

MEMORANDUM

HAK has seen

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE

INFORMATION

November 2, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith

SUBJECT: Washington Post Story on NATO/Pact Tank Balance

You asked me to check the substance of the Washington Post story on NATO tank forces and identify the possible sources for it.

The Substance of the Post Story

The Post story on the NATO/Pact tank balance is substantially accurate (Tab A). Its principal points are drawn from the NSSM 92 "building block" papers which were later incorporated into the NSSMs 84/92 summary papers. The main points covered in the story and their treatment in our work are:

-- Number of NATO Tanks. The Post story identifies a "5,000 tank replacement force" that is "only slightly smaller than the front-line NATO tank force" for a total of "about 11,000 Allied tanks (that) would be quickly available." The NSSM 84 summary reported that some "5,250 tanks were either prepositioned or held in reserve, which along with tanks in active units (including France) provide a NATO force of 11,302 tanks on M-Day. Thus, the Post and NSSM 84 numbers are quite close.

-- U.S. Tank Force. The story does not identify the size of the overall U.S. tank force in Europe; it does mention that the "extra" tanks include about 1,200 American M-60s and further implies that "about 500 of these are prepositioned in West Germany" for the Reforger units. The breakout of U.S. reserve tanks was not included in either NSSMs 84 or 92.

OSD REVIEW
COMPLETED

MORI C02391326

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

On file OMB release instructions
apply.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

2

-- Soviet Tank Force. Both the Post and NSSMs 84/92 assess the Warsaw Pact tank threat at about 13,000 tanks on M-Day and 19,000 after a few weeks of mobilization. However, these estimates are the basis of all government planning and have been widely disseminated.

-- NATO Improvements. The Post reports that "one of the options under study is assigning these forces (the reserve tanks) to new or current units or possibly converting one or both U.S. infantry divisions in Europe to armored units." The NSSM 84 study developed four options for increasing the number of NATO tank/anti-tank weapons in both the U.S. and Allied forces but none of them focused on the conversion of U.S. units or the assigning of reserve tanks to active units. OSD had planned to study these options but as yet has not done it.

While the Post story is drawn from the NSSMs 84/92 material, it goes well beyond it both in substantive detail about tanks and the policy implications of the discovery of large numbers of NATO war reserve tanks. For example:

-- The Post story sees the discovery of the reserve tanks as a "disclosure which could bring about a major shift in attitudes about the ability of Western forces to withstand a Warsaw Pact tank thrust across NATO's borders."

-- The NSSM 84 study found that "The Pact has been generally viewed as possessing a major advantage over NATO in numbers of tanks...this numerical disadvantage may be offset, in part, by NATO's large tank reserves, higher quality tanks, and superior maintenance."

The Post story, thus, is somewhat misleading in its implication that NATO does not by current lights have any great problem in stopping a Pact tank attack. We have found, and I think my earlier memo to you reflected this (Tab B), that NATO would still be outnumbered about 2:1 by the mobilized Pact tank force even if every reserve tank were included in our active forces.

In addition, there are many statements of fact or opinion appearing in the story that were not included in the NSSMs 84/92 work:

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

3

Find put!

-- The statement that the NATO reserve tanks are "parked along sealed off spurs of West Germany's autobahn...there are not nearly enough standby crews assigned to man them." We have not yet looked into the location of the reserve tanks. Also, these tanks do not have standby crews.

-- The estimate that the NATO reserve tanks are "equal to 10 armored divisions and represent a few billion dollars in unassigned assets." Our study did not look at this question.

-- The statement that "Laird is expected, among other things, to press NATO to improve its ability to stop a Russian armored attack" at the November NPG meetings. We and other agencies have not been informed as to what Laird would say at these meetings.

These observations go well beyond the work we have done.

Possible Sources of the Story

Washington Post's story is based on the NSSMs 84/92 studies, but this in itself is of little help in determining the source of the Post story.

-- The basic NSSM 84 report and the working papers associated with it were distributed to some 200 individuals in about seven agencies and perhaps as many agency components. A distribution list is at Tab D.

-- The personnel associated with the NSSMs 84/92 studies who had both access to these reports and enough policy background to write the story number about 30. I have listed the members of this group at Tab C, but because of the wide distribution of this report, the main source for this story was not necessarily a member of this group. It could just as easily have been a consumer of the report.

-- The finding on reserve tanks was common knowledge in DOD-oriented staffs around Washington more than a month ago. The formal distribution of the initial report was made in late September.

Thus, the tank information was very widely disseminated throughout Washington and could have been obtained by the Post from an almost endless number of individual sources.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

4

The Post story itself, however, offers a few additional clues:

-- Content. Because the story must have proved embarrassing to the military, the JCS and conservative elements of OSD(ISA) could have no interest in leaking it. Given the somewhat technical nature of the story's military discussion, it is unlikely that State is responsible. This leaves OSD, CIA, OMB, and the NSC as the possible sources.

-- Attribution. The story attributes its material primarily to "military planners," "intelligence sources," and "officials." On the whole, this language suggests that OSD was the main source of the story though it also implies that the intelligence community confirmed it. Given the diversity of material, the story may have had several sources.

I'd like to know

My guess (and it is only a guess) is that the story came from several sources probably within DOD and was confirmed within the intelligence community. Though DOD would like, I'm sure, to pin the story on your staff, there is no evidence and little reason to support this contention. One can't be much more specific than this without attributing motives to individuals in what would be an unfair manner.

As shown in Tab C, there were at least nine individuals, including myself, on the NSC staff who had sufficient access to leak the story, but I sincerely do not believe that any of them did largely because they knew the impact it would have on our efforts to get the Allies to contribute more to remedy known deficiencies in the NATO posture.

NOV 5 1970

SECRET/SENSITIVE

In NATO Stockpile

5,000 Extra Tanks Found

By Michael Getler

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Defense Department has discovered that this country and its NATO allies have about 5,000 more tanks in Europe than top-level Pentagon officials knew about.

Existence of the tanks was uncovered within the last four weeks, according to military planners, during a high-priority administration review of over-all NATO strategy known as National Security Memorandum 84.

The disclosure could bring about a major shift in attitudes about the ability of Western forces to withstand a Warsaw Pact tank thrust across NATO's borders.

For years, the Pentagon, by

its own estimate, has considered NATO to be badly outgunned by massive tank forces of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies.

The extra tanks, almost all of them among the most modern in service, have been stockpiled in West Germany for years as potential replacements for operational NATO tanks knocked out in battle.

But the reserve tanks, which could almost double NATO's tank strength, have not been included in the Pentagon's top-level planning estimate of NATO armored units facing the Warsaw Pact forces, according to these sources.

Furthermore, with the exception of about 500 tanks pre-positioned in West Ger-

many for two brigades of the U.S.-based First Infantry Division, the size of NATO's backup tank force has been unknown to top Defense Department and administration officials dating back to at least the Johnson administration, it is claimed.

Disclosure of the actual dimensions of the reserve tank force during the National Security Council study is said to have stunned civilian and military defense official at the highest levels. It also has caused a hasty official upgrading of estimates on the total NATO armored force that could be available within a matter of days to meet a Soviet ground attack in Europe.

- See TANKS, A16, Col. 1

A 16 Friday, Oct. 30, 1970 THE WASHINGTON POST

NATO Has 5,000 Extra Tanks

TANKS, From A1

Intelligence sources confirm that a big increase in estimated Allied tank strength has just been made.

The assessment of NATO strength vis-a-vis the Warsaw Pact is the key item in figuring out each year's total U.S. military budget, since the needs for a defense of Europe largely determine the over-all size of American armed forces.

The extra tanks, which are parked along sealed-off spurs of West Germany's autobahn, include about 1,200 American M-60s, the main battle tank now in use by the U.S. Army.

Most of the others are equally modern German-built Leopards and British Centurions. Only about 500 are old U.S. M-24s and M-48s still used by the Germans.

The same study that brought the size of the replacement force to top-level attention is also said to have raised the idea that under current strategy these tanks would be virtually useless in a fight.

According to military planners, the study pointed out that parking the tanks along highway leaves them extremely vulnerable to any quick Soviet air strike, bringing into question their availability as replacements.

The Russians, as one official puts it, must be more aware of these tanks than is the Pentagon.

Furthermore, it is said that there are not nearly enough standby crews assigned to man these tanks in the case of an urgent crisis, and that it can't be assumed that crews

from regular units will survive if their tanks are knocked out in battle.

The lack of standby crews is reportedly the main reason why the tanks are not considered to be combat ready now.

However, military experts say this could be easily remedied and the Pentagon is now reconsidering how best to use these tanks.

Though no decisions have been made on what, if anything, will be done, one of the options under study is assigning some of these forces to new or current units or possibly converting one or both U.S. infantry divisions in Europe to armored units.

The administration of late has also been pressing NATO allies to beef up their own military readiness rather than simply offering to pay more of the cost of keeping large American forces there.

The 5,000 tank replacement force is only slightly smaller than the front-line NATO tank force. It is equal to about 10 armored divisions and represents a few billion dollars in unassigned assets. The extra U.S. M-60s alone cost about \$500 million.

At the forthcoming NATO defense ministers meeting in Brussels in December, sources say U.S. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird is expected, among other things, to press NATO to improve its ability to stop a Russian armored attack through either more use of tanks or better anti-tank weapons, or both.

The prospect for quickly increasing actual NATO armored strength has major implications for U.S. and NATO long-range strategy.

By revealing the huge number of tanks actually in Europe already and the options for making them combat ready, officials say, the NSC study makes it clear for the first time that NATO has at least a better potential for holding off Russian armor without quickly resorting to nuclear weapons than many strategists believed.

Until now, the Pentagon officially estimated that NATO had about 6,000 tanks ready for immediate use.

Arrayed against these are about 13,000 Warsaw Pact tanks, mostly Russian, spread through Eastern Europe.

U.S. intelligence also estimates the Russians could move another 6,000 tanks into the front lines from Soviet bases within three or four weeks of a decision to mobilize.

Contrary to the Allied idea of keeping tanks as replacements, Soviet doctrine calls for a fast war-fighting strategy that brings all forces to bear as quickly as possible. Soviet tank forces reportedly are all assigned to specific units and independently manned.

The overwhelming numerical superiority of the Warsaw Pact forces has depressed NATO planners and fortified the impression, especially in Europe, that NATO could not hold off the Russians using just conventional weapons for more than a few weeks.

When the heretofore uncounted replacement forces are added, however, and providing some attempt is made to improve their readiness, planners stress that the ratios change dramatically.

About 11,000 Allied tanks

would be quickly available versus 13,000 for the Pact.

Further balance is provided, weapons experts say, because roughly half the total NATO tanks are modern, with long-range and highly accurate 105mm guns. Only about one-fourth of the Warsaw Pact tanks, mostly Russian T-62s, are rated as good. The bulk of the Pact forces are older Soviet T-54s and T-55s.

The imbalance in opposing armored forces, at least as it has been understood in the past, has also been labeled NATO's most serious weakness.

NATO countries have about the same number of tactical fighters and bombers as the Warsaw Pact and about the same number of men under arms.

Thus, it is now being reasoned in some quarters, that a new tank balance sheet might change some minds overseas about Europe being defensible and might also help in future NATO-Warsaw Pact mutual force reductions.

B

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506SECRETINFORMATION

October 5, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith *KWS*

SUBJECT: The NATO-Warsaw PACT Tank Balance in Central Europe

The PACT has generally been viewed as possessing a major advantage over NATO in numbers of tanks. Analysis done recently in connection with NSSMs 84 and 92 indicates, however, that NATO's tank problem is not one of items of equipment but of mobilization of manpower reserves to operate available tanks. When a simple count of tanks in active units is made, the PACT has a 1.83:1 advantage on M-day and a 2.70:1 advantage at M+15 (the most favorable situation for the PACT). When all relevant quantitative and qualitative factors are considered, however, it appears that the PACT advantage in terms of the number of tanks as such is probably never significantly greater than the 2:1 ratio its doctrine regards as necessary for a successful response to a NATO attack (presumably the Soviets would want even higher ratios on the attack but we have no evidence as to what they are). Factors which modify crude calculations of the tank balance include the following:

-- Previous DoD calculations of the tank balance failed to take account of NATO tanks in reserve stocks in the Central Region (roughly one third of total tank holdings). The PACT maintains all its tanks in active units. If organizational changes could be made which allowed NATO tanks in inventory to be thrown into the balance more rapidly, relevant force ratios would change radically. While NATO stockpiles have a smaller percentage of modern tanks than our active units, they still contain relatively more than do Soviet active units.

-- NATO tanks are more reliable and NATO tank maintenance is better. According to best estimates we have, PACT tanks would be out of action for maintenance 28 percent of the time on the average, NATO tanks only 11 percent.

-- NATO tank forces are supplemented by anti-tank systems superior to the PACT's.

SECRET*Ryan/dmd/4 Oct 7:*

SECRET

2

-- NATO tanks should have advantages of terrain, of concealment and emplacement, and thus of firing first in the majority of engagements. According to analyses of World War II tank engagements, kill ratios favoring the defense on the order of three to one can be expected. NATO's tactical advantage would be further enhanced by the use of barriers and anti-tank mines.

Several important conclusions emerge from all of this:

-- It may not be as important as we thought to design corrective approaches to MBFR which are tank heavy on the PACT side.

-- Analysis of NATO strategies and of possible approaches to an MBFR agreement is extremely sensitive to the data base employed. Our experience in analyzing the tank problem is not unique. We are encountering similar difficulties in every other area.

Enclosed (Tab A) is a paper summarizing tank issues which will provide you with more detail on the points made above.

SECRET

Tank Issues

I. The Present Situation

The Numerical Balance

The Pact has been generally viewed as possessing a major advantage over NATO in numbers of tanks. For instance, on M-day the number of tanks in active units in the Central Region is 13102 Pact tanks to 7148 NATO tanks (including France), a ratio of 1.83:1.

However, this neglects two factors which modify the conclusion.

- First, the Pact keeps all its inventory of tanks in active units, while NATO keeps over 1/3 of its Central Region tanks in reserve stocks. This difference follows from the Pact method of using whole units as combat replacements, while NATO replaces individual personnel and equipment items. Including the 4152 NATO tanks that are prepositioned or in reserve brings the balance to 13102 Pact tanks to 11302 NATO tanks, a ratio of 1.15 : 1.

- While this total number of tanks in the region is significant, not all tanks on either side are immediately available for combat on M-day. One way of indicating this is to balance the tanks of Pact Category I divisions in GDR, and Czechoslovakia against NATO divisions in FRG, Belgium and the Netherlands (stationed and indigenous forces in both cases). This balance is 9727 Pact tanks to 6052 NATO tanks, a ratio of 1.60:1.

By M+15, the number of Pact tanks in the Central Region is at its peak, with 6262 tanks arriving from the Western military districts of the Soviet Union. At this point all active units are assumed to be combat ready and available. The balance at this point is 19364 Pact active unit tanks to 7148 NATO, a ratio of 2.70:1. The balance of the total inventory

2

S E C R E T

of tanks is 19364 Pact tanks to 11302 NATO (some of NATO's reserve tanks may be mobilizing but are not so counted here). A ratio of 1.71:1.

The M+15 balances are the most favorable the Pact will receive; no more Pact tanks are added after M+15, while NATO tanks are mobilized from the in-region reserve stocks and, later, tanks arrive from the US and UK.

These balances and their relationships are shown in Table I.

The Qualitative Balance

There are significant qualitative differences among tanks. If Pact and NATO tanks are divided into classes according to effectiveness, Table II shows that the most modern Soviet tanks, all of the T-62 model, make up 23% of the M-day total, and 31% of the tanks in the GDR and Czechoslovakia on M-day, while the most modern category of NATO tanks make up 58% of the active unit tanks in the FRG, Belgium and the Netherlands and 46% of the total Central Region inventory of NATO tanks (including about 1/3 of the reserve tanks).

In addition, it is argued by many that NATO's support and maintenance of tanks are superior to the Pact's. One analysis concluded that while only 11% of NATO tanks would be unavailable at any one time because of major failures, 28% of Pact tanks would be. While the conclusion and the quantitative estimates are disputed, applying these factors to the M+15 balance, the most favorable for the Soviets, shows that the balance of working active unit tanks is 2.19:1 and the balance of working tanks is 1.38:1.

Being on the defensive could also help NATO. NATO tanks should have advantages of terrain, of concealment and emplacement, and thus of firing

SECRET

3

tank engagements has concluded, generally allow kill ratios favoring the defense on the order of three to $1\frac{1}{2}$. The kill ratio might not be as favorable in a mobile defense situation. On the other hand, the use of barriers and anti-tank mines could improve the effectiveness of NATO's defensive use of tanks. NATO engineer units are oriented around the construction of barrier defense (seven days work is estimated to construct a moderate barrier protecting Centag). In addition, large stocks of anti-tank mines (1.7 million) are kept by the FRG.

Anti-tank weapons are also effective in a defensive role. These weapons include a variety of guns and missiles, mounted on vehicles or not. In addition, the artillery of each side is estimated to have an anti-tank capability. Numerical estimates vary, according to what is included.

One M-day count compares 2450 Pact weapons to 2533 NATO weapons in active units. However, this does not include weapons in reserve and inventory.

In particular, it does not include the weapons of the German Territorial Army. This force is planned to have units of up to brigade^{2/} strength, with 4000 ^{3/} anti-tank weapons, available by M+12 hours. Also, NATO has in its total, several types of tracked tank destroyers, like the US Sheridan and the German Jagdpanzer, while the Pact has none of this high mobility type. However, aircraft and helicopters on both sides at present have a low anti-tank capability, primarily due to ordnance limitations. In addition the more sophisticated anti-tank missiles systems have had their combat effectiveness questioned (in connection with reliability, capability at short ranges, and prohibition costs of effective training).

^{1/} The JCS do not concur with this evaluation and state there is no fully accepted basis for these judgments.

^{2/} 6 brigades + 30 battalions planned; 3 brigades + 30 battalions now formed.

SECRET

Table I
M-Day Tank Balance

	<u>Pact</u>	<u>NATO</u>
Tanks available at front <u>1/</u>	9727	6052
Other tanks in combat ready units <u>2/</u>	1774	1096
Other tanks in active units <u>3/</u>	1601	0
Total in active units	13102	7148
Tanks prepositioned or in reserve <u>4/</u>	0	4154
Total	13102	11302

1/ For Pact, Cat. I divisions in GDR and Czechoslovakia; for NATO, all divisions in FRG, Belgium and Netherlands.

2/ For Pact, Cat. I divisions in Poland (available M+5); for NATO, active divisions in France (available M+15).

3/ For Pact, Cat. II and III units; no NATO units.

4/ No Pact tanks in this status.

M+15 Tank Balance

	<u>Pact</u>	<u>NATO</u>
Tanks in active units	19364	7148
Tanks prepositioned or in reserve	0	4154 (mobilization going on)
Total	19364	11302

Table II
M-Day Tanks by Category

Pact	A ²	B ³	C ⁴	D ⁵	Total
Tanks in GDR, Czech.	3131	6366	0	397	9894
Tanks in Poland	<u>0</u>	<u>2413</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>597</u>	<u>3010</u>
Total Tanks	3131	8779	0	994	13102
NATO					
Tanks available ¹	3561	2491 ⁶		0	6052
Other Tanks ⁷	<u>1740</u>	<u>3038</u>		<u>472</u>	<u>5250</u>
Total Tanks	5301	5529		472	11302

1/ Defined as in Table I

2/ Pact, T-62; NATO, M-60, Leopard, Chieftain, AMX-30

3/ Pact - T-54-55, T-10/T-10M; NATO-AMX-13, M-48, 105mm Centurion

4/ Pact-none; NATO-84mm Centurion, M-47

5/ Pact-T-34; NATO-M4, M26

6/ Categories B & C combined since no breakout can be made between 4mm and 105mm Centurion versions.

7/ Combines 1096 French combat ready tanks in France, available M415, and 4154 reserve or prepositioned tanks.

S E C R E T

Table III
Operationally Available Tanks Taking Account of
Maintenance Factors 1/
M+15

	<u>Pact</u>	<u>NATO</u>
Tanks in active units	13942	6362
Tanks prepositioned or in reserve	<u>0</u>	<u>3697</u>
Total	13942	10059

1/ .72 for Pact; .89 for NATO; an estimate of the percentage of tanks not unavailable because of maintenance.

Possible Sources of the Tank Story

OMB

William Morrill
Lucas Fischer

25X1

State

James Goodby
Marvin Humphries

CIA

Bruce Clarke



NSC

Wayne Smith
John Court
Bill Hyland
Robert Ryan
Andrew Hamilton
Wilfred Kohl
Col. Richard Kennedy
Hal Sonnelfeldt
Keith Guthrie

ACDA

Col. Raymond Thayer
David Linebaugh

OSD

Reginald Bartholomew
James Morrison
Phil Odeen
Barry Carter
Hank Gaffney
Garen Staglin
Dan Gulling
Jim Kolb
Robert Chapman
Jim Alef
Hans Einstein
Paul Bowron
Robert Stone
Greg Woods

NSSM 84/92 Report Distribution

<u>Agency</u>	<u>No. of Individual Copies</u>
NSC	25
OSD	40
State	15
CIA	10
ACDA	5
Army	20
Navy	25
Air Force	15
Marines	10
JCS	42
DIA	3