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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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NSA review completed

S-0878/DI-3A

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
THE DIRECTOR FOR CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DIRECTOR OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE, DEPARTMENT OF
THE NAVY
THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, INTELLIGENCE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Interagency Reassessment of the Personnel Strength
of Soviet Armed Forces

Reference: DIA letter S-3227/DI-3A, dated 29 October 1974,
subject: Interagency Steering Group - Soviet
Military Personnel Strength (U)

1. Enclosed is an Executive Summary of the interagency reassess-
ment of the personnel strength of the Soviet armed forces. A
detailed assessment is scheduled for dissemination about mid-
May 1975. The Steering Group concurs in the Summary.

2. It is recommended that the Steering Group be redesignated as
an interagency Soviet Military Manpower Review Board under DIA
chairmanship. The Standing Group is needed to continue research
and analysis in those areas of the reassessment reflecting un-
acceptable uncertainty.

3. Concurrence in this proposal or other pertinent comment is
requested by 25 April 1975.

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1 Enclosure
Executive Summary
(S) 1 Cy (CHAIRMAN)

STEERING GROUP:

DIA Richard M. Rodney Col 25A

CI [Redacted]

NSA [Redacted]

Army Patullo, LTC, GS

Navy Donald L. [unclear]

Air Force J Dale [unclear]

DIA Review Completed.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SOVIET ARMED FORCES MANPOWER STRENGTH
REASSESSMENT (U)

1. BACKGROUND

a. Historically, assessments of Soviet military manpower have been derived by a combination of methods. To estimate the strength of combat forces, manning factors were developed for the various types of ground units, aircraft, ships, SSM and SAM sites. These factors were then multiplied by the numbers of units or weapons systems in the order of battle. Similarly, the strength of combat service support forces has been calculated largely on the basis of estimated manning factors and order of battle. Personnel engaged in national level command and general support activities, however, were not specified by type of organizational unit for counting purposes. This portion of the count was estimated by using a combination of the available intelligence on manning levels and, in some cases, percentage factors derived from the US experience in staffing similar functions, such as command and control, research and development, and military medical care.

b. DIA, in 1974, initiated a reassessment of the national command and general support elements of Soviet armed forces. The DIA assessment followed the format of previous Defense Intelligence Projections for Planning (DIPP) in that it provided personnel strengths for the following functional categories: Ministry of Defense and Force Headquarters; Research and Development; Training; Intelligence; Military Assistance and Service Support. Since the Soviet Ministry of Defense is not organized according to these categories, this approach risked possible omissions and double counting. However, the DIA study served as a catalyst, stimulating interest in obtaining a more accurate manpower assessment both inside and outside the Intelligence Community. The reassessment presented here is a direct result of DIA Appraisal of 24 August 1974.

c. An interagency study of Soviet personnel strength was initiated in October 1974 under the chairmanship of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Its goal was to count all personnel, military and civilian, falling under the purview of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). Soviet security forces are not subordinate operationally to the MOD in peacetime, but were included because service in these components satisfies the obligations of the Soviet Conscription Law of 1967, and because some units would probably come under MOD control in wartime.

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d. Active participants in the interagency study included DIA, CIA, NSA and the three military departments. Because DIA and CIA maintain the most comprehensive data bases, the main burden of the reassessment was assumed by these agencies. NSA, however, contributed significant and indispensable data on signal and SIGINT personnel. An NSA study also provided the basic description of the organizations and staffs at the higher levels of the Soviet MOD. Department of the Air Force developed an assessment of Civil Defense personnel. The United States Army Medical Intelligence and Information Agency (MIIA) made what was perhaps the first serious attempt at a comprehensive count of Soviet military medical personnel. Within the Steering Group, all agencies participated in refinement of the final products.

2. ANALYTICAL APPROACH

a. From the outset, all agencies recognized that the evidential base for the reassessment was poor. In addition to SIGINT, defectors and recent emigres from the USSR have provided some data on manning levels, but the general fund of hard information is still inadequate. Consequently, reliance on order of battle manning factors as a primary analytical base, whatever its shortcomings, continued to constitute the best starting point. It was believed, however, that existing uncertainties in the manpower estimates could be reduced by exploitation of new data and the application of improved methodologies where possible.

b. The basic approach required development of a detailed breakdown of the known organizational entities comprising Soviet armed forces as a means of minimizing omissions and double counting. The comprehensive organizational unit breakdown not only provided a framework for order of battle holdings but also an improved yardstick for measuring the reasonableness of the strength assessment of staff and service elements. This approach, of course, has its own limitations. Our knowledge of higher level staffs is very general both as to function and as to strength. Nevertheless, we believe that by using the Soviet organizational scheme a more complete assessment of Soviet MOD strength has been achieved.

c. The index of organizations for inclusion in the count comprises:

(1) Ministry of Defense joint agencies, e.g., the General Staff, the Main Cadres Directorate, the Main Finance Directorate, etc..

(2) Force component agencies under the Ministry of Defense, e.g., ground force headquarters, air force headquarters, etc..

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(3) Field elements subordinate to Ministry of Defense joint agencies, e.g., Military Commissariats, field agencies of the Main Intelligence Directorate, etc..

(4) Major field organizations of the individual force components, e.g., military districts, air defense districts, fleets, groups of forces, and their subordinate elements.

3. METHODOLOGY

a. No single universal procedure could be employed for all of the organizational entities. The methods employed for two major force components and one major staff element (that of the Main Intelligence Directorate) are outlined in succeeding paragraphs for illustrative purposes. The methodologies for all subelements in the assessment will be provided when the full assessment is published.

b. Assessments of ground divisions are largely developed on the basis of estimated tables of organizations and equipment (TOE) and a categorization system which fits all existing divisions into one of three levels of manning, the levels constituting a fixed percentage of authorized (TOE) personnel. Aggregates are produced by multiplying numbers of divisions within each category. This counting procedure has an underlying logic and is the best option in the absence of direct evidence. The potential for inaccuracy, however, is clear. TOEs are estimates. More than one TOE for each type division may exist. Divisions may not necessarily fall within three categories only. Many components of existing divisions remain unidentified and unlocated.

c. The naval count is also, in large measure, keyed to a necessary but imprecise methodology. Standard manning factors are assigned to ship classes. The manning factors are based on direct but incomplete and sometimes contradictory evidence. Moreover, all ships within a class are assumed to be manned at the same level. Again, however, there is no substitute for the method in the absence of definitive data.

d. Because existing evidence was totally inadequate, assessment of personnel performing in a military intelligence role (GRU) was based, to a considerable degree, on comparison with the United States military intelligence population.

4. CONFIDENCE FACTOR

Each methodology used is designed to overcome data gaps but, as indicated above, none does so perfectly. In addition, there is the possibility that some organizations have been omitted and others included that no longer exist. The resultant estimate, therefore, must be considered a gross

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estimate of Soviet manpower. To gauge the degree of uncertainty in each element of the estimate, each joint agency task group charged with assessing the manpower of a given Soviet MOD element was charged also with providing a statement of their confidence in that estimate. These judgments will be furnished when the details of the estimate are published. For the total assessment, the Joint Steering Group believes there is a 90 percent probability the true total lies within +15 or -15 percent of the estimated number.

5. MANPOWER TOTALS

The results of the reassessment of military and civilian manpower strengths of the Soviet armed forces are summarized in the table on the page following. Total manpower strength of the Soviet armed forces including security forces on 1 February 1975 is estimated at 5,475,000, comprising 727,000 civilian and 4,748,000 military personnel. These totals compare with previous DIA-CIA figures for mid-1974 as follows: total manpower -- 5.2 million; civilian personnel -- 1.2 million; military personnel -- 4.0 million.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Steering Group be redesignated as an interagency Soviet Military Manpower Review Board under DIA chairmanship in order to direct continuing research and analysis in those areas of the reassessment reflecting unacceptable uncertainty. It is probable that additional analysis and data collection can improve the soft portions of the reassessment and thereby increase overall certainty. A continuing effort is warranted by the strength issue and can be best accomplished while the reassessment machinery is intact.

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7. INTERAGENCY ASSESSMENT ^{1/} ^{2/}

	<u>CIVILIAN</u>	<u>MILITARY</u>
- MOD/GS/MPD, et al	261,000	785,000
- Components ^{3/}		
-- Ground Forces ^{4/}	162,000	1,809,599
-- Air Forces	113,000	499,000
-- National Air Defense Forces	30,000	554,000
-- Strategic Rocket Forces	39,000	397,000
-- Naval Forces	106,000	369,000
	(450,000)	(3,628,000)
	711,000	4,413,000
- Security Forces		
-- MVD Internal Troops	9,000	166,000
-- KGB (Border Guards, Signal)	4,000 3,000	152,000 16,000
	<u>16,000</u>	<u>334,000</u>
TOTALS	727,000	4,747,000

^{1/} DOI is 28 February 1975.^{2/} May vary considerably from actual strength because of omissions, manning data deficiencies and the use of analogous manning data for counterparts to US forces.^{3/} Figures do not include component contribution to MOD staffs and directorates.^{4/} The percentage of civilians appears low in comparison with other components; this aspect will be subject to continuing analysis.

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