peacetime but depends upon Soviet-controlled sources for crude oil.

Aircraft maintenance is among the best of the Eastern European Communist countries because adequate repair facilities are available at the plants of the aircraft industry. The supply of engineers and

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technicians is also satisfactory, and serviceability rates are equal to those of the Soviet Air Forces.

Reliance on Soviet-produced combat aircraft in the future will make Czechoslovakia increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union for replacement aircraft and spare parts. This dependency would become clearly evident in the event of prolonged hostilities.

#### **D. Militarized security force (S)**

The only Czechoslovak militarized security force is the Frontier Guard, consisting of approximately 9,500 officers and enlisted men.

This force, though not large in number, is reliable and well trained. It is subject to military discipline and wears military uniforms. Weapons and much of their training are comparable to those of infantry troops. In addition to the function of preventing illegal entry into or exit from Czechoslovakia, the militarized security force constitutes, in effect, specialized auxiliary ground troops. Organized units could be attached to army field commands to perform certain specialized functions in wartime. These would include rear-area security, traffic control, counterintelligence, and military government. Should the situation require, Frontier Guard units could also be used as combat troops.

Seven Frontier Guard brigades with an average strength of approximately 1,000 men, though varying in composition, usually contain 10 to 15 companies each. Each company has a strength of approximately 100 men. On the West German border, a brigade is responsible for patrolling 25 to 50 miles, depending upon the terrain and the number of crossing points within the sector. The sectors of responsibility for brigades stationed along the Austrian border are somewhat greater than 50 miles because the threat of penetration from that country is assumed to be less. Ground patrols along the Austrian border are assisted to a considerable degree by river patrols on the Danube.

Subordinate to the Frontier Guard is the 500-man Danube Defense Guard which operates 50 river-patrol craft of post-World War II construction. It is responsible for patrolling the Czechoslovak Danube River border and for escorting foreign commercial craft passing through that stretch of the river. The headquarters and main operating base are at Bratislava. The craft and personnel are divided about equally between subunits at Bratislava and Komarno, each responsible for half of the river frontier. Substations used by patrolling craft exist at Medved'ov, Sturovo, the Morava estuary, and on Velky Ostrov. The Danube Defense Guard cooperates closely with the river police and probably with bridging engineers of the ground forces.

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