

Will They Fight?

US Intelligence Assessments and the Reliability of Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Armed Forces, 1946–89

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Gen. Nathan Twining, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), was clear in telling Congress in January 1959: “As we are all aware, the mere recital of numbers will not tell the entire story. The Soviet bloc and allied divisions are not equally effective, nor of the same size and composition. The political reliability, as well as dependability, of the satellite divisions is questionable.”¹ The next four decades would show Gen. Twining could not have been more truthful or accurate.

Following is my reconstruction of the story of the US Intelligence Community’s (IC) efforts to address one of the central analytical questions of the Cold War—whether and how well Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) military forces would fight for their Soviet masters in the event of a conflict. In describing how the IC wrestled with this difficult issue, I have attempted to answer several related questions:

- First, how important, in fact, was the NSWP topic to intelligence managers, and what analytical effort did they assign to dealing with it?
- Second, what challenges did analysts confront when examining this issue, and how were they similar to or different from those facing IC analysts working other analytic problems during the Cold War?
- Third, what conclusions did the IC reach on the reliability of East European forces and how confident were they in their judgments? Did their assessments change over time and, if so, how?
- Fourth, did IC analyses of this issue matter in any significant way? That is, did they affect US policies and programs or were they academic exercises?
- Finally, are the lessons from this chapter in the Cold War of any value to today’s intelligence analysts?

The Analytical Effort—How Much and Why

A review of the scholarly literature on NSWP reliability suggests little work was accomplished on this topic—within or outside the IC—until the late 1970s. Then and continuing for nearly a decade, the question drew considerable scholarly attention.² Since the Cold War’s end, however, historians have written extensively on the Cuban Missile Crisis, the “Bomber Gap,” and technological advances in collection capabilities, but no significant historical assessment of NSWP forces, employing unclassified or declassified national security products, has emerged.³

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Archival material made accessible over the past two decades, however, reveals NSWP reliability was the subject of attention at many levels of the IC. At the national level, two national intelligence estimates (NIEs) were devoted solely to the issue. The first was published in 1966 (“Reliability of the USSR’s East European Allies,” SNIE 11-15-66), and the other (“Military Reliability of the Soviet Union’s Warsaw Pact Allies,” NIE 12/11-83) in 1983.⁴ But several dozen other NIEs contained analysis relevant to the topic. These estimates examined issues such as the capabilities of Soviet general purpose and theater forces, Soviet military policy, and the Kremlin’s concepts and capabilities for going to war in Europe.⁵

Reliability issues also appeared in assessments of arms control and force reduction proposals for Europe and in multiple analyses exploring the nature and implications of political and societal unrest in Eastern Europe.⁶ Indeed, a whole series of “vulnerability” and “resistance potential” studies produced over the years discussed factors integral to the reliability issue as part of problems affecting the stability of East European regimes.⁷ Such now declassified studies document that attention was also paid to reliability issues at the theater and service level, where the topic was of enduring interest to senior command and service leaders. The US European Command’s ground component—US Army Europe (USAREUR)—and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) produced assessments on the subject; annual and quarterly USAREUR intelligence assessments examined reliability factors in their main bodies as well as in annexes devoted to “reliability” and “resistance potential.”⁸

The most comprehensive of these works was a 1972 USAREUR study that focused exclusively on NSWP northern tier countries.⁹ Service-level interest was evident in a series of RAND studies sponsored by the US Air Force on political and military aspects of the Warsaw Pact. Air Force intelligence also reportedly supported an “Achilles” program, dedicated to researching Soviet vulnerabilities.¹⁰

The IC interest in and effort devoted to East European reliability issues reflected in part the importance senior US national security leaders and military commanders attributed to the topic. In public remarks and in national security memorandums, US officials saw Soviet concerns over East European and NSWP reliability as a deterrent to war and a moderating influence on Soviet behavior.

In October 1953, Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, a former director of central intelligence (DCI) then serving as undersecretary of state, publicly asserted that the Soviet Union would not start an offensive war against Western Europe unless its lines of communication (LOC) through the satellite countries were more secure than they were then. He noted that the greatest deterrent to Soviet aggression was the “unsettlement” in the neighboring satellites.¹¹

Reliability concerns also were perceived to be a force multiplier for the West should conflict erupt. IC analyses—from the 1950s through the 1980s—addressed ways in which reliability concerns and unrest in Eastern Europe might prevent the participation of NSWP forces in offensive operations and tie down Soviet forces responsible for maintaining lines of communications and internal order behind the Iron Curtain. A national estimate in 1968 noted:

*The current status of the Czechoslovak forces is a key factor in Warsaw Pact capabilities for both immediate and reinforced military action against NATO. At present, the Soviets almost certainly would not count on these forces in any serious contingency. Further, should armed conflict with NATO occur in the present circumstances, the Soviets would probably feel it necessary to use some of their own forces for occupation duty in Czechoslovakia. The unreliability of the Czechs is probably highly disruptive to Warsaw Pact military planning.*¹²

Other studies looked at potential aid to resistance movements and dissident elements in Eastern Europe to ensure their militaries remained passive or actively resisted Soviet efforts to suppress popular unrest.¹³

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The IC's level of effort on this topic varied over time, driven by factors and developments on both sides of the Iron Curtain. For sure, reliability issues were studied more closely in the 1950s, when the United States perceived a real possibility that war with the Soviet Union might erupt. Fostering uncertainty over the loyalty of Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies and the security of Soviet LOCs through Eastern Europe and laying the groundwork for active resistance behind enemy lines were seen as prudent military measures.

During the 1960s and 1970s Washington's Flexible Response defense policy—with its greater reliance on conventional military means and the need to counter the Warsaw Pact's larger ground forces—ensured reliability issues remained of interest. Unrest and rising nationalism in Eastern Europe spurred study as well. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the 1968 Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the Solidarity crisis in Poland as well as Romania's foreign policy "deviations" all served to highlight that, despite prophylactic measures by Moscow and the East European regimes, the reliability of NSWP forces was in doubt.¹⁴

Growing East European nationalism also was perceived as potentially offering greater insight into Soviet attack plans. A 1966 NIE, "Warning of Soviet Intention to Attack," concluded that the chances of obtaining indications for warning are enhanced by the growing independence of the East European states in both political and military matters, and by their demands for more discussion and mutual agreement on Warsaw Pact planning and the role of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe.... We think the chances are good that through such channels we would get some knowledge of Soviet intentions.¹⁵

Lastly, changes in Soviet military policy and its war-fighting strategy—changes that greatly increased the role and importance of NSWP forces—drove ongoing interest. Nikita Khrushchev's push to reduce Soviet general purpose forces and rely more on Moscow's growing strategic nuclear deterrent initially generated the requirement for greater East European military capability, a requirement that was reinforced by a growing awareness that a war with NATO might have to be fought with forces already in Eastern Europe.¹⁶

Challenges to Analysis

Determining whether East European military forces would fight and, if they did, how well they would perform was neither simple nor merely “bean counting.” The IC was confronted with a host of analytic challenges ranging from defining the problem to overcoming the paucity and dubious reliability of available sources. These challenges were compounded by the lack of subject matter expertise in the community and by intermittent bureaucratic support.

Although the issue was important to the IC, where its components came down on the key questions wasn't always clear. Despite the term's use in dozens of in-depth intelligence assessments into the 1980s, what was meant by “military reliability” was not explicitly defined until the 1983 NIE on the subject. In that estimate, the concept was used in two contexts. The first was as an assessment of whether NSWP armed forces would carry out Warsaw Pact directives in the period before or during a conflict with NATO. The other addressed Soviet perceptions of NSWP reliability.¹⁷

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Not only did the IC lack definitions, but it apparently did not have an agreed upon methodology for assessing NSWP reliability. The declassified literature reveals multiple common factors considered in most IC analyses. It was recognized, for example, that conditional variables, including the type and length of the conflict, the potential opponents and Western actions, as well as the battlefield success achieved by Warsaw Pact forces would affect whether and how NSWP forces would fight.

IC analyses also closely examined the political and military situation in each NSWP country and its implications for reliability. In the 1970s and 1980s, IC products increasingly focused on Warsaw Pact command and control (C2) arrangements, the types of military equipment NSWP forces possessed, and the frequency and nature of military training.¹⁸ Additional insights were gleaned from examinations of East European forces' performance during crises, from the 1953 East German Uprising to the Solidarity crisis in Poland.¹⁹

Beyond methodological issues, lack of reliable sources hindered IC analysis. Estimates of the Cold War period acknowledge this limiting factor.²⁰ The fielding of national technical collection systems in the 1960s and 1970s did little for the IC elements that followed the issue. Instead, their problem became more acute with the erection of the Berlin Wall and the reduction to a trickle of the flow of escapees and travelers who could offer the kind of insights the IC needed.

The quality of the information they did get left much to be desired. Collection by units like the US Military Liaison Mission (USMLM) in East Germany and other means addressed some of these shortfalls, but quantity and quality remained problems.²¹ Debriefings of escapees, refugees, and travelers provided the majority of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) on NSWP reliability. This HUMINT was usually based on second- or third-hand access and often was no more than rumor and hearsay. Attaché, foreign liaison service, and embassy reporting occasionally offered insight, as did material generated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Radio Free Europe, and emigré newspapers and journals.²² High-ranking sources—like colonels Oleg Penkovskiy and Rudyard Kuklinski—with access to senior Soviet and Warsaw Pact leaders were clearly the exception, not the rule.²³ Consequently, it is not surprising that the 1983 NIE on reliability readily conceded:

*For the most part the perceptions of Soviet leaders described in the study are our own judgments of their probable views, buttressed by observations of their precautionary actions.*²⁴

Two additional factors not common to other Cold War intelligence disciplines hindered IC analysis of NSWP. For one, the advanced social science skills best suited to assessing the complex issue were not widely found in the military intelligence establishment or, for that matter, initially in other elements of the community. Although service and command intelligence organizations contributed key inputs on topics like training, discipline, and morale, they lacked the expertise to integrate such analyses with the larger political and societal issues that would play roles in determining whether and how well Moscow's allies would fight.

This deficiency limited the community's capacity to produce on the topic and forced a heavy reliance at times on think tanks and universities for analytic skills, at least early in the Cold War. Later, as the military services produced and employed intelligence specialists with advanced degrees and foreign area officers (FAOs) with regional and language expertise this reliance diminished.²⁵

The other limiting factor was the lack of a strong bureaucratic supporter. Reliability assessments—unlike estimates identifying a “bomber gap” or new or more numerous Soviet tanks—could do little to spur larger procurement budgets. In fact, assessments questioning the reliability of NSWP forces could be perceived as undermining the need to match larger Warsaw Pact capabilities. Candid assessments posed problems, particularly in the NATO arena, where a viable Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact threat was needed to justify even modest defense budgets. Consequently the few advocates of reliability and associated vulnerability studies were generally found in the special operations and psychological warfare communities, neither of which carried much bureaucratic clout after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.²⁶

What Did They Find?

Consensus and consistency, not discord or significant change, generally characterized the IC's overall assessments of NSWP reliability during the period of this study. While acknowledging that there would be variation between the Warsaw Pact's northern and southern tiers, the IC overwhelmingly concluded that NSWP forces would probably initially fight in a conflict with NATO. How certain they were of this judgment varied over time, driven in part by events behind the Iron Curtain and the roles Moscow assigned to NSWP forces.

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1949-1961

Interest in whether and how well East European military forces would fight in an East-West conflict predated the Warsaw Pact's creation in May, 1955. As early as 1946 intelligence assessments noted that while the East European forces in the Soviet sphere of influence had sizable armies, many of which had combat experience, most lacked modern equipment and had, from the Soviet viewpoint, "serious shortcomings in organization, leadership, and political reliability."²⁷

The June 1953 East German Uprising and unrest elsewhere in Eastern Europe reinforced the IC's initial judgment that "the question of political reliability of the Satellite armies places a significant limitation upon their military usefulness."²⁸ Even so, some analysts believed Soviet and East European measures implemented after 1953 to bolster reliability were at least partially successful.²⁹ Noting the possibility that satellite forces might be employed in certain situations "Probable Developments in the European Satellites Through Mid-1956," NIE 12-54, concluded:

*We believe that while the Satellite armed forces would probably fight well against traditional enemies, their reliability will remain sufficiently questionable during the period of this estimate to place a significant limitation upon their military usefulness in event of general war.*³⁰

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Poland's defiance of Moscow in the days before the Hungarian revolt raised new questions about NSWP reliability and Soviet policies.³¹ Noting that the Polish army supported the nationalist opposition and most Hungarian soldiers either went over to the rebellion or did not oppose it, NIE 12-57, "Stability of the Soviet Satellite Structure," concluded the year after the revolt:

*The Soviet leaders probably now believe that for many purposes the reliability of these forces cannot be counted upon, and that, in circumstances where internal uprisings or foreign war raised hopes of attaining national independence, they might become an actual danger to Communist regimes.*³²

The NIE went on to predict that “intensive efforts will be undertaken to improve security controls within Satellite forces, especially among higher officers.”³³

Theater- and national-level estimates monitored and noted improvement among NSWP forces in the years that followed. By 1960, the IC’s assessment had evolved based on this progress, albeit with reservations remaining over NSWP reliability. USAREUR’s annual intelligence estimate, for example, stated:

While we anticipate continued improvement of the military posture of Satellite forces during the period of this estimate, the Soviets probably would employ only Bulgarian and Czech forces in offensive operations. The remaining Warsaw Pact forces would probably be used in various internal defensive roles.³⁴

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1961-1976

The expanded role of NSWP forces in Pact plans and their improved military capabilities and reliability became the focus of IC analysis during the next eight years. By 1964 the IC recognized that Khrushchev’s decision to cut overall Soviet defense spending—largely at the expense of conventional forces—had enormous implications for NSWP forces. The same was true for the evolution of Soviet views on limited wars, where Moscow went from “holding that limited non-nuclear wars would almost certainly escalate” to “a growing acceptance of the possibility of limited non-nuclear conflict.”³⁵

These changes in strategy were reflected in the four-fold increase in Warsaw Pact exercises between 1961 and 1965 and multiple other measures designed to transform the organization into an alliance capable of waging war.³⁶ The IC monitored Moscow’s progress in training, integrating, and equipping its bloc allies. To the Intelligence Community’s credit, it recognized that the Kremlin’s success did not come without a cost. A 1964 estimate noted that

*while the Soviets are evidently disposed to give East European forces greater responsibilities within the Warsaw Pact structure, the growing political autonomy of these countries probably tends to reduce the USSR’s confidence in its ability to marshal them for an offensive against NATO.*³⁷

Six months later the IC went even further, observing that

*as autonomy spreads in Eastern Europe, the range of contingencies in which the USSR can rely on effective military support from the Warsaw Pact allies will narrow.... This may require the Soviets to re-examine their concept of a rapid offensive sweep through Western Europe, at least to the extent that they had depended on the Satellite forces for supporting action.*³⁸

The IC’s most significant assessment of the monumental changes going on in Eastern Europe and the Warsaw Pact was delivered in August 1966 in the first of the two estimates the Intelligence Community would devote solely to the subject, SNIE 11-15-66 (“Reliability of the USSR’s East European Allies”). Prompted by a request from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the SNIE explored the factors affecting the political/military reliability of the East European Warsaw Pact nations as allies of the USSR, “particularly in respect to the Soviet assessment of those factors.”³⁹ The request specifically asked the IC to assess

*East European reliability under three assumed circumstances in which the USSR might conceivably plan to engage the West in non-nuclear combat: 1) a Berlin crisis; 2) a deliberate non-nuclear attack on Western Europe; and 3) a conflict arising by accident.*⁴⁰

The writers of the SNIE discerned that the Pact's military purposes were intertwined with political objectives, and thus they examined what they considered the major considerations affecting NSWP reliability—the growth of national communism and Soviet strengthening of the Warsaw Pact.

The assessment correctly recognized that Moscow was engaged in a “delicate task of giving the East Europeans more stature within the Pact while tightening the actual alliance by a more thorough integration of East European forces into Soviet operational plans and deployments.”⁴¹ The SNIE concluded that Moscow was succeeding in this effort despite the growth of East European nationalism and an emerging independent voice in Romania.⁴²

The assessment also acknowledged that Soviet policy and success varied behind the Iron Curtain, and that key differences existed between the military capabilities and importance it attributed to the Warsaw Pact's northern (East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia) and southern tiers (Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria).⁴³ Nonetheless, the SNIE's bottom-line was clear:

The Soviets probably believe that strict military discipline, Communist indoctrination, and the careful selection of East European officers and career NCOs, will ensure the reliability of the East European forces in the event of war. We, too, believe that this would be the case, at least initially.⁴⁴

The 1968 “Prague Spring” and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia demonstrated that the IC had overestimated Moscow's success in controlling and channeling the rising tide of East European nationalism.⁴⁵ While the Kremlin could take solace in the fact that token East German, Polish, Bulgarian, and Hungarian forces had obeyed orders to provide “fraternal assistance,” the August invasion highlighted the fragility of NSWP reliability.

Ironically, only seven years earlier, Czechoslovakia had been assessed in a USAREUR intelligence estimate as one of Moscow's most capable and reliable allies.⁴⁶ Yet the IC's failure to foresee the Prague Spring did not blind it to the profound political and military ramifications the events that year would have for the Soviets. A SNIE published in October 1968, “Capabilities of the Warsaw Pact Against NATO,” noted:

We believe that they [Soviet leaders] must now reexamine their decision of the late 1950's to place much heavier reliance on East European armies in operations against the Central Region of NATO. The Czechoslovak situation is but the latest in a series of developments putting in question the reliability of East European forces—Romanian insubordination, the abortive Bulgarian military coup, and Polish military disgruntlement at involvement in the Middle East crisis of 1967. The contribution of each East European country would have to be weighed separately by the Soviets since there are wide variations in reliability. Soviet concern on this account may result in broad changes in Warsaw Pact organization and troop dispositions, but it is still too early to predict them.⁴⁷

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The SNIE's conclusions echoed a number of familiar themes—from whether and how Moscow might employ NSWP forces to variations in the reliability of each of the East European militaries. Nevertheless, these issues required reexamination in light of the 1968 events, potential Soviet responses, and the military and political implications for the Warsaw Pact and NATO.

Uncertainty surrounding the Kremlin's course of action in the aftermath of the 1968 invasion initially prompted disagreement within the IC on the issue of NSWP reliability. The 1970 interagency study, "The Warsaw Pact Threat to NATO," acknowledged that

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*some analysts doubt that East European forces would prove reliable in a variety of contingencies while others consider that the East Europeans would be reliable in most circumstances.*⁴⁸

Elaborating, the study went on to note that some members of the estimate's working group believe that the other East European forces in the Central Region could probably become almost totally unreliable for use against NATO.

Others qualified this judgment, arguing that "in certain cases these forces would be reliable—for example, Polish forces in contingencies which raised the specter of East Germany's reunification with West Germany."⁴⁹

Disagreement over Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact reliability was fed by reports that East German-Polish relations had deteriorated seriously as a result of West Germany's Ostpolitik foreign policy, changing Soviet security considerations, and the rise of a more assertive East Germany. Reliable reporting indicated that the Poles had implied to the Soviets that

*the East Germans were unreliable members of the Bloc, alleging in this connection both that the East German army was ideologically impure and that East German propaganda had been soft on [Czechoslovak Prime Minister] Dubcek.*⁵⁰

While IC analysts acknowledged that such charges probably had been “exaggerated by the Poles for polemical purposes,” they viewed these charges—voiced secretly to Moscow—as indicative of intra-Pact strains that could undermine reliability.⁵¹

These doubts largely dissipated over the next five years as Soviet and East European measures to improve NSWP reliability were taken. A detailed 1972 USAREUR study on the Warsaw Pact’s northern tier, for example, concluded that the East Germans would respond to a call by the Warsaw Pact for hostile action against the West and would be particularly effective in the short run. As with earlier IC assessments, the 1972 study acknowledged that East German reliability in a longer conflict or one in which setbacks were experienced might deteriorate.⁵² Similar conclusions were drawn about the Polish and Czech armies.⁵³

The 1975 NIE “Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO” echoed many of the same themes. The estimate concluded that the armed forces of Eastern Europe were loyal to their national regimes and that, should a general war erupt, the East Europeans would fight.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the NIE qualified this judgment by asserting that the basic question of whether or not an East European regime would commit itself to Pact wartime operations would be “heavily influenced by the perceptions of the national leaders and the political circumstances leading to war.”⁵⁵

The NIE also acknowledged the limitations of the IC’s analysis:

*We cannot judge the enthusiasm with which East Europeans will support the conflict. Neither can we foresee how they would view their own national interests in the course of a conflict nor the inducements that would be required to make them quit the war.*⁵⁶

The estimate was more confident in its assessment of NSWP military contributions and the Kremlin’s reliance on these forces:

*While Soviet leaders may have private doubts of whether the Pact cohesiveness would withstand the strains of war, they have committed themselves to relying on East European forces to carry out wartime functions potentially critical to the Pact’s prospects for success in a war with NATO.*⁵⁷

The military importance of NSWP forces and the ability of Moscow to commit these forces by bypassing their national regimes became a key IC focus in the years ahead and an important variable in the community’s assessment of NSWP reliability.

1977-1989

The Warsaw Pact’s last years were reminiscent of its rocky origins, with concerns over East European unrest and questions surrounding the reliability and effectiveness of NSWP forces dominating. As it had before, Moscow successfully dealt with the immediate challenge of Poland but ultimately could not stem the political and economic forces that would bring down the Berlin Wall and spark the 1989 East European revolutions.

The IC assessments during this period likewise mirrored earlier patterns, shifting from pessimistic views of political turmoil and Warsaw Pact disintegration to acknowledgement that Soviet and East European control mechanisms had proven effective in yet another intra-Pact operation.

The IC was quick to recognize the approaching political upheaval in Poland and the ramifications for the Warsaw Pact. A June 1977 assessment, “Probable Soviet Reactions to a Crisis in Poland,” concluded that Moscow would first search for a nonmilitary solution in addressing labor unrest and political dissidence. The Kremlin, it asserted, recognized that an invasion of Poland—with its much larger population of intensely nationalistic and anti-Soviet people— would pose much more serious challenges than those faced in Czechoslovakia. Any intervention would, with near certainty, “be met with widespread and bloody opposition, including some from elements of the Polish army.”⁵⁸ Although this assessment varied some over the next four years, the IC remained confident in its judgment that Moscow could not count on the Polish military for much assistance in resolving its “Polish problem.”⁵⁹

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Between 1977 and the December 1981 imposition of martial law in Poland, over a half-dozen NIEs or substantial intelligence assessments addressed the dilemma Moscow faced with Poland and overall NSWP reliability and its bearing on the larger question of the military balance of power in Europe and Moscow’s perceived more aggressive foreign policy. IC assessments repeatedly pointed out that the Pact’s numerical advantage in ground forces in Central Europe was tempered by the questionable reliability of the East European forces. An assessment in 1977, for example, noted that “they [the East Europeans] probably would respond with a total military commitment only to a clear and present danger to their homelands.”⁶⁰

The IC also saw the impact of the unreliability of NSWP forces on the Kremlin’s willingness and ability to go to war. “Doubts that its East European allies might not fight loyally and effectively” a 1978 assessment argued, “constrain Moscow’s planning for aggressive war.”⁶¹ Several estimates suggested that the problems in Poland or elsewhere in Eastern Europe would severely undermine the capacities of the Soviet war machine. The refusal of an East European ally to participate fully in an offensive against NATO would tie down Soviet forces on the territory of the recalcitrant ally with “policing” and logistic transport responsibilities. Moreover, the Soviets, according to one assessment, “probably would have to bring in additional forces from the USSR prior to hostilities, thus affording NATO additional warning and reaction time.”⁶²

The potential problems and implications were even greater if Poland was that “recalcitrant ally.” As a July 1981 assessment indicated:

Because Poland's role in Soviet plans for war against NATO is critical, a Soviet invasion could do substantial damage to the warfighting capabilities of the Warsaw Pact.⁶³ ... even if all Polish military units stood absolutely aside during a Soviet invasion (which we regard as unlikely), Moscow would not be able to interpret that passive response as ensuring the continuation of Poland's current role in Warsaw Pact plans for war.⁶⁴

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The declaration of martial law in December 1981 and Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's initial success in its implementation was somewhat surprising and forced the IC to back off its earlier, more pessimistic assessments. For example, a March 1982 SNIE asserted that

Moscow's concern about the willingness of Polish Army and internal security units to maintain control in Poland probably has been allayed by the forces' effective performance in implementing martial law...[and] the substantial and well-trained forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs have acted effectively in implementing martial law, and we believe they—with continuing support of the Army—have a good chance of maintaining order.⁶⁵

The assessment acknowledged that “the Soviets probably have some doubts about the ability of the regime to mobilize Poland if it were called to support military operations against NATO.⁶⁶ However, unless the situation in Poland deteriorated dramatically, it concluded, the “Polish role in Warsaw Pact warfighting strategy will probably not change.”⁶⁷

A more sanguine assessment was reflected as well in the IC's 1983 NIE “Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies.”⁶⁸ In the first and most extensive national-level work on the issue of reliability since 1966, the NIE concluded that Moscow had probably drawn mixed lessons from the experiences of the past several years in Poland. The estimate maintained that the Soviets had grave concerns about resistance from the Polish army if a Warsaw Pact invasion had occurred. Yet it conceded Moscow probably was encouraged that “the Polish military performed as expected by its commanders and when and as required by its government.”⁶⁹

The estimate described a “progressively more elaborate set of statutory and military command and control procedures” instituted by the Kremlin to minimize the potential for East European military unreliability.”⁷⁰ According to the NIE, the Soviet control system was “considered pervasive in the Pact” and “certainly afforded Moscow a high degree of control over a chain of command that is virtually all-Soviet by definition.”⁷¹

Ultimately the NIE came down where so many other earlier IC assessments had on the issue of reliability—initial NSWP compliance, albeit with variation among its members, with subsequent performance and continued allegiance determined by multiple, conditional factors:

We believe that Soviet orders to go to war would be successfully transmitted from the Soviet General Staff to NSWP line units that would, in the main, obey these orders at least during the initial stages of a conflict with NATO. However, we also believe that NSWP military reliability could be degraded by a static front, and substantially degraded by Warsaw Pact reverses.⁷²

The NIE ended by expanding on this last issue, identifying a host of potential East European vulnerabilities that NATO might exploit to amplify Kremlin concerns about NSWP reliability.⁷³ Just as in the past, the potential return from such efforts was considered high: “Without reasonable assurance of participation by most Pact forces, we believe Moscow is unlikely to initiate hostilities against NATO.”⁷⁴ Consequently the IC launched multiple studies to examine the nature and extent of these vulnerabilities and what factors might prevent their exploitation.⁷⁵

The IC’s analytic focus shifted somewhat during the Warsaw Pact’s last five years. Although NSWP reliability continued to be assessed, several factors led the IC to look more closely at the growing capability gap between the East European forces and their Soviet counterparts. One was the perceived success of Soviet control mechanisms instituted in the early 1980s to specifically address reliability concerns. A 1985 NIE noted that

*The Soviets apparently have in place with most East European forces a system that effectively places the NSWP forces under Soviet control from the outset of hostilities.*⁷⁶

The estimate went on:

*Soviet fiat, however, cannot close the widening gap between modern Soviet forces in Eastern Europe and those of Soviet allies. This disparity in combat potential is most pronounced in Eastern Europe’s southern tier and in Poland. It will probably lead to operational adjustments in Soviet plans against NATO in the years ahead.*⁷⁷

Eastern Europe’s widespread economic problems thus had not only spurred labor unrest but they had also adversely affected the willingness and ability of these nations to modernize their military forces in accord with Soviet dictates. The IC recognized that despite Soviet pressure, “none of the East European forces have kept pace with Soviet force improvements” and that this disparity would probably worsen in the years ahead.⁷⁸

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The community also grasped that this gap, like the reliability issue, created potential weaknesses that might prompt changes in Soviet war plans. “Because the East Europeans will have difficulty in adopting the latest Soviet organizations or operational concepts,” the 1985 estimate concluded, “the Soviets may increasingly be forced to augment or replace first-echelon East European forces with their own forces drawn from the western USSR.”⁷⁹

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev’s decision in the late 1980s to reduce Soviet general purpose forces and defense spending had implications for NSWP reliability. On the one hand, these developments lessened the importance of the reliability issue by reducing the likelihood of conventional conflict in Europe. On the other, lower defense budgets and force reduction treaties made it even more critical that the remaining forces be capable and reliable. As the February 1989 NIE “Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces” asserted:

*The Soviets almost certainly are aware of the operational price they will pay if their NSWP allies are not able to perform their assigned missions alongside Soviet forces. The impact of these force deficiencies on operational planning will become more apparent to the Soviets after their force reductions in Central Europe and the western USSR are completed.*⁸⁰

The revolutions that swept throughout Eastern Europe during the remainder of 1989 made this point largely moot. In an anti-climatic coda, the IC's final judgment on the NSWP reliability issue was delivered in April 1990. In a National Intelligence Council memorandum, "The Direction of Change in the Warsaw Pact," IC specialists concluded:

*Recent political events in Eastern Europe will further erode Soviet confidence in their allies. Moscow cannot rely upon Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces; it must question its ability to bring Soviet reinforcements through East European countries whose hostility is no longer disguised or held in check.*⁸¹

An Assessment of IC Work

In summary, the IC's 40-year effort to assess NSWP reliability had come full circle. In the 1950s, the community correctly concluded that the East European satellites were largely unreliable, possessed limited military capabilities, and held a minor part in Soviet war plans. A decade later this assessment had evolved, recognizing the progress of Soviet and East European efforts to mold more loyal and capable forces. NSWP forces were considered—at least initially in a conflict—to be largely reliable, militarily proficient, and important players in Moscow's strategy for defeating NATO. By the late 1980s, however, the IC's findings had returned largely to where they had been three decades earlier, with NSWP forces assessed as less capable, of uncertain reliability, and constrained in the roles they could play in Warsaw Pact military operations.

In retrospect, IC analyses compared favorably with work done by multiple scholars and think tanks during the late 1970s and 1980s. Much like the IC, they found the NSWP reliability question difficult to answer. As Condoleezza Rice acknowledged in her 1984 study of the Czech military: "The search for indicators of reliability continues, but there is, in the absence of conflict, no way to test the potency of the explanations explored."⁸²

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Most academics came to the same conclusions as the IC did on NSWP reliability. After surveying 59 former East European servicemen and conducting exhaustive research, A. Ross Johnson and Alexander Alexiev asserted: "This study thus provides empirical support for earlier studies concluding the USSR can rely on NSWP forces—but very conditionally."⁸³

Non-IC research also painted a picture of reliability that varied among countries and even among levels within individual country's militaries.⁸⁴ Scholarly assessments of NSWP reliability—again mirroring the IC—also evolved over time. These studies recognized that NSWP forces were increasingly more of a liability for the Kremlin than an asset. Daniel Nelson perhaps summed it up best, noting in 1984: “After almost thirty years, I think it is fair to regard the Warsaw Pact as more a symbol of Soviet weakness than of Soviet strength.... In short, there is little about which Moscow or East European rulers can be fully assured in the Warsaw Pact.”⁸⁵

The IC's judgments concerning NSWP reliability also have fared well in light of the evidence that has emerged from East Bloc archives since the fall of the Berlin Wall. These snapshots from Warsaw Pact files suggest Moscow's assessment of the reliability of her NSWP allies, on one hand, was even more pessimistic than that held in the West. Col. Oleg Penkovskiy's posthumously published memoir repeatedly noted Soviet concerns about East German forces. Penkovskiy, for instance, cited Gen. Kupin, the Commander of the Soviet Tank Army in Dresden and others stationed in East Germany as asserting that

*in case of a Berlin crisis or a war we would have to kill both West and East Germans. Everything is ready to fight against not only West Germany but East Germany as well, because the Germans have anti-Soviet sentiments.*⁸⁶

Similarly, a series of after-action reports on the July 1968 military maneuvers codenamed Sumava—a prelude to the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia—cast significant doubt on the reliability of other Warsaw Pact armies if their readiness were ever tested in a conflict with NATO.⁸⁷ Two Hungarian generals reported to their Politburo in July 1968:

*The experience of the entire exercise unfortunately confirmed that there are unacceptable shortcomings, irregularities, and inadequate provisions in the Warsaw Pact. All this clearly demonstrates that sooner or later these deficiencies will erode the dignity of the Soviet Union and undermine the Pact.*⁸⁸

And yet, much like the West, Moscow's confidence varied over time, with the ally, and even among elements of the NSWP militaries. For example, Soviet officers sent to Poland to assess the military's attitudes were satisfied that the country's officer corps—though not necessarily the troops—could be counted upon.⁸⁹ In another instance, a 1984 East German intelligence agency (Staatsicherheit [Stasi]) report—citing a NATO study it had acquired on Warsaw Pact reliability—did not contradict NATO's assessment that “reliability in general is high and that the internal structure of the Warsaw Pact forces is settled.”⁹⁰

On the other hand, formerly classified Soviet memoranda and exercise data indicate that Gen. Kulikov and the Soviet military were planning for the worst case scenario in Poland but were confident they could still achieve their military objectives in a war with NATO without the participation of key NSWP members. In an interview more than a decade after the Pact's collapse, Kulikov would assert that, from the military point of view, Solidarity's coming into power would have made no difference and Poland's departure from the alliance would have been “a mere inconvenience rather than a serious blow to Soviet military plans.” In a war with NATO, he maintained, “Moscow would have had enough advance warning to secure the passage of its troops through Poland without difficulty.”⁹¹

A 1982 Soviet war-game suggests Kulikov was not spouting propaganda. The exercise assumed that “an extremely unstable situation” had developed in Poland and Romania and that both countries wanted to leave the Warsaw Pact. A report on the exercise noted that “one of the goals of this exercise obviously consists in testing whether the operational-strategic tasks of the Unified Armed Forces can also be accomplished without the Polish Army and the forces of the Socialist Republic of Romania.”⁹²

IC assessments of NSWP reliability not only scored high in relevance when they were written but retain their relevance in the post 9/11 world.

The “So What”—Then ...

IC assessments of NSWP reliability not only scored high in relevance—a key measure of intelligence analytic tradecraft—when they were written but retain their relevance in the post 9/11 world.

IC analyses of NSWP reliability appeared to have played a role in informing and shaping US national security policies during much of the Cold War. IC and theater-level intelligence on NSWP reliability served to educate key decisionmakers at each level. Its focus and findings went beyond simply counting tanks and bombers. Reliability and vulnerability analyses highlighted the critical relationship between political, economic, social, and military factors at play behind the Iron Curtain and made clear that the Warsaw Pact’s military prowess was inherently linked to its success in the political realm.

Four decades of IC study made US decisionmakers aware that the Warsaw Pact was not “ten feet tall” and that there were multiple vulnerabilities that potentially could be exploited to deter conflict or aid in winning a war should it erupt. On the other hand, these same studies documented that Moscow had made progress in improving the military reliability and usefulness of its allies and that at least initially, key units would fight. This body of work—stretching from the 1950s to the 1980s—also made clear that not all East European economic, military, political, or social vulnerabilities were easily exploited.

The caveats the IC advanced with their analyses were as important as their findings. The IC recognized the difficulty of making these judgments and attempted to provide nuanced understanding of likely outcomes given a multitude of independent variables that changed over time and in response to developments on the ground.

IC assessments of NSWP reliability also appear to have influenced the way the United States prepared for a potential conflict and actually waged “cold war.”

IC assessments of NSWP reliability also appear to have influenced the way the United States prepared for a potential conflict and actually waged “cold war.” Intelligence assessments early in the Cold War supported efforts to encourage defections among East European satellite military forces and other psychological warfare initiatives.⁹³ Resistance potential and vulnerability studies likewise facilitated unconventional warfare planning, helping to refine the target focus for resistance elements to nurture behind the Iron Curtain during the “cold war” as well as those to employ in wartime.

NSWP reliability even factored into National Security Council discussions in 1959 on a nuclear policy for Eastern Europe. The State Department argued that an automatic decision to attack the bloc countries at the advent of war would “tie the hands of the United States in advance” and would result in war on these countries whether or not they actually engaged in hostilities against the United States on the side of the Soviet Union.

*Some of these Bloc countries might actually take the opportunity of general war to rebel against Soviet domination in the event of a war in which they are not attacked by the U.S.*⁹⁴

Similarly, formerly Top Secret national security documents reveal contingency planning in the aftermath of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution to support the Polish military—even employing American conventional air strikes—should the Soviet Union invade Poland.⁹⁵ Nearly three decades later, reliability and vulnerability assessments responded to US senior-level policy interest in and initiatives to exploit East European vulnerabilities in the wake of Poland’s Solidarity crisis and the 1983 Soviet-American war scare.⁹⁶ A declassified study of emigrés produced in 1986 reported:

Respondent testimony suggests that there is considerable unrealized potential for Western information sources, primarily radio broadcasting, to affect the outlook and reliability of NSWP soldiers, in peacetime as well as in crises. ⁹⁷

... and Now

Possible lessons learned from the IC’s four-decade long effort to assess the reliability of NSWP forces stand out in at least three areas.

Determining whether and how well Moscow’s allies would fight resembles many of the difficult intelligence problems confronting the IC today. Analysts then worked with limited data, fought for scarce HUMINT collection, and wrestled with source bias. Although national systems provided some insight into the weapons of NSWP forces and the disposition of Soviet units, they ultimately could never answer the most basic question about the fighting will and ability of East Europeans.

Much like many of today’s most difficult intelligence problems, assessing NSWP reliability defied simple answers. In many ways it was more a “mystery” than a “puzzle.”⁹⁸ Providing a penetrating analysis of the reliability issue required analysts to understand the intricate relationship between political, military, economic and social issues in the multiple NSWP countries. Integrated, holistic analysis was required to assess these complex links—the same approach needed for understanding and evaluating the sources and resiliency of terrorism and extremism in today’s world.

IC analysts might benefit from reviewing the variables and factors used to determine NSWP reliability.

The IC's efforts to overcome these Cold War analytic challenges also offer guidance for the Director of National Intelligence and other senior Intelligence Community leaders. The IC initially turned to and drew heavily on valuable social science expertise found only in academia and think tanks to assess vulnerabilities and resistance potential behind the Iron Curtain.

Later, the IC benefited not only from contracted studies but also from the rich academic debate that emerged in the 1980s on the subject. These exchanges helped better define the reliability issue and the methodological approaches employed, infusing needed analytic rigor. Recommendations on how to better exploit collection on the reliability question emerged from the work of these non-IC organizations as well.⁹⁹

Finally, given four years of war in Iraq and a strategy that relies increasingly on Baghdad's forces to conduct its day-to-day combat operations, IC analysts might benefit from reviewing the variables and factors used to determine NSWP reliability. Although many years and marked cultural differences separate the eras, using some of the key variables employed to assess NSWP reliability during the Cold War—unit morale and discipline, the nature of the conflict, the opponents faced, and battlefield success—may aid in developing a similar approach for predicting the performance of Iraqi Security Force units. For while American forces in Iraq may never have to worry that—unlike the Soviets—their allies might “shoot in the wrong direction,” they will have to continue to wrestle with the same question that Moscow did for 40 years—will they fight and how well?¹⁰⁰

Footnotes

1. US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, (Historical Series), Vol. XI (86th Congress, First Session-1959), (Washington, DC: GPO, 1982), 32.

2. One of the first and most prolific authors on the issue was A. Ross Johnson. He, Ivan Volgyes, and Dale Herspring wrote extensively on the subject. Among the most significant works in this body of literature were: A. Ross Johnson, "Has Eastern Europe Become A Liability to the Soviet Union? (II)—The Military Aspect," in Charles Gati, ed., *The International Politics of Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1976), 37–58; Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, "The Military as an Agent of Political Socialization in Eastern Europe: A Comparative Framework," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol.3, No.2. (February 1977), 249–70; Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, "Political Reliability in the East European Warsaw Pact Armies," *Armed Forces and Society* (Winter 1980), 270–96; Dale R. Herspring, "The Warsaw Pact at 25," *Problems of Communism*, September–October 1980, 1–15; A. Ross Johnson, "The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Military Policy in Eastern Europe," July 1981, RAND/P-6583; Ivan Volgyes, *The Political Reliability of the Warsaw Pact Armies: The Southern Tier* (Durham, NC: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1982); Thomas O. Cason, "The Warsaw Pact Today: The East European Military Forces," in Robert W. Clawson and Lawrence S. Kaplan, eds., *The Warsaw Pact: Political Purposes & Military Means* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1982), 137–62; Daniel N. Nelson, ed., *Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984); Jeffrey Simon, *Warsaw Pact Forces: Problems of Command and Control* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985); Daniel N. Nelson, *Alliance Behavior in the Warsaw Pact* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986); Douglas A. MacGregor, "Uncertain Allies? East European Forces in the Warsaw Pact," *Soviet Studies*, vol. XXXVIII, no.2, (April 1986), 227–47; Edward B. Atkeson, "The 'Fault Line' in the Warsaw Pact: Implications for NATO Strategy," *Orbis* (Spring 1986), 111–31; Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, "East European Military Reliability: An Emigré-Based Assessment," RAND/R-3480, October 1986; Dale R. Herspring, "The Soviet Union and the East European Militaries: The Diminishing Asset," in Robin F. Laird and Erik P. Hoffmann, eds. *Soviet Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1986), 549–69; and Daniel N. Nelson, *Alliance Behavior in the Warsaw Pact* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986).

3. Indicative of such scholarship are: Chris Pocock, *The U-2 Spyplane: Toward the Unknown: A New History of the Early Years* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2000); David Christopher Arnold, *Spying from Space: Constructing America's Satellite Command and Control Systems*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005); Norman Polmar, *Spyplane: The U-2 History Declassified* (Osceola, WI: MBI Publishing, 2001); David T. Lindgren, *Trust But Verify: Imagery Analysis in the Cold War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000; and Curtis Peebles, *Shadow Flights: America's Secret Air War Against the Soviet Union* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000).

4. Unless otherwise indicated, all NIEs referenced in this paper can be found online at www.foia.cia.gov "Reliability of the USSR's East European Allies," (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966; "Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies," (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983.

5. Among these estimates were: "Probable Developments in the European Satellites Through Mid-1956," (NIE 12-54), 24 August 1954; "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1957-62," (NIE 11-4-57), 12 November 1957; "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1958-63," (NIE 11-4-58), 23 December 1958; "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1961-66," (NIE 11-4-61), 24 August 1961; "Capabilities of the Soviet Theater Forces," (NIE 11-14-62), 5 December 1962; "Capabilities of the Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1963-69," (NIE 11-14-63), 8 January 1964; "Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1964-70," (NIE 11-14-64), 10 December 1964; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-65), 14 April 1965; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-66), 16 June 1966; "Warning of Soviet Intention to Attack," (NIE 11-10-66), 18 August 1966; "Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-66), 3 November 1966; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-67), 20 July 1967; "Main Issues in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-68), 19 September 1968; "Capabilities of the Warsaw Pact Against NATO," (SNIE 11-17-68), 8 October 1968; "Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-68), 12 December 1968; "Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-69), 4 December 1969; "The Warsaw Pact Threat to NATO," Interagency Working Group 5 for National Security Study Memorandum 84, Final Report of the Working Group, 1 May 1970; "Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO," (NIE 11-14-75), 4 September 1975; Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 18 Studies in Intelligence Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007) "The Balance of Forces in Central Europe," (SR 77-10100), Intelligence Assessment, 1 August 1977; "Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities for Going to War in Europe: Implications," (NIE 4-1-78), 10 April 1978; "Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO," (NIE 11-14-79), 31 January 1979; "The Development of Soviet Military Power: Trends Since 1965 and Prospects for the 1980s," (An Intelligence Assessment), 1 April 1981; "Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO," (NIE 11-14-81), 7 July 1981; "Soviet Ground Forces Trends," (SOV 84-10177), CIA-DIA-Army Assessment, 1 October 1984; "Soviet Strategy and Capabilities for Multi-theater War," (NIE 11-19-85/D), 1 June 1985; "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces, 1985-2000," (NIE 11-14-85), 1 September 1985; "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces and Doctrine Through the 1990s," (NIE 11-14-89), 1 February 1989.

6. Examples include: "Stability of the Soviet Satellite Structure," (NIE 12-57), 19 February 1957; "Political Stability in the European Satellites," (NIE 12-59), 11 August 1959; "The Outlook in Eastern Europe," 9 November 1961; "Eastern Europe and the Warsaw Pact," (NIE 12-65), 26 August 1965; "The Soviet Approach to Force Reductions in Europe," (NIE 11/20-73), 11 January 1973; "Implications of a Soviet Invasion of Poland," (PA 81-10297, 24 July 1981; "Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena," (NIE 11-4-78), 7 July 1981; "Poland's Prospects over the next 12 to 18 Months," 25 March 1982; "Instability and Change in Soviet-Dominated Eastern Europe," 1 December 1982; "The Soviet Challenge to US Security Interests," (NIE 11/4-82), 10 August 1982; and "The Direction of Change in the Warsaw Pact," (NIC M 90-10002), 1 April 1990.

7. Various vulnerability and resistance potential studies examined the reliability of East European militaries, including: "Resistance Factors and Special Forces Areas Hungary," Project NR: 9570, March 1956, US Army Military History Institute (USAMHI); "Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the Sino-Soviet Bloc," (NIE 10-58), 25 April 1958; "Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the USSR and Eastern Europe," (NIE 11-6-66), 27 January 1966; and a series of Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) vulnerability studies completed during the 1980s: DIA, "Bulgarian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-16-85, November 1985; DIA, "Romanian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-0218-85-SI, March 1985; DIA, "Hungarian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-18-87-SI, May 1987; and DIA, "Polish Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-0217-85-SI, July 1985.

8. See "USAREUR Intelligence Estimate-1965"; "USAREUR Intelligence Estimate-1962"; "USAREUR Intelligence Estimate-1961"; "USAREUR Intelligence Estimate-1960"; "Special Intelligence Estimate Number 1-59: Soviet/Satellite Military Courses of Action in Europe Through 1960," 1 February 1959; Periodic Intelligence Report 3-58, 1 October 1958; and Periodic Intelligence Report 1-59, 1 April 1959. These reports can be found online at <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/index.cfm> Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP) under "NATO Military Planning Collection." The Parallel History Project posts declassified materials from US, NATO, and former Soviet Bloc archives. Also see USAREUR, "Poland, A Reliability Study," (U), April 1982, cited in Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, "East European Military Reliability: An Emigré-Based Assessment (Annex)," Rand, R-3480/1, October 1986, 4, found at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/>
9. "Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Reliability, Northern Tier," APO New York: Headquarters, US Army, Europe and Seventh Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff Intelligence, 1972, USAMHI.
10. USAF sponsored RAND studies included: Thomas W. Wolfe, "The Evolving Nature of the Warsaw Pact," Memorandum RM-4835-PR, December 1965; and J.F. Brown, "Relations Between the Soviet Union and Its Eastern European Allies: A Survey," R-1742-PR, November 1975, A Report Prepared for United States Air Force Project Rand. A brief reference to the "Achilles" program can be found in G. Murphy Donovan's "Soviet Military Vulnerabilities," *Studies in Intelligence* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 22.
11. "Soviet Attack Now Doubted by Smith," *New York Times*, 22 October 1953, 17:1.
12. "Capabilities of the Warsaw Pact Against NATO," (SNIE 11-17-68), 8 October 1968, 3-4. See also: "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1957-1962," (NIE 11-4-57), 12 November 1957, 42; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-65), 14 April 1965, 12; "Reliability of the USSR's East European Allies," (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966, 10; "Capabilities of the Warsaw Pact Against NATO," (SNIE 11-17-68), 8 October 1968, 3-4; "Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-69), 4 December 1969, 27; "The Warsaw Pact Threat to NATO," 1 May 1970, 59; "The Balance of Forces in Central Europe," (SR 77-10100), 1 August 1977, 6; "Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities for Going to War in Europe: Implications," (NIE 4-1-78), 10 April 1978, 1, 16-17; "The Development of Soviet Military Power: Trends Since 1965 and ProsIntelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 19 *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007) pects for the 1980s," (An Intelligence Assessment), 1 April 1981, 20; "Moscow's Polish Problem: An Intelligence Assessment," 1 June 1981, 1; "Implications of a Soviet Invasion of Poland" (PA 81-10297), 24 July 1981, 4-5.
13. For examples, see: "Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the Sino-Soviet Bloc," (NIE 10-58) 25 April 1958 and "Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the USSR and Eastern Europe," (11-6-66), 27 January 1966.
14. Intelligence and academic analyses increasingly focused on the rising East European nationalism in the mid-1960s. See "Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1964-1970," (NIE 11-14-64), 10 December 1964, 33; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-66), 16 June 1966, 3, 7-8; and "Reliability of the USSR's East European Allies," (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966, 4, and Thomas W. Wolfe, "The Evolving Nature of the Warsaw Pact," Memorandum RM-4835-PR, December 1965, The Rand Corporation, and J.F. Brown, "Relations Between the Soviet Union and Its Eastern European Allies: A Survey," R-1742-PR, November 1975, A Report Prepared for United States Air Force Project Rand.
15. "Warning of Soviet Intention to Attack," (NIE 11-10-66), 18 August 1966, 15.

16. For a discussions of the policy changes initiated by Khrushchev and the Kremlin in the 1960s that significantly affected Soviet general purpose forces and the Warsaw Pact, see Thomas W. Wolfe, "The Evolving Nature of the Warsaw Pact," Memorandum RM-4835-PR, December 1965, The Rand Corporation; Robin Alison Remington, "The Warsaw Treaty Organization's Third Decade: Systemic Transformation," in Nelson, 49-51; Jeffrey Simon, Warsaw Pact Forces: Problems of Command and Control, 13-24; Bradley R. Gitz, Armed Forces and Political Power in Eastern Europe: The Soviet/Communist Control System (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 18-30; A. Ross Johnson, "The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Military Policy in Eastern Europe," July 1981, RAND/P-6583, 6-17; Dale R. Herspring, "The Warsaw Pact at 25," Problems of Communism, September- October 1980: 1-15. Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., A Cardboard Castle: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991 (New York: Central European University Press, 2005). IC analysis of this issue is contained in "Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1964-1970," (NIE 11-14-64), 10 December 1964, 3-4, 32; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-66), 16 June 1966, 2; "Reliability of the USSR's East European Allies," (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966, 4-6; "Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-66), 3 November 1966, 1; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-67), 20 July 1967, 3, 10; "Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-68), 12 December 1968, 1; and "The Development of Soviet Military Power: Trends Since 1965 and Prospects for the 1980s," (An Intelligence Assessment), 1 April 1981, 19-21.

17. "Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies," (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983, 2.

18. See: "Probable Developments in the European Satellites Through Mid 1956" (NIE 12-54), 24 August 1956; "The Outlook in Eastern Europe," 9 November 1961, 2-3; "Capabilities of the Soviet Theater Forces," (NIE 11-14-62), 5 December 1962, 23; "Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1964-1970," (NIE 11-14-64), 10 December 1964, 32; "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-65), 14 April 1965, 3; "Eastern Europe and the Warsaw Pact," (NIE 12-65), 26 August 1965, 5; "Reliability of the USSR's East European Allies," (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966; "Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces," (NIE 11-14-69), 4 December 1969, 27; "Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO," (NIE 11-14-75), 4 September 1975, 33; "Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities for Going to War in Europe: Implications," 4/10/1978, 4; "Implications of a Soviet Invasion of Poland" (PA 81-10297), 24 July 1981, 5; "Poland's Prospects Over the Next 12 to 18 Months," 25 March 1982, 3-4; and "Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies," (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983.

19. The academic community approached the issue with more structure and depth. Dale Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, for example, clearly delineated that reliability should be considered in four different contexts: internal-offensive, internal defensive, external-defensive, and external-offensive. Their joint research also was slightly different, with greater emphasis placed on issues such as “the political socialization of the armed forces” and “their normative commitment” to their respective regimes. See Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, “Political Reliability in the East European Warsaw Pact Armies,” *Armed Forces and Society* (Winter 1980): 270–96. Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, “The Military as an Agent of Political Socialization in Eastern Europe: A Comparative Framework,” *Armed Forces and Society* 3, No.2. (February 1977): 249–70. Daniel N. Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 20 *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts–December 2007) Nelson in “The Measurement of East European WTO ‘Reliability’” in Nelson, *Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability* likewise attacked the methodological and definitional issues surrounding NSWP reliability. For Nelson, the key question was “one of linkages between military performance on the battlefield” with what he called “mobilization potential.” Nelson saw “mobilization potential as the principal limitation on force availability, and thus the key determinant of reliability.” Nelson subsequently introduces and discusses six indicators to ascertain mobilization potential: scenario of hostility; duration of involvement in hostile action; systemic integration; domestic socioeconomic conditions; domestic political conditions; and military preparedness. For other works that address many of these factors see: Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, “East European Military Reliability: An Emigré-Based Assessment,” RAND/R-3480, October 1986, and Volgyes, *The Political Reliability of the Warsaw Pact Armies: The Southern Tier*, 3–11. Academic research on the issue of NSWP reliability also was evident at the war colleges. See Wing Commander Peter M. Papworth, RAF, “The Integrity of the Warsaw Pact,” *Air University Review* (March–April 1977); Roger E. Kanet, “East Europe and the Warsaw Treaty Organization: The Question of Reliability” (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute US Army War College, 1978).

20. “The Outlook in Eastern Europe,” (NIE 12–61), 9 November 1961, 7; “Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the USSR and Eastern Europe,” (NIE 11-6-66), 27 January 1966, 7; “Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO,” (NIE 11-14-75), 4 September 1975, 33; “Military Reliability of the Soviet Union’s Warsaw Pact Allies,” (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983, 1; Paul Kecskemeti, “The Military Reliability of the Hungarian Armed Forces,” RAND, RM-2204, 1958, 20 USAMHI.

21. For insight into the USMLM mission and collection efforts during the early Cold War, see John A. Fahey, *Licensed to Spy: With the Top Secret Military Liaison Mission in East Germany* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 183–92. Covering the mission later in the Cold War is James R. Holbrook, *Potsdam Mission: Memoir of a U.S. Army Intelligence Officer in Communist East Germany* (Cork Hill Press, 2005).

22. Declassified NIEs do not contain reference, or source, citations. The description of sources upon which they were drafted is based on my analysis of sources used in declassified vulnerability studies such as “Resistance Factors and Special Forces Areas Rumania,” Project NR: A-1570, 1958, and “Resistance Factors and Special Forces Areas Bulgaria,” Project NR A-394, USAMHI. In these studies, multiple CIA HUMINT Intelligence Information Reports (IIR) are referenced, with the ultimate source of information identified as local newspapers, communist party newspapers, refugees, defectors, and escapees, some whom had served in the armed forces or border guards. A few “confidential” sources are also included. Other sources identified included letters received from relatives behind the Iron Curtain and reports from travelers and correspondents. US embassy and defense attaché reporting, military intelligence (MI) unit products, foreign intelligence service reporting, and translated information from Radio Free Europe and the FBIS also appear. Collection opportunities occasionally increased in the aftermath of Eastern Europe’s political unrest. In 1957, Paul Kecskemeti, was able to administer questionnaires to 75 former Hungarian officers and enlisted men, gathering key data on their attitudes on reliability. See Kecskemeti, “The Military Reliability of the Hungarian Armed Forces,” RAND, RM-2204, 1958, 1–2, 20, 123. Yet the IC also did not always make the best use of the limited sources they had: A 1986 declassified assessment noted: “Emigré and defector debriefings conducted in U.S. government (USG) channels are generally focused on ‘harder’ issues rather than ‘softer’ issues like reliability. Thus more attention to some ‘soft’ factors in official debriefings may be warranted.” See Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, “East European Military Reliability: An Emigré-Based Assessment (Annex),” Rand, R-3480/1, October 1986, 1.

23. Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965) and Benjamin Weiser, *A Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, and the Price He Paid to Save His Country* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

24. “Military Reliability of the Soviet Union’s Warsaw Pact Allies,” (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983, 1.

25. During the 1950s, the military and intelligence communities drew heavily on work done at MIT, Georgetown, Indiana, and RAND. Examples of such research include MIT’s Center for International Studies (CENIS), “The Vulnerability of the Soviet Union and its European Satellites to Political Warfare,” Vols I-V, July 1952, CD 385 Political Warfare 1952, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Record Group (RG) 330, Box 367, National Archives Washington, DC (NAWDC); Georgetown University, Project 9570: “Hungary Resistance Activities and Potentials,” Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 21 Studies in Intelligence Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007) March 1956, RG 319, Box 240, NAWDC. Project 9570 also references a Georgetown study entitled “Resistance Potential: Hungary” dated July 1953; Indiana University, “Psychological Warfare Vulnerabilities of Soviet Satellite States,” referenced in “Terminal History of ARCS,” 1 July–31 December 1953, 31 December 1953, Vol. I, K318.8 53/07/01-53/12/31. USAF Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL; Paul Kecskemeti, “The Military Reliability of the Hungarian Armed Forces,” RAND, RM-2204, 1958, USAMHI. Not all within the Intelligence Community viewed these academic and think tank efforts as particularly valuable. Some analysts felt that academics and contractors “took our data and sold it back to us” with little or no value added.

26. For a discussion of the decreased emphasis on psychological warfare in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution, see James D. Marchio, "Rhetoric and Reality: The Eisenhower Administration and Unrest in Eastern Europe, 1953-1959," Ph.D. Dissertation, American University, 1990, 407-67. It is probably not mere coincidence that the Office of the Secretary of Defense, not any of the services, asked for the 1966 SNIE on the "Reliability of the USSR's East European Allies," (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966. Also of note, General John W. Vessey, Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 1982-1985, was a strong advocate of the DIA vulnerability studies at this time. Although not from the special operations community, General Vessey's service in Laos in 1972 to coordinate all US military operations there probably gave him a good appreciation of resistance forces and the challenges they faced.
27. Weekly Summary, 23 August 1946, in Woodrow J. Kuhns, ed. *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years*. (Washington, DC: CIA, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1997), 74.
28. "Soviet Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action Through Mid-1959," (NIE 11-4-54), 14 September 1954 in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952-1954, Vol. VIII Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1988), 1,250.
29. John Scott wrote: "During the summer of 1954...I found senior Western military leaders extremely worried about the satellite armed forces, which a year or so earlier they had happily written off as riddled with defection and completely unreliable." John Scott, *Political Warfare: A Guide to Competitive Coexistence* (New York: The John Day Company, 1955), 63; Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, told a congressional committee that "in the past three to four years there has been very little numerical increase in the Soviet strength." But he said there had been a "very material increase in the effectiveness of Soviet forces." He testified that the Russians also had put a "great deal of effort" into building up armed forces in their satellite countries with "a mutual security program of their own." He said these troops were not "first class" now but would be in a few years. Gen. Gruenther predicted there would be no repetition of the 1953 anti-Communist riots in East Berlin because the Russian had "learned their lesson" and now had the situation "under control." The Russians, he said, were "concentrating repeatedly" on the indoctrination and disciplining of young Germans. "Gruenther Warns of Russian Power," *New York Times*, 12 July 1954, 3:5.
30. "Probable Developments in the European Satellites Through Mid-1956," (NIE 12-54), 24 August 1954, 2.
31. Reports that other East European military forces proved unreliable during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution were investigated by the IC and, in at least one case, found to be inaccurate: "Expectations that the Rumanian Army might prove as disloyal to the Communist cause as the Hungarian Army led some Western newspapers in October 1956 to declare, on the testimony of 'very reliable' sources inside Rumania, that many units of the Rumanian armed forces had been temporarily disarmed during the height of the fighting in Hungary. These reports were subsequently investigated by Western military attachés and found to be groundless. The attachés were unable to confirm or disprove other newspaper reports in October 1956 claiming that while the Rumanian Army retained its arms, it was temporarily deprived of ammunition." "Resistance Factors and Special Forces Areas Rumania," Project NR: A-1570, 1958, 34, USAMHI.
32. "Stability of the Soviet Satellite Structure," (NIE 12-57), 19 February 1957, 9.

33. Ibid.

34. USAREUR, Special Intelligence Estimate Number 1-59: Soviet/Satellite Military Courses of Action in Europe Through 1960, 1 February 1959, 9–10.

35. See “Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1964–1970,” (NIE 11-14-64), 10 December 1964, 3–4, 32; and “Soviet and East European General Purpose Forces,” (NIE 11-14-68), 12 Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 22 Studies in Intelligence Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007) December 1968, 1. Also see CIA Intelligence Study: “Warsaw Pact Military Strategy: A Compromise in Soviet Strategic Thinking,” 7 June 1965. This superb study, declassified and released in June 2007 as part of the CAESAR-POLO-ESAU papers, argues that “the internal Soviet debate on the nature of a war in Europe has had a significant effect on the development of the missions and force structure of the East European armies.” It provides an extended and nuanced discussion of Soviet debate over the nature of conflict in the nuclear age, driven in part by Nikita Khrushchev’s strategic outlook and desire to reduce conventional forces. Interestingly, the study argues that “there are signs that competing interests within the Soviet Union—rather than the Western ‘threat’ exclusively—were responsible for the assignment of an offensive mission to the East European forces.” (i)

36. See Wolfe, “The Evolving Nature of the Warsaw Pact,” 7–28; Herspring, “The Warsaw Pact at 25,” 2,4, 7; John M. Caravelli, “Soviet and Joint Warsaw Pact Exercises: Functions and Utility,” *Armed Forces and Society* 9, No.3 (Spring 1983), 393–426; and “The Development of Soviet Military Power: Trends Since 1965 and Prospects for the 1980s,” (An Intelligence Assessment), 1 April 1981, 19–21.

37. “Capabilities of Soviet General Purpose Forces, 1964–1970,” (NIE 11-14-64), 10 December 1964, 3.

38. “Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy,” (NIE 11-4-65), 14 April 1965, 12.

39. “Reliability of the USSR’s East European Allies,” (SNIE 11-15-66), 4 August 1966, 1.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid, 6.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid, 2.

45. The IC was still asserting 12 months before Soviet tanks and their NSWP allies rolled into Czechoslovakia that “the Warsaw Pact has served and will probably continue to serve as a convenient framework within which the USSR can work to limit tendencies to independence among its East European allies.” See “Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy,” (NIE 11-4-67), 20 July 1967, 11.

46. “Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Reliability, Northern Tier,” 1972, 22, USAMHI; and “USAREUR Intelligence Estimate 1961,” 1 January 1961, 92 at <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/index.cfm>.

47. "Capabilities of the Warsaw Pact Against NATO," (SNIE 11-17-68), 8 October 1968, 5. Also see "Main Issues in Soviet Military Policy," (NIE 11-4-68), 19 September 1968, for a discussion of some of the potential implications for the Soviet military and Warsaw Pact of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.
48. "The Warsaw Pact Threat to NATO," Interagency Working Group 5 for National Security Study Memorandum 84, Final Report of the Working Group, 1 May 1970, 7.
49. Ibid., 58.
50. CIA, Intelligence Report: "The Polish Question: East Germany," July 1971, iii.
51. Ibid., 6-8, ii.
52. "Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact Reliability, Northern Tier," 14.
53. Ibid, 20, 25.
54. "Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO," (NIE 11-14-75), 4 September 1975; A. Ross Johnson, in his chapter "Has Eastern Europe Become A Liability to the Soviet Union? (II)—The Military Aspect," concluded: "For the present, far from having become a military liability to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe is a military asset that has appreciated in recent years and shows every sign of continuing to increase in value." in Charles Gati, ed., *The International Politics of Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger, 1976), 56.
55. "Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO," (NIE 11-14-75), 4 September 1975, 33. Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 23 Studies in Intelligence Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007)
56. Ibid., 33.
57. Ibid., 32-33. The estimate describes at length some of these key contributions, such as the fact that "NSWP forces permit the achievement of advantageous force ratios without reinforcement from the USSR. In addition, Polish forces in the north and Czech forces in the south allow for concentrations of Soviet forces in the critical center. Primary logistics routes run through Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia and the East Europeans commit heavy resources to their protection." It went on to note that "in Central Europe the East Europeans provided over half of the combat divisions and made important contributions in the air defense and logistics realms."
58. "Probable Soviet Reactions to a Crisis in Poland," (RP 77-10141CX), 1 June 1977, ii & 13 at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/>.
59. For example, in June 1981 an IC assessment concluded: "The Soviets probably now doubt they can count on Polish military cooperation. Therefore, in the event they decide to resolve the situation by military force, they will try to confront the Poles with such overwhelming strength that resistance would be futile. To project an image of unity on the part of the Warsaw Pact in rejecting Polish revisionism, the Soviets would also want other Pact armed forces to participate in the intervention" in "Moscow's Polish Problem: An Intelligence Assessment," 1 June 1981, 6.
60. "The Balance of Forces in Central Europe," (SR 77-10100), 1 August 1977, 6.

61. "Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities for Going to War in Europe: Implications," (NIE 4-1-78), 10 April 1978, 17.
62. "The Balance of Forces in Central Europe," (SR 77-10100), 1 August 1977, 6.
63. "Implications of a Soviet Invasion of Poland," (PA 81-10297), 24 July 1981, 4-5.
64. Ibid. See also "The Development of Soviet Military Power: Trends Since 1965 and Prospects for the 1980s," (An Intelligence Assessment), 1 April 1981, 20. This assessment argues: "Since the Soviets altered their concept for war in Europe (in the mid-to-late 1960s), Warsaw Pact planning for war against NATO has assigned an important role to Polish forces....Polish forces are also assigned the critical tasks of operating and safeguarding the lines of communication from the USSR through Poland. Soviet military planners must have reservations about the reliability of Polish forces in wartime, and they probably have contingency plans that exclude them or assign them less critical tasks. Nevertheless, it would be difficult for Soviet units to replace the Poles completely without endangering vital wartime objectives."
65. "Poland's Prospects Over the Next 12 to 18 Months," SNIE, 25 March 1982, 3.
66. Ibid, 3-4.
67. Ibid.
68. "Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies," (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983.
69. Ibid, 10. Others saw the historical record as providing evidence of Soviet and East European success. Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, "The Military as an Agent of Political Socialization in Eastern Europe: A Comparative Framework," *Armed Forces and Society* 3, No.2 (February 1977), 267.
70. "Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies," (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983, 12.
71. Ibid., 22.
72. Ibid., 3.
73. Ibid, 31.
74. Ibid, 6.

75. A series of vulnerability studies were initiated by Secretary of Defense tasking after the 1983 NIE. Among these were: DIA, "Bulgarian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-16-85, November 1985; DIA, "Romanian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-0218-85-SI, March 1985; DIA, "Hungarian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-18-87-SI, May 1987; and DIA, "Polish Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-0217-85-SI, July 1985. I was the primary drafter of the Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Romanian studies. I also completed a project as part of the Director of Central Intelligence's Exceptional Analyst Program entitled: "Unrest Behind the Iron Curtain, 1945-1981: Causes and Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 24 Studies in Intelligence Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007) Consequences for U.S. Exploitation Efforts," June 1987, DIA Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Case #0669-99. In addition, Ivan Volgyes notes in the Preface to *The Political Reliability of the Warsaw Pact Armies: The Southern Tier* that "this study was originally prepared under contract for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation and for the Office of Net Assessment of the Department of Defense during January-August 1981."

76. "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces," 1985-2000 (NIE 11-14-85), 1 September 1985,

15. See also Jeffrey Simon, *Warsaw Pact Forces: Problems of Command and Control*, 184-202.

77. Ibid. See also "Soviet Ground Forces Trends," (SOV 84-10177), 1 October 1984 for more on change in Soviet plans. For success of Soviet measures to improve reliability, see Douglas A. MacGregor, "Uncertain Allies? East European Forces in the Warsaw Pact," *Soviet Studies* XXXVIII, no.2, (April 1986), 227-47. Even MacGregor, however, concludes that "despite these successes, unqualified reliance on East European military formations to conduct sustained combat operations against the West would still be incautious." (243). Although not focused on the issue of external reliability, Catalin Razvan Cretu's, "The Behavior of East European Armed Forces During the Crises of the Communist Order, 1955-1989," Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2002, argues that these militaries were largely reliable in internal crises due to their desire to insure their institutional survival.

78. "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces," 1985-2000 (NIE 11-14-85), 1 September 1985, 6.

79. Ibid.

80. "Trends and Developments in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces and Doctrine Through the 1990s," (NIE 11-14-89), 1 February 1989, 13.

81. "The Direction of Change in the Warsaw Pact," (NIC M 90-10002), 1 April 1990, iii.

82. Condoleezza Rice, "Warsaw Pact Reliability: The Czechoslovak People's Army," in Nelson, 125; see also Major Edgar O'Ballance, "Poland: Keystone or Weakest Link?" *Military Review*, April 1963, 59.

83. Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, "East European Military Reliability: An Emigré-Based Assessment," RAND/R-3480, October 1986. The open source literature likewise mirrored the IC's finding that the length and nature of the conflict would greatly affect NSWP reliability. Daniel Nelson concluded: "All things being equal, the longer militaries of Eastern Europe are required to perform, the more one should doubt the full application of their available forces." *Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability*, 10.

84. Gordon Drake's "Reliability of the East German Armed Forces," for example, concluded: "On balance it would seem that the SED's Herculean efforts at ensuring the political and ideological reliability of its officers field grade and above have succeeded....Reliability of the junior officers is much more problematic." Joint Military Intelligence College (JMIC) Seminar Paper, 8 June 1987, Defense Intelligence Agency Library, Washington, D.C., 32. For additional studies on how reliability varied among NSWP nations and even within individual militaries see Ivan Volgyes, "Bulgaria," 99–124; Condolezza Rice, "Warsaw Pact Reliability: Czechoslovak People's Army," 125–42; Henry Krisch, "German Democratic Republic," 143–83; Ivan Volgyes, "Hungary," 184–224; and Jan B. de Weydenthal, "Martial Law and the Reliability of the Polish Military," 225–63 in Nelson, *Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability*; and Volgyes, *The Political Reliability of the Warsaw Pact Armies: The Southern Tier*.

85. Nelson, 267.

86. Penkovsky, 203, 344–45; Holbrook also cites strong anti-Soviet sentiment among the East German populace based on his interaction during his United States Military Liaison Military tour. See pages 111, 114, and 176. In "New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian Crises," Mark Kramer concludes in discussing the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution: "The remains of the Hungarian army were regarded by Soviet commanders (and Kadar) as politically and militarily unreliable." (377 & 384) This was based on the testimony of former national defense minister Lajos Czinege in *Magyar Orszaggyules, A Honvedelmi Bizottsag 1989 Oktoberi ulesszakan letrhozott visgalobizottsaf 1989 december 11-i, 1990 januar 3-i, 1990 januar 15-i, 1990 februar 6-1 ulese jegyzokonyvenek nyilt reszlete*, 5 vols. (1994), Vol 1, 261, in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issues 8–9, Winter 1996/1997. Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 25 Studies in Intelligence Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007)*

87. Mastny and Byrne, *A Cardboard Castle: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955–1991*, 36, 286–94.

88. *Ibid*, 291. This excerpt shows that the Soviets at the time believed they could not rely on the Czechoslovaks, the Romanians or the Albanians when the time came to act. (294)

89. *Ibid*, 51–2; and Kuklinski wrote: "In conclusion, with bitterness, I must report that as much as a small group of generals and officers of the Polish Armed Forces privy to the planning of the intervention are dispirited and crushed, there hasn't even been thought of military opposition by Polish forces to the military action of the Warsaw Pact. There are even statements that the very presence of such a large force on Polish territory can lead to increased calm." Weiser, *A Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, and the Price He Paid to Save His Country*, 220–21. Referring to martial law, Kuklinski believed Polish troops would resist: "In the final analysis, nevertheless, the troops will not permit a massacre of the nation. They will choose death rather than to live in disgrace on their knees...It would seem that both the Soviet leadership and the traitors from the Polish United Workers Party...are aware of this. And the fact that, in the planned intervention, it is proposed to deploy five armies, which will be commanded by Russians, Czechs, and Germans, with the Poles being excluded, testifies to this emphatically." Weiser, 227.

90. Stasi document is available at the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP) at <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic.cfm?lng=en&id=17254&navinfo=15296>

91. Quoted in Mastny & Byrne, 53.

92. Ibid, 463. To the IC's credit, it essentially had reached this conclusion as well. A 1981 NIE observed: "Soviet military planners must have reservations about the reliability of Polish forces in wartime, and they probably have contingency plans that exclude them or assign them less critical tasks." "The Development of Soviet Military Power: Trends Since 1965 and Prospects for the 1980s," (An Intelligence Assessment), 1 April 198, 20.

93. "NSC 86/1: United States Policy on Soviet and Satellite Defectors," 19 April 1951, Presidential Security File, Subject File, NSC Reports-2, Box 195, Subject File- NSC Policies of the Government, Vol. IV, 1951, Policies of the Government of the US Relating to National Security, Harry S. Truman Library. The US Air Force's Project 'Gretna Green' provided assessments of psychological warfare vulnerabilities on all East European satellites as well as ways to encourage defections. See 'Terminal History of ARCS,' 1 July-31 December 1953, 31 December 1953, Vol. I, K318.8 53/07/01-53/12/31. USAF Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. For a broader discussion of USAF efforts to foster dissent in the Soviet and Bloc militaries, see James D. Marchio, "Casualties of the Cold War: 'Operation Think' and the Air Resupply Communications Service," *Air Power History* 39, No.1 (Winter 1992), 19-23.

94. President Eisenhower echoed this sentiment suggesting that "in his view the countries of the Sino-Soviet Bloc other than Communist China actually constituted a weakness for the U.S.S.R. They would like nothing better than to have the opportunity to revolt against the U.S.S.R. if an opportunity were provided by the outbreak of general war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R." "NSC Discussion of NSC 5904," 5 March 1959, Summary, 398th Meeting of NSC, Eisenhower, DD: Papers as President of the US, 1953-61, Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box 11, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, 6-10. It also is significant that NIE 10-58, "Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the Sino-Soviet Bloc," contains an explicit discussion of the anticipated reaction in each NSWP country to the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

95. See JCS 2066/49 US Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe (NSC 5811) 20 May 1958 and JCS 2066/45 US Policy Towards Poland (NSC 5808/1) 18 April 1958, Collection— JCS Papers, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C; and James Marchio, "Risking General War in Pursuit of Limited Objectives: U.S. Military Contingency Planning for Poland in the Wake of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising," *Journal of Military History* 66, No.3 (July 2002), 783-812.

96. "Military Reliability of the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact Allies," (NIE 12/11-83), 28 June 1983; DIA, "Bulgarian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-16-85, November 1985; DIA, "Romanian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-0218-85-SI, March 1985; DIA, "Hungarian Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-18-87-SI, May 1987; and DIA, "Polish Vulnerability Study," DDB-2260-0217-85-SI, July 1985; and "East European Military Reliability—An Emigré-Based Assessment," 1 October 1986.

97. "East European Military Reliability—An Emigré-Based Assessment," 1 October 1986, 7. *Intelligence Estimates of the Warsaw Pact 26 Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 51, No. 4 (Extracts-December 2007)

98. Malcolm Gladwell, "Open Secrets: Enron, Intelligence, and the Perils of Too Much Information," *The New Yorker*, 8 January 2007.

99. Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, "East European Military Reliability: An Emigré-Based Assessment" (Annex), Rand, R-3480/1, 1 October 1986, 1.

100. Eugene Hinterhoff, "The Warsaw Pact," *Military Review* (June 1962), 89–94, Translated and digested from the original, published in *WEHR UND WIRTSCHAFT* (Federal Republic of Germany), December 1961 under the title "Die Manover der Warschu-Packt Staaten," 94.

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