ASPECTS OF NATO

Defence policy
From its inception the defence policy of the Alliance has been essentially deterrent in nature. It has been designed to persuade any potential aggressor that war will not pay. The concept of deterrence has successfully kept the peace in Europe for 20 years and is still valid today. However, if the basic defence concept has remained the same, methods and means have changed with the times.

From the start NATO's strategy was based on holding the enemy as far forward as possible: this led to the adoption of a concept of forward defence under which the territory and populations of Western Europe would be protected against invasion and no major withdrawals would be acceptable.

Early Problems.

The most urgent task facing the Alliance immediately after the decision to set up integrated commands at the beginning of 1951 was that of building in the shortest possible time well equipped and well trained forces capable of defending NATO territory against aggression. In that year the United States agreed to place its units in Germany under SACEUR's command. France, the United Kingdom
and other members followed suit. When General Eisenhower left in May 1952, the military targets (the Lisbon Force Goals) proposed by the Temporary Council Committee for the period up to 1954 had been agreed; machinery for co-ordinating the military efforts of member countries had been set up; the command structure had been considerably improved; the forces of Greece and Turkey had been incorporated into Allied Command Europe; the strategic concept had been further developed; and the effectiveness of the armed forces had increased.

By 1956, when General Norstad succeeded General Gruenther as SACEUR, further substantial progress had been made. In particular, with the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany, it had become possible to plan for the forward defence of Europe much closer to the Iron Curtain.

**Strategy and Technology.**

It had speedily become apparent that the goals for conventional forces established at the 1952 Lisbon meeting were unrealistically high. At the same time technological advances both in the West and in the Soviet bloc had changed the premises on which the strategy had been based. In particular Russia's newly acquired capacity to deliver a nuclear strike made a reappraisal of Western defence policy imperative. A new strategic concept was evolved, based largely on the assumption that it would be necessary to use nuclear weapons at the outset in response to any aggression that was not of a minor character. SACEUR was requested by the North Atlantic Council to base his forward planning on the assumption that a large variety of nuclear weapons would gradually be introduced into the
forces both of the NATO countries and of the Soviet bloc, and to take account of a levelling off of the defence expenditures in member countries.

These developments were dramatised by the launching of the first Russian sputnik. The Heads of Governments of the NATO countries meeting shortly thereafter in Paris (December 1957) decided that NATO's defensive strength should take account of recent developments in weapons and techniques; that to this end it was necessary to establish stocks of nuclear warheads readily available for the defence of the Alliance in case of need; and that intermediate range ballistic missiles should be put at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. The deployment of the stocks of nuclear warheads, and arrangements for their use, were to be decided in agreement with the countries directly concerned.

Another important step was taken in 1960 when the first elements of a Mobile Force were constituted. Various member countries assigned to SACEUR well-equipped land and air units immediately available for despatch to any threatened area, particularly on the flanks of Europe. By its ability rapidly to establish a NATO presence in potentially vulnerable areas, this multinational force enormously increases the odds against an enemy who might otherwise be tempted to launch a limited-objective aggression against purely national defending forces in the hope of facing the Alliance with a fait accompli situation. This force has held numerous exercises in both the northern and southern flank areas of the European Command. A similar naval element known as the Standing Naval Force Atlantic was established under SACLANT in December 1967.

When Ministers met in Oslo in May 1961, they considered the time had come to take stock once more of
the longer term problems of NATO defence. Since that date the Council (or, since November 1966, the Defence Planning Committee) has had the broader problems of NATO defence policy under continuous review.

**Nuclear Problems.**

The importance of nuclear weapons for NATO's defence planning and the increasing stockpile of such weapons in Europe have kept nuclear problems in the forefront of Ministerial consideration. At the Ministerial meeting at Athens in May 1962, it was decided to institute procedures for the exchange of information among all members of the Alliance concerning the role of nuclear weapons in NATO's defence.

At the same time the 'Athens guidelines' were adopted, which set out certain broad assumptions regarding the circumstances in which NATO might be forced to have recourse to nuclear weapons in self-defence and the extent to which political consultation would be possible in each case. The United States confirmed her determination to continue to make available for the Alliance the nuclear weapons necessary for NATO defence and, with the United Kingdom, gave firm assurances that their strategic forces would continue to provide defence against threats to the Alliance beyond the capability of NATO-committed forces. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have specifically committed themselves to consult with their allies in the Council prior to a decision to use nuclear weapons in various contingencies.

At the beginning of 1963 the nuclear forces available to NATO Commanders were strengthened by the assignment to SACEUR of the United Kingdom's V-bomber
force and of three United States Polaris submarines. These latter replaced the Jupiter IRBM missiles which had been stationed in Italy and Turkey in conformity with the decision of the Heads of Government in December 1957 and which were by this time becoming obsolete. At the same time, in May 1963, the North Atlantic Council at its Ottawa meeting approved the measures taken to organise the tactical nuclear strike forces assigned to SACEUR. These measures involved the creation of a Deputy for Nuclear Affairs to SACEUR, as well as arrangements for broader participation by officers of non-nuclear member countries in the nuclear activities of Allied Command Europe and in the co-ordination of operational planning at the headquarters of the United States Strategic Air Command at Omaha.

The Concept of Graduated Response.

As the 1960's progressed, a number of factors made a further revision of NATO's strategic concept overdue. First, the relaxation of tension between East and West in Central Europe led to the realisation that a major attack on that front was not necessarily the main threat that NATO had to face. Increasing account needed to be taken of the possibility of limited, peripheral or ill-defined threats in other areas.

It was noticeable that the Soviet Union was developing types of forces designed to enable it to deploy a significant military capability in any part of the world. In particular the increasing Russian penetration of the Mediterranean area posed a potential threat to NATO's southern flank.

Secondly, the development of the missile as the principal means of delivering a nuclear warhead and the construction
of hardened launching sites produced a capability to survive a surprise nuclear attack and retaliate within a matter of minutes.

This capability was further enhanced by the development of the even less vulnerable weapon system represented by the nuclear-propelled ballistic missile submarine.

Each side was thus in a position to destroy important areas of the potential enemy's territory and to annihilate a large proportion of his population even after itself receiving a first strike. These developments called into question both the assumption that a major nuclear war was the most likely form of conflict and the credibility of a strategy of massive retaliation in circumstances other than a major nuclear attack.

A new and more flexible strategic concept was accordingly developed and adopted by the Defence Planning Committee meeting at Defence Minister's level in December 1967. The basis of this concept, which retains the principle of forward defence, is that credible deterrence of military actions of all kinds is necessary, and that this can be secured only through a wide range of forces equipped with a well-balanced mixture of conventional and tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. The purpose of this balance of forces is to permit a flexible range of responses combining two main principles. The first principle is to meet any aggression with direct defence at approximately the same level and the second is to deter through the possibility of escalation. If an attack cannot be contained our response must at least be sufficient to convince the enemy of NATO's determination to resist and to force a pause during which the risks of escalation must be considered.
The keystone of the new strategy is that an aggressor must be convinced of NATO's readiness to use nuclear weapons if necessary; but at the same time he must be uncertain regarding the timing or the circumstances in which they would be used. In short, while this flexible strategy involves the possibility, ever present in the background, of escalation to a nuclear strike, it is based essentially upon controlling the progress of escalation of any conflict rather than planning to meet any attack with instant and massive nuclear retaliation.

New Strategic Concept.

The new strategic concept, with its increased emphasis on the need to be prepared for attacks of varying scales in any region of the NATO area, calls for a comprehensive range of mobile and well-equipped forces, conventional as well as nuclear.

Should deterrence fail and an armed attack be made against any member of NATO, there is available a considerable sea, land and air conventional combat potential, over and above NATO's strategic nuclear forces. These conventional forces are well organized and prepared for immediate employment. NATO's readiness posture and its capacity to reinforce, deploy and mobilise in time of tension and crisis are the foundation of "controlled escalation".

Crisis Management.

The importance of timely and effective decisions in a time of crisis is greater than ever under the new concept. The co-location of the Council and Military Committee in Brussels and the move to the new temporary headquarters
provided an opportunity for the construction and operation of a Situation Centre with up-to-date facilities for NATO-wide communications and the display and processing of appropriate political military and economic data.

The Centre is designed specifically to enable the Council both in peacetime and in a period of rising tension and crisis, to assemble and disseminate all available intelligence and information with regard to developing situations. Consultation can therefore take place on the basis of a current and realistic review of latest developments at every stage of a crisis situation.

In the past, emphasis has been placed on the need for military communications networks but relatively little attention was paid to the requirements of the Council if it were to fulfill its responsibilities as a decision-making body in periods of tension. In 1966 the Special Committee of Defence Ministers in their examination of the needs of NATO associated with allied participation in crisis management and nuclear planning specifically recommended the creation of a NATO-wide communications system dedicated to the needs of the Council.

The Secretary General, acting on behalf of the Council exercises overall control and direction of this system, which began working in May, 1968. It provides secure teleprinter communications between the Council headquarters in Brussels, the capitals of member nations and the major NATO Commands. When fully completed, in the course of 1969, with automatic switching equipment, the system will be capable of providing alternate routings to all tributaries through a subsidiary switching centre to be established in the United Kingdom.
The Council's unique and vital communications will be further strengthened in 1970, when the NATO Satellite Communications System will become fully operational. This system will consist of a network of ground terminal stations throughout the NATO area interconnected by two SKYNET-type satellites. It will provide increased capabilities for reliable telephone conversation and telegraph traffic data transmission between the headquarters in Brussels, member states and NATO Military Commands.

A first phase of this operation is already underway, with two ground terminals, one at SHAPE Headquarters in Belgium, the other at AFSOUTH Headquarters, Naples. Transmitting time is being made available on United States communications satellites pending the availability of NATO's own space segment. This first phase provides experimental and training facilities as well as ensuring the availability of operational communications between the points served in an emergency.

The Defence Planning Committee participates in exercises at regular intervals jointly with the Military Committee, to examine, test and develop procedures associated with their respective roles in a period of tension and crisis. An Operations and Exercise Planning Section has been established to co-ordinate all activities connected with the functioning of the Situation Centre, including the planning for and conduct of all types of exercises. It is also responsible for ensuring that, in peace and in time of crisis, the needs of the Council and the Defence Planning Committee in respect to briefings, compilation of reports and dissemination of information are effectively met.

The Situation Centre gives the Council the technical facilities necessary for the performance of its task in times of crisis. It provides the means for effective and rapid consult-
ation among Permanent Representatives and between them and all member capitals and thus enables them to give guidance to the NATO Military Authorities.

**Force Goal Planning.**

NATO’s forces must continuously be adapted to keep pace with changing circumstances and technological developments. Member countries have full independence of action in determining the size and nature of their contribution to the common defence. Further, for internal budgetary reasons, national authorities are rarely in a position to make firm commitments for more than a year ahead. Nevertheless, the collective nature of NATO’s defences demands that, in reaching their decisions, governments take account of the force structure recommended by the NATO military authorities and of the long-term military plans of their partners.

NATO’s procedures for common force planning must take into account such factors as the best use of the available resources, the military requirements which have to be met, advances in science and technology, a rational division of labour among member countries, and above all the need for force plans to be within the countries economic and financial capabilities.

The first attempt at reconciling NATO’s military requirements with the economic and financial resources of member countries dates back to 1951. The report, prepared by the “Three Wise Men”, — Mr. Averell Harriman, Sir Edwin Plowden and M. Jean Monnet — for the Ministerial Meeting at Lisbon in 1952, was founded on the principle that defence must be built on a sound economic and social basis and that no country should be called on to shoulder a defence burden beyond its means.
This was the basic premise of the "Annual Review" examinations of countries' defence efforts carried out between 1952 and 1961 and of the "Triennial Review" procedure adopted in 1961. This latter was designed to improve the effectiveness of the annual review and to simplify a process which, because of the many different elements which must be taken into consideration, was necessarily very complex.

Meeting in Ottawa in May 1963, Ministers instructed the Council, with the help of the NATO military authorities, to study the inter-related questions of strategy, force requirements, and available resources. This exercise was completed in 1966, when a NATO force plan for the period 1966-1970 was adopted. It was recognized that there was a continuing need for such studies, and procedures for NATO defence planning reviews were approved in the same year. These new procedures, by which NATO's force plans are reviewed and projected for a period of five years ahead, will make it possible to modify future force plans to meet changing circumstances, and also provide a firm basis on which countries can plan their force contributions. The procedures to a considerable extent reflect those introduced in the United States by Mr. Robert McNamara during his term as Secretary of Defence, and which have with suitable modifications been adopted by a number of other member countries.

**NATO Nuclear Policy.**

The development by both East and West of an invulnerable second strike nuclear capability and the availability to the Major NATO Commanders of strategic
and tactical nuclear weapons has raised highly complex political and technical problems.

Among these are the needs to frame a nuclear policy for the Alliance, to associate non-nuclear members of NATO as closely as possible with nuclear planning, and to develop appropriate procedures for consultation and decision-making. Reference has already been made to the decisions taken at Athens in 1962 on exchanges of information and guidelines regarding consultation, to the appointment of a Nuclear Deputy to SACEUR and to the participation of allied officers from non-nuclear European countries in nuclear planning at SHAPE and Omaha.

In addition, various proposals have from time to time been put forward for the development of a specifically Allied force equipped with nuclear weapons. Chief among these was an American proposal for the creation of a multilateral nuclear force (MLF), several versions of which were for a while under study by a number of member governments. The MLF was to be owned and controlled jointly by the nuclear and non-nuclear powers participating in it and would have taken the form of mix-manned submarines, surface ships or land-based weapons assigned for operation to SACEUR. A British alternative proposal for an Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) envisaged national as well as multi-national components committed to NATO for the duration of the Alliance. The exercise by any participating power of a veto on the operational use of the ANF was also envisaged. However, neither of these projects reached the stage of actual implementation.

Much more substantial progress in improving allied co-operation in nuclear affairs has been achieved following an initiative by Mr. McNamara in the spring of 1965.
This led to the establishment of an ad hoc Special Committee under whose aegis three working groups conducted studies on exchange of intelligence, information and other data, communications, and nuclear planning.

Following recommendations by the Special Committee, Ministers decided in December 1966 to establish two permanent nuclear planning and policy-making bodies.

The first of these, the Nuclear Defence Affairs Committee (NDAC), is a committee of the DPC. Membership is open to any interested NATO country. It meets under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General, normally at Ministerial level. At present it consists of twelve members: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. Its task is to propose general policy on the nuclear affairs of the Alliance.

The second body, the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), consists of seven members elected from the NDAC countries for periods of eighteen months. The NPG meets at the level either of Defence Ministers or of Permanent Representatives. It deals with more specific aspects of policy plans, programmes and procedures for the use of nuclear weapons, the improvement of machinery for carrying out agreed methods of consultation, and the possible modernisation of existing weapon systems.

In recent months the NPG has had under consideration such important issues as the possible implications for NATO of anti-ballistic missile developments; the possible tactical use of atomic demolition munitions and other nuclear weapons; the development of a theatre concept for the use of nuclear weapons; the improvement of national participation in the nuclear planning of the Alliance; and in general the means of improving the consultative and
decision making machinery of the Alliance with respect to nuclear weapons.

**Soviet Military Capability.**

After the war, when the allies demobilized, the Soviets continued to build the biggest peacetime military force in history. Since NATO is by nature a defensive Alliance, the Soviet military capability must therefore be evaluated as a potentially aggressive force. This force has increased considerably since World War II and there is every indication that it will continue in the foreseeable future to increase both quantitatively and qualitatively. The record of achievement so far is impressive.

The USSR has expended vast resources in improving its military capability. Private estimates from Western sources indicate approximately 25 to 30 per cent of the total state budget is spent on defence and defence-related research and development. The other Warsaw Pact nations have also continued to expand their military budgets. Heavy programmes for the modernization of weapon systems and improvement of infrastructure are under way, and the satellite nations are preparing to bear a greater share of the cost. As the military strength of these nations increases, the position of the USSR becomes more flexible and its ability to expand its activities world-wide is increased.

**Strength of Forces.**

The Soviet Union and her Warsaw Pact allies have approximately five million men under arms. In addition, the Soviet Union has provided quantities of late-model military equipment, material and technical assistance to other count-
ries of the communist bloc. The Soviet ground forces have an estimated strength of two and a half million men organized, so far as field units are concerned, in about 140 tank, motorized rifle, and airborne divisions. An estimated 25 of these divisions are in the Far East and do not represent a direct threat to the Alliance. The remaining 115 divisions are located west of the Urals, with a spearhead represented by 26 tank and motorized rifle divisions located in the Soviet Zone Occupied Germany (20), Poland (2) and Hungary (4). These 26 divisions are considered combat ready. Those in the USSR, however, are at different levels of combat efficiency and it is estimated that only about three-quarters of them could participate in an immediate confrontation. The remaining divisions are generally kept at low strength and it would take time for them to become combat-ready. (Note: Following the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 an agreement was signed in Prague on 17th October 1968 permitting the stationing of an unspecified number of Soviet troops on Czechoslovakian soil. Under this agreement a considerable re-inforcement of the Soviet presence took place in the Central Region).

Among these formations are approximately 50,000 airborne forces. It is estimated that up to one-third of this total could be air-dropped or air-landed in any portion within the range of military transport aircraft. Since World War II, the Soviets have concentrated on modernizing their ground forces. Particular emphasis has been placed on increased mobility, so that today armoured motorized forces represent a high proportion of the total strength. The cross-country and river-crossing capabilities of their units have been improved, as has their night fighting ability, and they have been equipped with heavier mobile weapons. One of the most recent aspects of this modernization has been
the equipment of ground forces with a variety of tactical nuclear weapons, some of which are mounted on track carriers to give them a higher order of mobility.

In general the Soviet forces are kept at a high level of proficiency from recruit training to advanced studies. Their military forces operate efficiently in both small and large-scale manoeuvres. All these factors make the Soviet army a modern, well-equipped, efficient fighting force, geared to the realities of the nuclear age.

Soviet strength is supplemented by forces provided by her allies totalling some 62 rifle, motorized rifle and tank divisions. There are about 6 East German divisions, 15 Polish, 15 Czechoslovakian, 6 Hungarian, 10 Rumanian, and 10 Bulgarian divisions. While the level of readiness of these forces varies considerably, the satellite armies are improving in the fields of equipment, training and coordination with Soviet forces. It is estimated that not more than 50 per cent of these have a combat-ready capability.

Air Forces.

The approximate estimated strength of the Soviet Air Force is at present of the order of about 7,000 fighters, 1,500 light, medium and heavy bombers, and 2,500 transport and other aircraft, to a total of approximately 11,000. Only about three-quarters of these are likely to be of direct concern to the Alliance. In addition, the fighters are largely defensive in nature. The actual offensive threat, therefore, while certainly formidable, is not as overwhelming as the figures might at first sight suggest.

Comparing this situation with that which existed at the close of World War II, it is clear that considerable progress
has been achieved in types of equipment and in their use. At that time, the Soviet Air Forces were far behind those of the Western powers, and were almost exclusively employed in the support of ground forces.

They now have a complex of airfields, well-protected by an effective air defence belt along the Iron Curtain. Aircraft operating from these fields include long-range jet bombers capable of reaching into the heart of Canada and the United States.

Today the air forces are divided into five major components: Air Defence, Tactical Aviation, Long-range Aviation, Transport Aviation, and Naval Aviation. The quality of the aircraft is high and generally comparable with their Western counterparts. Their employment is also comparable, except for Naval Aviation. Soviet Naval aircraft are currently land-based. However, the introduction of helicopter-carriers may be an indication of a more important role for Naval Aviation in the future. Nearly all their medium-range naval aircraft are fitted to carry anti-ship missiles with ranges of about 100 nautical miles.

In addition, the satellites have between them some 2,500 aircraft, nearly all fighters.

It can be assumed that the Russians regard these fighters as the forward element of their own defensive fighter screen.

Missile Force.

The Soviet missile force is estimated to have several hundred medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (MRBM/IRBMS) with ranges up to 2,500 nautical miles. These missiles are by their nature primarily a threat
to fixed and predictable targets in Europe. The intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMS) are designed to cover the most distant targets, including those in the United States and Canada.

Although these missiles are of primary importance in that they would presumably be the first weapons used in the event of a massive surprise attack, this is not the most likely way for a war to start. In the limited type of operation which would be a more probable form for the outbreak of hostilities, such weapons would be inflexible. The danger is that such limited hostilities would escalate to a stage where they would be brought into play. This constitutes a grave threat to the Alliance.

Soviet Navy.

The Soviet Navy has undergone extensive modernization since World War II and there has been much new construction. This is probably best illustrated by the fact that Russia entered World War II at the bottom of the list of major world naval powers, and now ranks second only to the United States.

The Soviet Navy consists of four fleets: the Pacific, Baltic, Black Sea and North Fleets. The Pacific Fleet is not of direct concern. The Baltic and Black Sea fleets share the characteristic of limited and difficult access to open seas and, in wartime, would have to force a passage through narrow straits. During and since the Arab/Israeli conflict in the Middle East in 1967 the Soviets have established a greatly increased presence in the Mediterranean, reaching a total of 40 or more ships of all types at varying times. The North Fleet, on the other hand, has
direct access to the Atlantic Ocean and forms the main threat against the lines of communication between America and Europe.

The most significant aspect of the USSR's naval strength lies in its submarine fleet.

It is estimated that the Soviets have about 400 submarines, of which three-quarters are long-range ocean-going types, capable of operation almost anywhere in the Atlantic or Pacific. (This figure is seven or eight times greater than the number of German submarines at the start of World War II.) This impressive Soviet submarine force has, like the rest of the fleet, been undergoing extensive modernization in recent years. It probably now includes 40 to 50 nuclear-propelled submarines, some of which the Russians claim are capable of firing missiles from under-water. It is clear that this submarine fleet forms the nucleus of the offensive striking power of the Soviet Navy. The largest number of Soviet submarines operate in the North Fleet and thus their access to areas of vital importance to the Alliance is of direct concern.

The pride of the Soviet surface fleet is now the destroyer force, estimated at approximately 100 ships. Many modernized ships or new classes of ships, fitted with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, have been sighted. The tendency to equip newly constructed ships with missiles rather than conventional weapons is also evident in quite small classes of vessels such as the fast patrol boat which has surface-to-surface missiles. This craft is now operational and in service in large numbers.

Each of the Soviet fleets is backed up by its own Fleet Air Force consisting of strike/reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft, with a number of transport aircraft in support.
Russia was for many years essentially a land power, and the fleet was regarded as an extension of the army. However, in 1962 the navy was accorded its own position as an individual service and is now required both to perform its own purely maritime tasks, and to co-operate in joint inter-service defence plans. This seems to indicate a growing appreciation of the potential of seapower when properly applied. There have been an increasing number of instances of Russian fleet units appearing at sea far from their home bases and their recent build-up in the Mediterranean was further proof of this.

Another threat which was not fully appreciated until recently is the growth of the Soviet merchant and fishing fleets. From very modest beginnings, both have grown spectacularly in recent years. The Soviet "fish factory" ships and trawlers now range over the world's oceans, and it is significant that a high proportion of them are outfitted for intelligence gathering. They carry comprehensive monitoring equipment and highly sophisticated electronic gear. Their speed is often in excess of that usually associated with such craft. It is not unusual for such a trawler to attach itself to NATO formations during exercises as an uninvited and extremely persistent observer. The Soviets are devoting considerable attention to merchant shipping. The target that has been set for their merchant fleet has been announced as 27 million tons by 1980. They have already achieved a tonnage of 9.5 million, and it looks as if their 1980 goal can be achieved.

The Soviet Navy, although inferior to NATO naval forces, imposes a serious threat, especially against the vital Western lines of communication. The Warsaw Pact navies are small and mainly equipped to assume responsibility for the defence of homeland waters. They possess a limited
sealift capability. There has been some modernization with Soviet-supplied ships. Combined Warsaw Pact exercises have been carried out in both the Baltic and Black Seas, and an improved operational capability has been demonstrated.

**Strength and weakness.**

Obviously the Soviet military machine is a mighty one. There are certain negative features, however, which operate to Russia's disadvantage. The Soviet land mass has a long perimeter. It is vulnerable to attack. Her large number of divisions can be concentrated at any one point only by neglecting part of the remainder of the perimeter. For example, if she attacks central Europe, she must maintain forces strong enough to hold the Turkish Army on her border with that nation, and others to keep the back door of Siberia protected. Moreover, the reserve divisions located in the Western part of the USSR are about 500 miles away from the Iron Curtain. To bring them up would take time and their movement could not be concealed from the Western allies.

The Soviet bloc's territory is immense. Such a large land mass demands long, stretched lines of communication which are vulnerable not only because of their length but also because of their limited number. These lines of communication would be even more vulnerable in the satellite countries they have to cross in view of opposition to the Soviet regime by part of their populations. Hence, the Soviets would have to hold some forces back from the front to protect these communication lines.

One cannot foresee how reliable the satellite divisions would be in combat, or what their attitude, or the attitude
of communist countries, might be. The difficulty of assessing these psychological factors must create certain planning problems for the Soviet High Command.

That Command is also aware that the powerful retaliatory forces of the Alliance are so deployed as to preclude all of them being wiped out in a single surprise attack.

It is plain that any military thrust by the Soviets would be met by an Alliance which the Russians know could strike back with conclusive force.

Despite these disadvantages, the Soviet bloc’s military forces are sufficiently strong, both in numbers and in firepower, to conduct all types of military operations in support of their objectives. This was illustrated by their invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968.
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