

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
National Foreign Assessment Center

30 August 1980

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Options for Military Intervention in Poland

1. A Soviet decision to invade Poland would be predicated on both:

--the existence of political conditions requiring the use of military force to control the situation; and

--a Soviet perception that the Polish government and military were either unwilling or unable to take effective action.

Specific examples of situations which could prompt such a decision might include a refusal by portions of the Polish armed forces to take actions ordered by the Polish government or fundamental changes in the Polish political system which were unacceptable to the Soviets. [redacted]

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2. We doubt that the Soviets would attempt a small-scale military intervention in Poland. The use of small contingents of Soviet troops to supplement the efforts of the Polish military probably would be undesirable from the point of view of both the Soviet and Polish governments. The Soviets' restrained behavior to date indicates that they strongly prefer that the Polish government use its own military units to deal with any situation requiring military force. Moreover, we doubt that the Polish government would request the assistance of Soviet troops even under considerable pressure. If such a request were made, however, the two Soviet divisions already in Poland as part

NOTE: This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] and [redacted] Theater Forces Division, Office of Strategic Research. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to [redacted] or to [redacted]

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of the Soviet Northern Group of Forces might be used (See Map 1 - Soviet Ground Force Divisions In and Around Poland). [redacted]

3. A more likely eventuality is that prior to or concurrent with Soviet preparations for a large-scale military invasion triggered by unacceptable Polish events, the Soviets would begin to "intervene" politically using the threat of military force. They probably would issue warnings of some kind in their press and radio broadcasts, send high-level emissaries to Warsaw or call Polish officials to Moscow, and take a variety of other steps designed to show the Poles that Soviet tolerance was over. [redacted]

4. Given the general anti-Russian attitude of the Polish populace, we assume that at least some Polish military forces would resist a Soviet invasion. In any event, Soviet planners would assume that their invasion force would not only have to subdue substantial civil disturbances but would also have to contend with active resistance from part or all of the Polish military. The Soviets in 1968 evidently assumed that the Czechoslovak military would resist and concentrated 29 divisions for about a 3:1 force superiority against them. We also know that the Soviets rate the military capability of the Polish armed forces highly--second only to the East Germans among the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact allies--and would expect the Polish military to fight effectively should they decide to do so. [redacted]

5. The Soviets would want to prepare a force large enough to subdue resistance quickly and, indeed, to discourage resistance by its overwhelming appearance. (See Maps 1 and 2 - Soviet Ground Force Divisions In and Around Poland). The actual invasion force might consist of the majority of their divisions in the three western military districts, along with the two Soviet divisions already in Poland and possibly five Soviet divisions from East Germany. Two airborne divisions and other specialized units might be added to this force and at least token non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) participation would be sought (see paragraph 8). The invasion force might total about 500,000 men including more than 30 divisions (see Troop List - Soviet Ground Force Divisions In and Around Poland). Over 250,000 men would have to be mobilized to form this invasion force and its immediate support elements. At least some of the 14 Soviet divisions remaining in East Germany probably

would be prepared to reinforce the effort if necessary. Moreover, we believe the Soviets would mobilize additional forces in the western USSR in order to be prepared for all contingencies. [REDACTED]

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6. On balance, we believe that the Soviets would need about two weeks to mobilize such a force and adequately prepare it for the demanding job of decisively and promptly subduing Polish resistance once the invasion began. The Soviets likely would perceive several difficulties in making units available for the invasion and in preparing them for the invasion. The most ready divisions that could be used to invade Poland are those in the Soviet groups of forces in Eastern Europe--particularly the 19 Soviet divisions in East Germany (see Map 2 - Soviet Ground Force Divisions In and Around Poland - By Category). Undoubtedly they would use the two Soviet divisions already in Poland. We believe, however, that they would be hesitant to use more than about five of the Soviet divisions in East Germany both because of concern that political unrest might spread to East Germany and because of concern regarding possible NATO actions during the period of civil disturbance in Eastern Europe. Only five Soviet divisions from East Germany participated in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and then only after the Soviets had reinforced their troops in East Germany with recently mobilized divisions from the USSR. [REDACTED]

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7. Even though the 30 divisions the Soviets would probably want to use for such an invasion could be mobilized and moved into position in about a week, commanders, staffs, and the troops themselves would not have been exercised or rehearsed in the type of actions they would likely be engaged in or in the specific plans for the invasion. Because of the Soviets' desire to ensure a prompt and decisive outcome--and perhaps, through intimidation, to avoid the necessity for an actual invasion--they probably would take at least a week following the one week of mobilization to exercise the invasion force and to demonstrate its strength to the Poles. If negotiations were proceeding and the Soviets judged that more time could be spared, preparations might extend over weeks or months. In the case of a two-week preparation time we would expect to detect mobilization on this scale within one to two days of its initiation. Political events in Poland and elsewhere would also help to provide us warning. [REDACTED]

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8. At least token NSWP participation would probably be sought to lend legitimacy to the intervention. If the

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decision to invade were made within the next several days, some NSWP forces assembled for exercise Comrades-in-Arms might be retained in the vicinity of Poland after the scheduled end of the field activities which are to run from 8 to 12 September. This in itself would be a warning indicator. The non-Polish forces currently scheduled for participation in the exercise, however, are too small to constitute a suitable invasion force. Thus, we do not believe that an invasion would be launched following Comrades-in-Arms without further mobilization. [REDACTED]

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9. If the situation in Poland were deteriorating rapidly and the Soviets judged that they must intervene hastily, despite the high military and political risks involved, they could commit a portion of their mobilizing force more rapidly. The airborne divisions, some of the higher strength divisions from the USSR immediately adjacent to Poland, and possibly some Soviet divisions in East Germany and in Poland would likely be used (see Troop List). Sixteen divisions probably could be assembled and committed within four days under exigent circumstances. The urgency of political events and the intensity of military operations would likely give us warning within the first day of all-out preparations. Such a hastily prepared invasion would not provide the overwhelming show of force during its early stages that the Soviets probably would like to have to discourage resistance. It would also be poorly rehearsed if undertaken without prior command post exercises and there might be insufficient time for securing NSWP participation. The Soviets might calculate, however, that reinforcements could be brought in from East Germany-- despite the risk of seriously weakening their military posture there--if the initial invasion force could not quickly subdue Poland. [REDACTED]

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10. Polish forces are disposed to defend against a NATO attack from the west (see Maps 3 and 4 - Polish Ground Force Divisions). The Warsaw Military District (MD) forces in the east are both fewer and less ready than Pomeranian and Silesian MD forces in the west. These forces would be no match for Soviet units from the western USSR. Soviet units invading from East Germany, however, could meet stiffer resistance. Key Polish airfields would be possible targets for early seizure by Soviet airborne forces while Polish air defense assets would have to be considered by Soviet planners (see Map 5 - Polish Airfields and Air Defense Sites). Because of the short air distances involved, the Poles probably would have little tactical warning. [REDACTED]

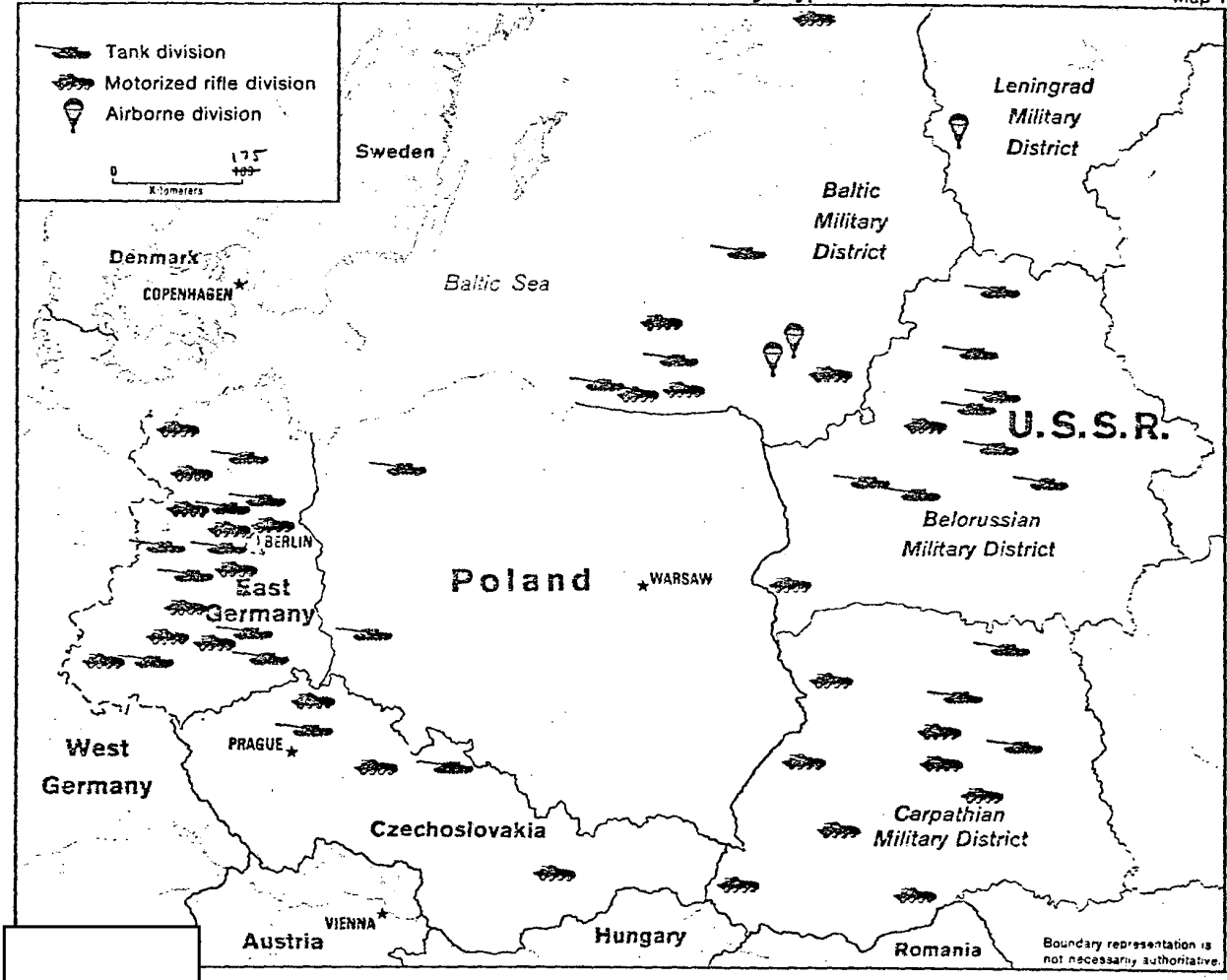
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11. We believe there would be observable differences between a Soviet mobilization in preparation for an invasion of Poland and the type of mobilization that the Pact would undertake in preparation for war with NATO. Mobilization probably would be restricted to the western USSR and, even there, would not be total. Mobilization likely would be very limited within the NSWP countries. Soviet strategic and naval forces might not significantly change their readiness posture. [redacted]

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Soviet Ground Force Divisions In and Around Poland—By Type

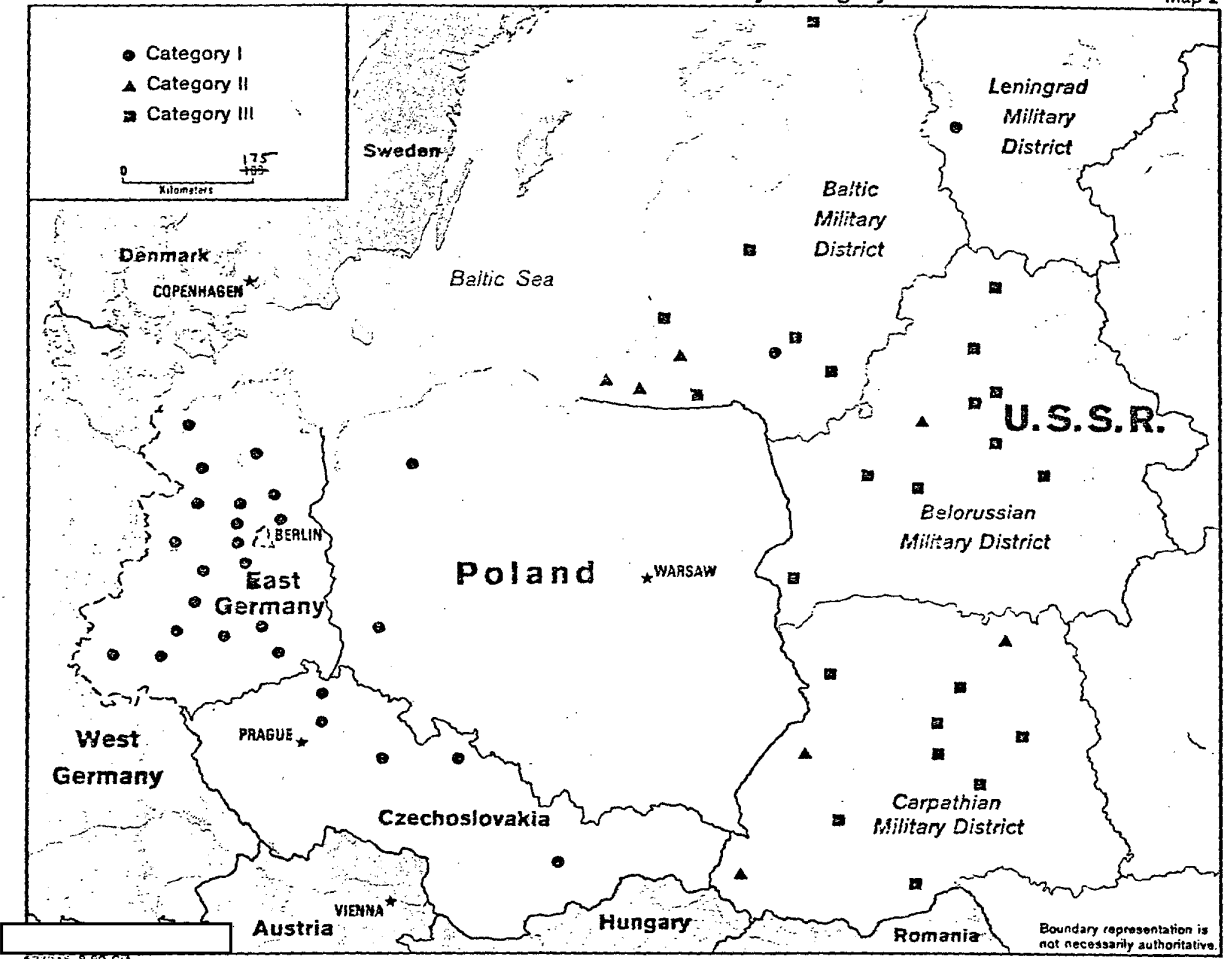
Map 1



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Soviet Ground Force Divisions In and Around Poland-By Category

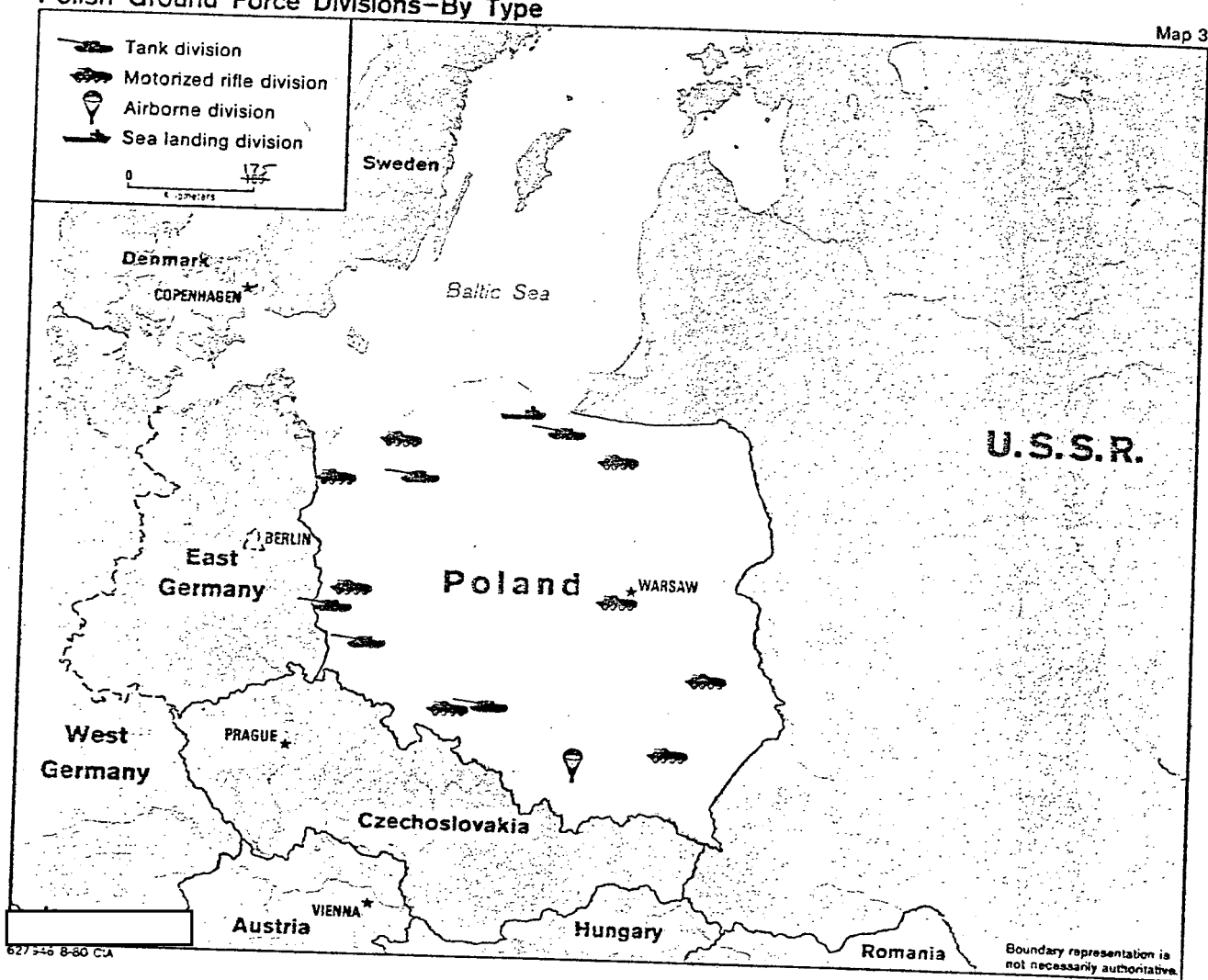
Map 2



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### Polish Ground Force Divisions—By Type

Map 3

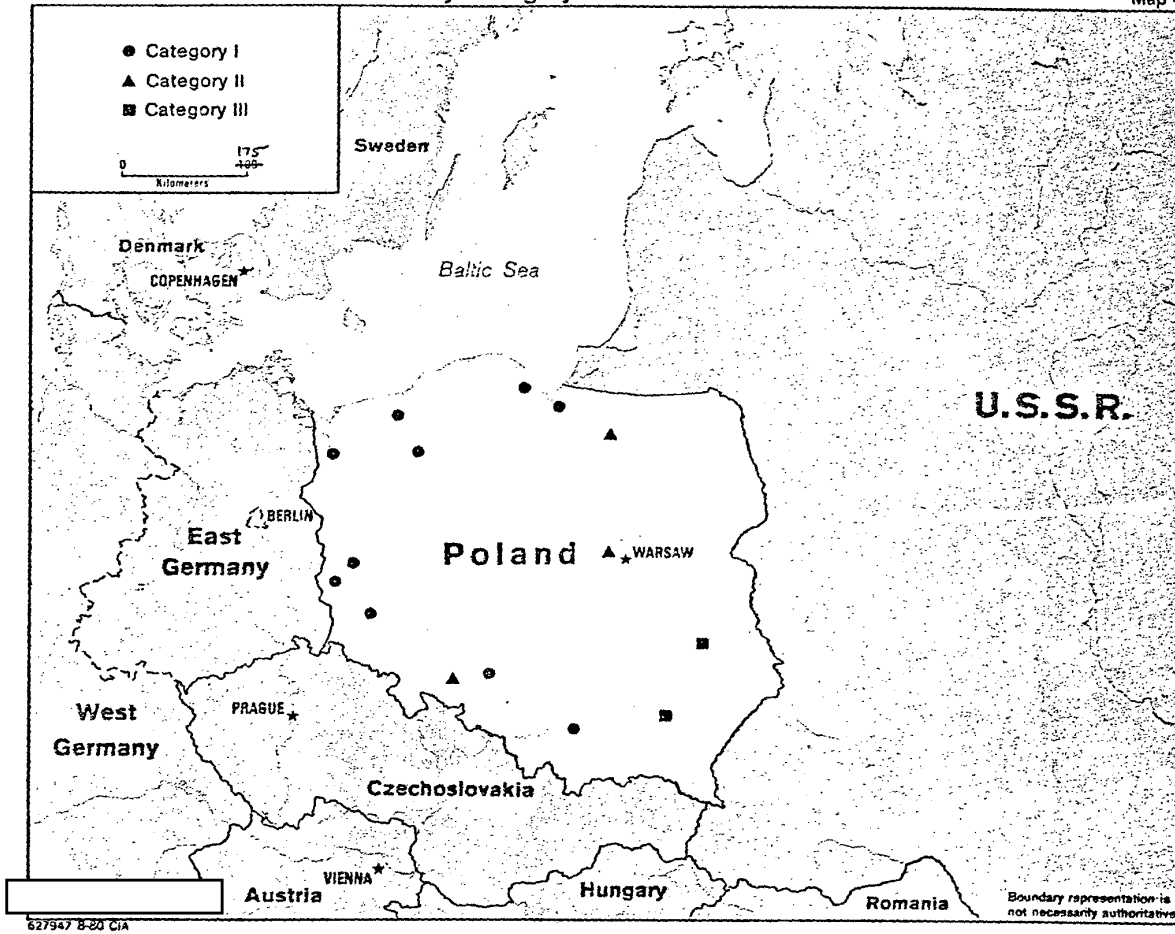


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Polish Ground Force Divisions—By Category

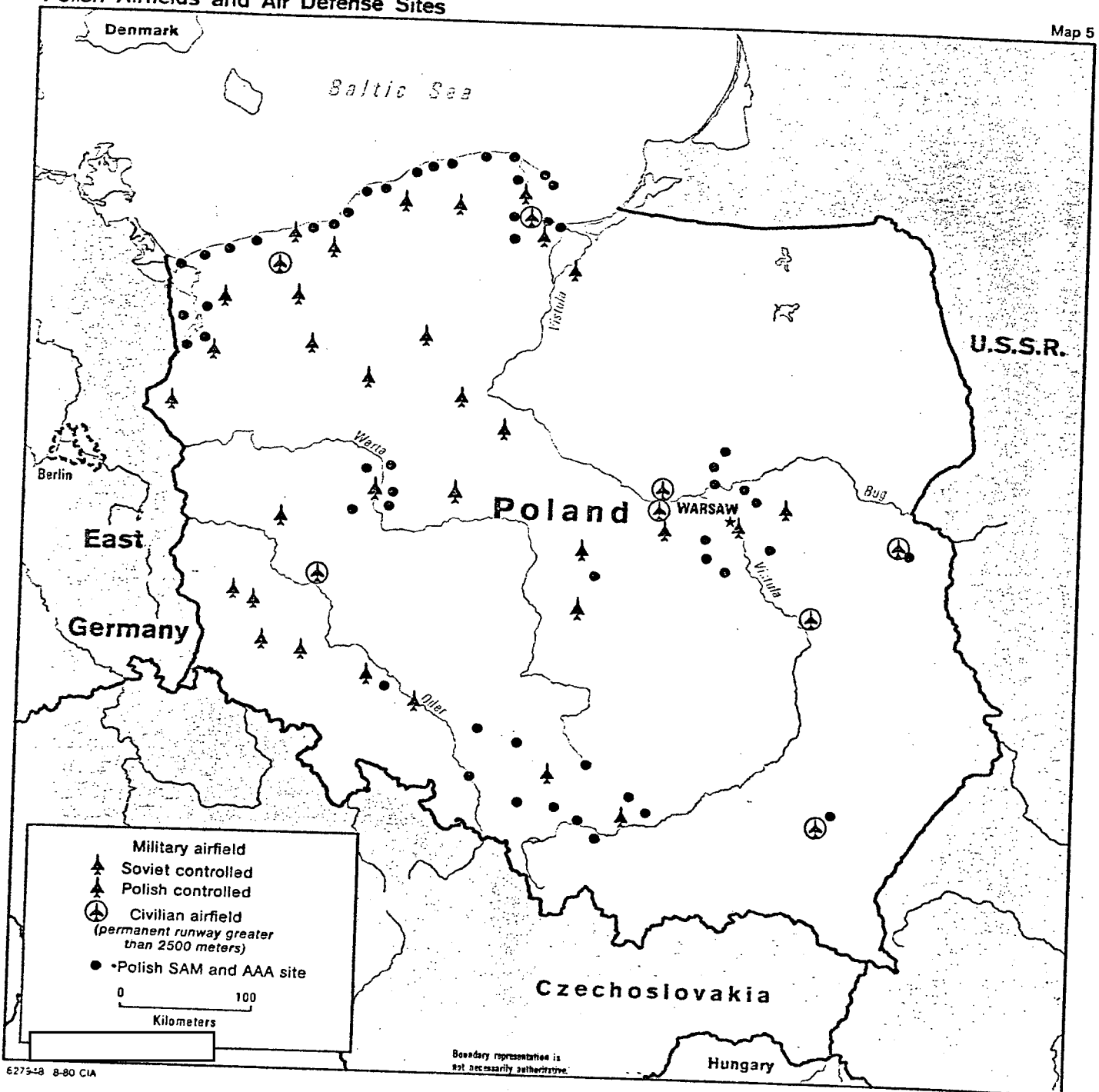
Map 4



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### Polish Airfields and Air Defense Sites

Map 5



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Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

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Categorization of Divisions

- Category I : These divisions are estimated to have a full complement of combat equipment and more than three-fourths of their authorized wartime personnel.
- Category II : These divisions also have a full complement of combat equipment, but frequently lack some support equipment. Assigned personnel strengths vary from about one-third of authorized wartime strength in some NSWP divisions to about two-thirds in Soviet divisions.
- Category III : These divisions are manned at cadre strength with manpower levels ranging from about one-tenth to one-third of authorized wartime personnel. They apparently have most of their essential combat equipment, except armored personnel carriers, but have less support equipment than Category II divisions.

Troop List - Soviet Ground Force Divisions  
In and Around Poland

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Possible Use*</u>
Group: Northern Group of Forces (NGF), Poland (2 TD)			
20th TD	Swietoszow	I	XX
u/i TD	Borne	I	XX
Group: Central Group of Forces (CGF), Czechoslovakia (2 TD, 3 MRD)			
<u>CGF Subordinates</u>			
18th GMRD	Mlada Boleslav	I	
u/i TD	Milovice	I	
<u>28th Corps</u>	Olomouc		
<u>48th MRD</u>	Vysoke Myto	I	
30th GMRD	Zvolen	I	
31st TD	Bruntal	I	
Group: Group of Soviet Forces, Germany (GSFG) (9 TD, 10 MRD)			
<u>1st Guards Tank Army</u>			
7th GTD	Dresden		
9th TD	Rosslau	I	
11th GTD	Riesa	I	
27th GMRD	Dresden	I	XX
	Halle	I	
<u>2nd Guards Tank Army</u>			
16th GTD	Furstenberg		
25th TD	Neustrelitz	I	
21st MRD	Templin	I	
94th GMRD	Perleberg	I	
	Schwerin	I	
<u>3rd Shock Army</u>			
10th GTD	Magdeburg		
12th GTD	Krampnitz	I	
47th GTD	Neuruppin	I	
207th MRD	Hillersleben	I	
	Stendal	I	

\*For illustration we have selected divisions we believe might be used in the two options discussed in the memorandum. Those divisions figuring in the 31-division option are indicated with a single mark (X); those figuring both in the 16-division option and in the 31-division option are indicated with a

Troop List - Soviet Ground Force Divisions  
In and Around Poland

<u>double manet (XX).</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Possible Use</u>
<u>8th Guards Army</u>	Nohra		
20th GMRD	Grimma	I	XX
39th GMRD	Ohrdruf	I	
57th GMRD	Naumburg	I	
79th GTD	Jena	I	
<u>20th Guards Army</u>	Eberswalde		
6th GMRD	Bernau	I	XX
14th GMRD	Juterbog	I	XX
35th MRD	Dallgow-Doberitz	I	XX
Military District: Baltic (3 TD, 5 MRD, 2 ABN)			
<u>MD Subordinates</u>			
7th Guards Airborne Division*	Kaunas	I	XX
44th Guards Airborne Division* (Training)	Jonava	III	
24th TD (Training)	Dobele	III	
107th MRD	Vilnius	III	
56th GMRD	Tallinn	III	
3rd GMRD	Klaipeda	III	
<u>11th Guards Army</u>	Kaliningrad		
1st GTD	Kaliningrad	II	XX
40th GTD	Sovetsk	II	XX
1st GMRD	Kaliningrad	II	XX
26th GMRD	Gusev	III	X
Military District: Belorussia (8 TD, 2 MRD)			
<u>MD Subordinates</u>			
45th GTD (Training)	Borisov	III	
120th GMRD	Minsk	II	XX

\*Subordinate to Soviet Airborne Troops Headquarters, Moscow.

Troop List - Soviet Ground Force Divisions  
In and Around Poland

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Possible Use</u>
<u>5th Guards Tank Army</u>	Bobruysk		
8th GTD	Marina Gorka	III	X
193rd GTD	Bobruysk	III	X
29th GTD	Slutsk	III	X
<u>7th Tank Army</u>	Borisov		
3rd GTD	Lepel	III	X
34th TD	Borisov	III	X
37th GTD	Polotsk	III	X
<u>28th Army</u>	Grodno		
46th GTD	Slonim	III	X
50th GMRD	Brest	III	X
Military District: Carpathia (3 TD, 8 MRD)			
<u>MD Subordinates</u>			
66th GMRD (Training)	Chernovtsy	III	
117th GTD (Training)	Berdichev	III	
24th MRD	Lvov	II	XX
<u>8th Tank Army</u>	Zhitomir		
23rd TD	Ovruch	II	XX
30th GTD	Novograd Volynskiy	III	X
<u>13th Army</u>	Rovno		
15th GMRD	Vladimir Volynskiy	III	X
97th GMRD	Slavuta	III	X
161st MRD	Izyaslav	III	X
<u>38th Army</u>	Ivano Frankovsk		
70th GMRD	Ivano Frankovsk	III	X
128th GMRD	Mukachevo	II	XX
17th GMRD	Khmelnitskiy	III	X
Additional Airborne Division Military District: Leningrad			
76th Guards Airborne Division*	Pskov	I	XX

\*Subordinate to Soviet Airborne Troops Headquarters, Moscow.