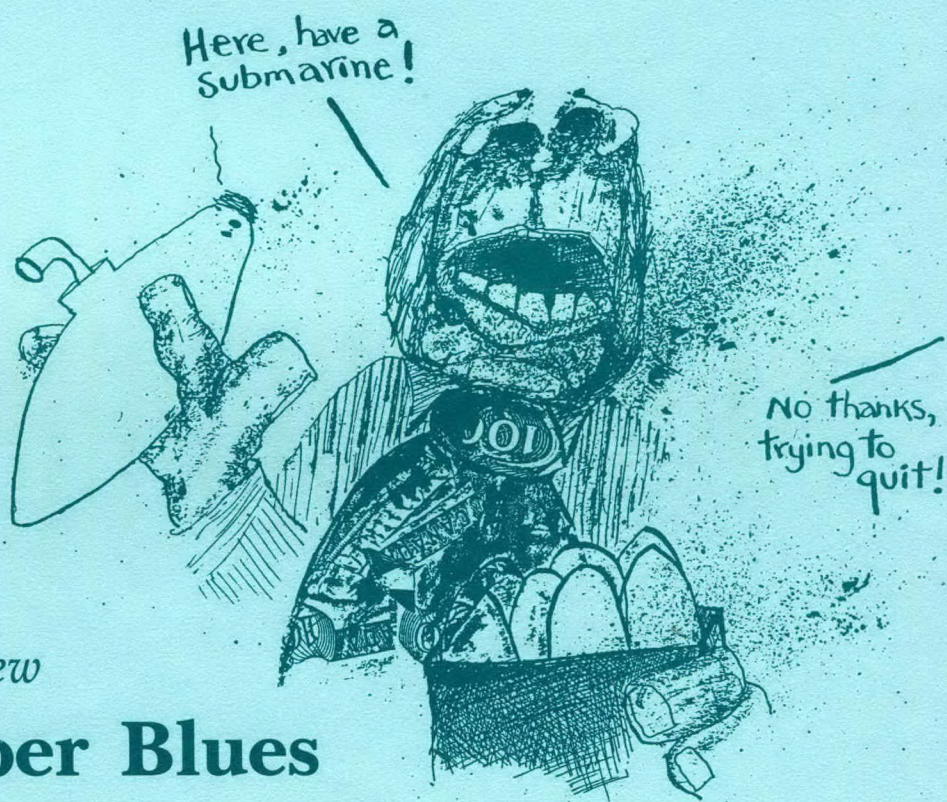


# The Ploughshares Monitor

September 1987  
Vol. VIII, No. 3



"and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares..."



Haverluck

*Three points of view*

## White Paper Blues

*The White Paper, Star Wars and Nuclear Deterrence*

by Ernie Regehr

Whatever ambivalence the Mulroney government has felt about Star Wars seems to have been laid to rest with the publication of the defence White Paper (WP).

While having earlier declined direct involvement in the Strategic Defence Initiative (a research programme to explore the feasibility of ballistic missile interception), the programme itself was encouraged as "prudent" and, most important, the concept of strategic defence itself, a

strategy that is central to nuclear war-fighting strategies, has never been rejected. The arrival of Defence Minister Perrin Beatty and his White Paper have both signalled that the government, instead of rejecting Star Wars, is in the process of rejecting any lingering reservations Canada has had over the Reagan/Weinberger pursuit of nuclear "superiority".

This is made explicit by the announcement that Canada will participate in the Air Defence Initiative

(a study of strategic air defence that is directly linked to Star Wars — see the sidebar on air defence), but it is also implicit in the White Paper's approach to nuclear deterrence.

Successive Canadian governments have pledged their undying commitment to deterrence, even supporting cruise missile testing and the like in its name, but none have been able or willing to define it — and Mr. Beatty's White Paper remains true to the tradition. It's a tradition that is lead-

## Editorial

Critics of the defence white paper have described it in extravagant terms, as representing a dark hour for Canada, as a watershed event, as a new and dangerous direction for Canada, and so on. Clearly, none of the opposites are true, but it may be folly to grant the White Paper the importance that is implied in these grand denunciations. Its most notable contribution may well be to make the job of the critic a lot easier.

Perrin Beatty's statement of Canadian defence policy does not prescribe a *new* and dangerous direction for Canada: it prescribes an *old* and dangerous one. In that respect it is a welcome document that articulates clearly the real and crumbling foundations of Canadian defence policy. Nuclear submarines, increased forces in Central Europe, and an emphasis on domestic military production are not so much new directions as they are logical extensions of the old.

For forty years Canada has, in defence matters, been excessively hospitable to US perceptions of threat, been preoccupied with offering uncritical Canadian solidarity to the US through NORAD and NATO, and has been lacking an independent analysis of Canadian security needs or strategic doctrine.

Each of these failures is repeated in the new document and, in setting them out on the table for all to see, the White Paper helps us clarify our own agenda in response.

Part of that response, and much more, can be found in these pages. Canada's indefatigable disarmament diplomat, William Epstein, offers a critique, joined by Phyllis Creighton's scrutiny of the White Paper's rhetoric, and our own look at the paper's approach to star wars and nuclear war-fighting strategies. Ploughshares researcher Bill Robinson examines the conventional balance in Europe, in the process exposing the White Paper's faulty arithmetic.

Elsewhere, this issue of the *Monitor* offers more military industry news, a review of low level military flying in Labrador, the Disarmament Calendar, and the Ottawa Report which this time examines the implications of the NDP's new popularity for its disarmament commitments.

The relationship between Disarmament and Development received some welcome attention this summer during the United Nations' special conference. Ploughshares Political Affairs Co-ordinator Simon Rosenblum participated as an observer on the Canadian delegation. We also include in this issue the Ploughshares submission to the conference.

Ernie Regehr

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ing us, perhaps unwittingly, toward direct support for star wars and nuclear war-fighting strategies. (The call for Canadian clarity on deterrence is not a plea for nuclear threat and counter-threat as the ultimate basis of security, rather it is a caution that an abandonment of basic deterrence in favour of nuclear war-fighting strategies promises even greater insecurity and would make the quest for disarmament a fond hope.)

There is a *pro forma* textbook description of deterrence in the WP, but it is an irrelevant formula that has long since lost its power to shape the strategic environment and, in particular, to guide the deployments of the nuclear alliances in which Canada operates. Deterrence is said to be maintained by nuclear forces which "must be capable of surviving an attack and retaliating in a manner so devastating as to convince any potential aggressor that the penalty he risks incurring far outweighs any gain he might hope to achieve" (p. 17; this and



following page references refer to the published White Paper). This is the traditional doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD), and the rest of the WP's discussion of northern defence suggests that the Government doesn't believe a word of it.

The threat of mutual destruction by nuclear weapons is not based on "superiority" or even a balance of nuclear forces, nor does it require a defensive capability against an adver-

sary's nuclear forces. Indeed, defensive forces that put into question the other side's retaliatory capacity actually undermine deterrence, but it is just such a strategic defence strategy that has become the preoccupation of the Reagan/Weinberger Pentagon, without so much as a murmur of concern from this WP (it cautions against excessive optimism related to arms control, but apparently considers strategic defence planning to be a model of sobriety).

Under current Pentagon strategic planning, the objective is to place the Soviet Union under the discipline of deterrence, while liberating America from its constraints. This strategy says the Soviet Union will be most effectively deterred when it recognizes in the United States the capacity to conduct protracted nuclear war and to prevail over the Soviet Union in the event of such a war. Hence, the development of more accurate weapons targetted on the Soviet deterrent, which, combined with strategic

## Canada signs on to the Air Defense Initiative

by Bill Robinson

The Canadian Government has in effect signed on to the Star Wars programme with its recent decision (announced in the White Paper on Defence) to "participate in research on future air defence systems in conjunction with the United States Air Defense Initiative."

The Air Defense Initiative (ADI) is a US Air Force programme to design an active air defence system for North America which can survive throughout a nuclear war and destroy all attacking Soviet bombers and cruise missiles. A follow-on from the SDA 2000 study (see *Monitor*, December 1986), it is intended to develop technologies for future surveillance, command and control, and interception systems for the air defence mission.

Although ADI is not officially a part of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI -- or Star Wars), it is intimately related to that program. According to US Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Thomas Cooper, "what we have tried to do [with ADI] is posture ourselves so that at a point in time when we deploy an SDI, if we deploy an SDI, we can have a counterpart in the air

defence world."

Such an air defence counterpart is a necessary part of Star Wars because without air defences a defence against ballistic missiles is just so much useless gadgetry. The Soviet warheads carried on bombers and cruise missiles (currently about 5% of the Soviet arsenal; possibly about 15% by the mid-1990s) are more than sufficient to destroy North America without any assistance from ballistic missiles. Thus, without an active air defence, a Star Wars defence is pointless.

For the same reason, without a Star Wars defence, an active air defence is pointless. This basic strategic fact of life was understood by Canada's previous defence ministers, who largely abandoned active air defence (in favour of surveillance and early warning) when the Soviet Union started to deploy a significant number of intercontinental ballistic missiles in the mid-1960s. They realized that stopping bombers (which carried at that time nearly 60% of Soviet nuclear weapons) was futile when missiles could not be stopped.

The current defence minister talks as though he missed out on the strategic facts of life. Defence Minister Perrin Beatty argues that ADI and similar active air defence efforts are necessary in order to defend Canada against the bomber and cruise missile "threat", whether a Star Wars defence is deployed or not. It is hard to tell whether Mr. Beatty is serious or not. The minister's line of argument may be nothing more than a convenient justification for getting National Defence into the active strategic defence business (which it clearly wants to do), while not requiring the government to commit itself publicly to Star Wars (which so far it is unwilling to do).

One fact is clear, however -- the minister's argument is nonsense. ADI makes no sense without SDI.

The drive to develop and deploy air and space defences promises to accelerate the nuclear arms race and to undermine Canadian and international security. ADI contributes to this danger as surely as SDI does. Canadian participation in the Air Defense Initiative should not go unchallenged.

defences, are intended to offer the United States first-strike and war-fighting options. (In fact, it is a self-defeating strategy that will not deter the Soviets. In a crisis, if the Soviets consider themselves vulnerable to an American first strike, they will be tempted to launch a pre-emptive strike — particularly if the Kremlin really believes in survivable nuclear war as the Pentagon says it does.)

The WP declines direct commentary on this — notably, it does not repeat Prime Minister Mulroney's warning to the North Atlantic Assembly that SDI could add to nuclear first-strike fears — but the implications of the policy outlined are unmistakable. Besides the announced participation in the air component of strategic defence research, the plan to acquire nuclear-powered submarines and extra maritime patrol aircraft indicates pursuit of an increased capacity, if not intent, to participate in the sea component of strategic defence (strategic anti-submarine warfare efforts).

What is made explicit in these developments is that the WP's statement on deterrence is more a statement of Western chauvinism than it is a general principle — the West, through the United States, should

retain an invincible nuclear arsenal, but the Soviet Union's counterpart should be undermined and made vulnerable. This is not the deterrence of promised retaliation, this is the deterrence of promised defeat, based on the quest for military superiority (little wonder the Government has lost its optimism for arms control). By the account of the WP it is quite a simple matter — Western nuclear forces deter, Soviet nuclear forces threaten.

This Western chauvinism is taken further in the statement that "we (Canada) enhance deterrence to the extent that we are able to deny any potential aggressor the use of Canadian airspace, territory or territorial waters for an attack on NATO's strategic nuclear forces" (p. 17). That is a reasonable statement — but a true statement of principle would have substituted the reference to "NATO's forces" with a reference to "an adversary's forces". Deterrence would also be enhanced by denying a potential aggressor the use of Canadian territory for an attack on the Soviet Union's strategic forces. What's good for the goose ought to be good for the gander. If deterrence is to be your guide, then *both* sides must be deterred. To threaten the deterrent of

either side undermines the stability of the strategic environment, increases the likelihood that a crisis will lead to nuclear war, and thus increases what the WP calls "the principal direct threat to Canada", namely, "a nuclear attack on North America by the Soviet Union" (p. 10).

The WP asserts a principle of mutual deterrence, but then shows it doesn't believe it. (It should be noted, by the way, that to affirm the mutuality of deterrence is not to claim that there are no political or moral distinctions to be made between the two sides — it is only to acknowledge that as long as both sides have chosen weapons of global annihilation as their last resort, both must be subject to the discipline of deterrence.)

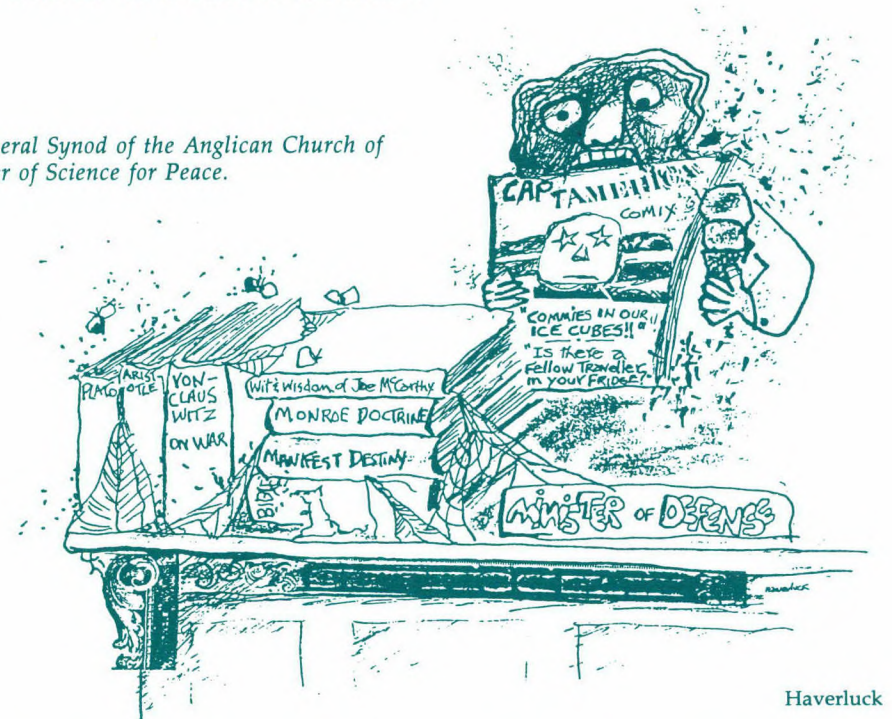
This WP not only offers no criticism of American efforts to undermine mutual deterrence by threatening Soviet strategic forces, it actually promises to open Canadian territory even further to forces that threaten attack on the strategic nuclear forces of one of the superpowers. It is a formula that puts the sobriety which the WP counsels into question, and that banishes the optimism it ridicules.

## Cold War Heat

*Phyllis Creighton* is a member of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and Secretary of the Toronto chapter of Science for Peace.

The new Defence White Paper, *Challenge and Commitment, A Defence Policy for Canada*, turns on an axis of "confrontation in East-West relations," which is described as the "central fact" (p. 1)<sup>1</sup> in our security situation. It is a disturbing document that fans cold war fears and hatred, marching to the warmongers' drum with a repeated refrain of "in the event of war" (p. 14, and similar phrases are used 20 times throughout the document). Its message is nailed home in a two-page colour spread titled "The Military Threat", which shows Moscow's Red Square, a huge tank, gray-coated officers and half a huge picture of Lenin. Like ABC's TV mini-series "Amerika", the underlying fear it purveys is "the Russians are coming".

But why this tone of Soviet threat when the paper says that Canadian defence policy since World War II has



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been essentially sound (p. 89) — without Cold War rhetoric to fuel it? Why is there no mention of the Soviet peace initiatives and far-reaching arms control proposals of Mikhail

Gorbachev in the past two years? There are, however, two straw men confronting each other. In the case of the West, a bland assurance that it, "would resort to armed force only in

its own defence". But in the case of the East, Western governments are warned against basing their peoples' futures on "expressions of good will" and on the "most optimistic interpretations of the intentions of others" (p. 5). The unexamined dogma that "unilateral disarmament measures will not enhance Canadian security" is duly trotted out (p. 27). But wasn't the world that knows Chernobyl safer for the 18-month *unilateral* Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing?

### Good guys and bad guys

Honesty will not do, however, for the paper's thrust can only be sustained if the West is good, the East, bad. The USSR aims to "mold the world in its own image" (p. 5), as the photo of the Berlin Wall grimly reminds us (p. 7). But why not a shot of Nicaragua's Carinto harbour being mined in the US covert war there, a superpower aggression that Canada deploras? It is not just the Soviet Union that seeks to "translate military power into political gains" (p. 15).

There are some hints at the true state of the arms race: what the USSR has achieved in strategic weapons is "rough parity" (p. 19). But their bombers have "gained new importance" -- with far fewer listed than the West. The buildup of the Soviet surface navy has been "unprecedented" (p. 14), but to a level below NATO's (and the Soviet naval forces are divided by geography into four separate fleets with access to the high seas limited to choke points dominated by the West). As for submarines, both sides have vast overkill capacity, but no one tells you here that more American ones are out of port at sea than Soviet. Soviet military use of space has "increased significantly" (p.11), but the related factor of US use goes unmentioned.

Come to think of it, you would never know, unless you read Ruth Sivard's *World Military and Social Expenditures 1986*, (pp. 8 and 10) that in the last quarter century NATO has consistently exceeded the Warsaw pact in arms expenditures, nor that with over 300 major installations abroad the US has the largest military basing system, apparently also to mould the world in its image.

The "might be's" also figure in the paper. The claim is made, without evidence, that a Soviet nuclear attack on North America is "the principal direct threat to Canada" (p. 10) --im-

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***In fact, the crucial division of the globe is not East/West, but North/South, and the true threats to security are environmental, social and economic.***

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plying that the USSR (which knows about nuclear winter) is the evil empire bent on first strike. The Warsaw Pact is considered a monolithic force in the event of war (pp. 12,14) -- with nary a nod to the known unrest that makes its solidarity in conflict uncertain.

The text suggests that Canadian Arctic waters could well provide an alternate route to the Atlantic for Soviet subs (p.11), and then a map depicts an alarming criss-cross of red routes under the Arctic ice cap to both Atlantic and Pacific (p. 52). The fact that there is no current evidence that Soviet submarines are entering the Canadian Arctic goes unmentioned. Facts interfere with the myths that build a Red Menace, which is then used to frighten Canadians into a financial sacrifice for "security" through weapons.

The paper's world view repeats another myth: that "Canadian defence spending contributes significantly to the maintenance of a robust and flexible economic environment" (p. 84) -- although the Soviet and US examples hardly show prosperity through increased military production. Country by country -- the US, USSR, the UK -- the highest rates of military expenditures go hand in hand with the lowest growth in productivity.

The real cost of an emphasis on weapons is found in a retarded and distorted economic growth. Military-related production, being very capital intensive, creates fewer jobs than investment in any other area of the economy. So the opportunities foregone include broader employment possibilities. The paper claims that defence purchases contribute to the development of internationally competitive Canadian industries -- in arms, that is, a commodity already in appalling excess. Our world is over-armed and undernourished. Unarguably the 120 wars and the 20 mil-

lion deaths caused by them since World War II have been made possible by the arms race and arms trade. Thus it is not economic myopia alone but moral blindness as well that marks the promotion of weapons production for profit.

### The crisis

In fact, the crucial division of the globe is not East/West, but North/South, and the true threats to security are the environmental, social and economic crises that are worsened by the very ideological struggle and militarism which the White Paper fuels.

The vast militarization of our world, unprecedented in all history, is *not* promoting peace. Armed conflicts in many areas stand as potential flashpoints for all-out war. Whether or not nuclear deterrence has kept the peace for 40 years -- a belief not susceptible to proof -- people all over the world know that the escalating numbers and power of weapons do not make us safer.

If more weapons could solve complex political rivalries, they would have done so long ago. Instead, scarce resources that *could* meet human needs are being squandered. And the process of militarization is visibly impoverishing both superpowers. It seems it is for just such a 'development' that we are to aim.

### The need for light, not heat

Is it to promote such military and economic myths, such Cold War fears and hatreds that the National Defence Speakers Bureau has been organized, and military funding for university teaching and research is to be increased? Then it is time to recall to the government the basic situation of Canada. A huge country that cannot be defended with today's weapons, Canada depends on the preservation of a peaceful world order based on respect for international law. Thus Canada's interest lies in achieving arms reduction and control, promoting *rapprochement* between the superpower blocs, and developing the framework of common security. The White Paper betrays a basic contradiction. If East and West have been reluctant to use force or negotiation to resolve their differences, and if we agree with the paper fear that, "far too often military force or the threat of military force has been the preferred tool for achieving political objectives" (p. 2), then which differ-

ence will Canada help to solve by building a more powerful military force?

*Challenge and Commitment* identifies the USSR as the "enemy" into the far future in a fashion that can no

longer be tolerated. From the perspective of the fragile blue ball that the astronauts showed us, the one human family of which we are a small part must turn away from militarism and point instead toward

peacemaking and reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> Page numbers here and following refer to those of the White Paper itself.

## Is Canada Joining the Arms Race?

**William Epstein**, a senior special fellow at the UN Institute for Training and Research, was formerly in charge of disarmament in the UN Secretariat. He represented the Secretary General at the negotiations leading to the 1963 Test Ban Treaty and the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He is also Chairman of the Canadian Pugwash Group.

The Defence White Paper proposes the wrong policy, for the wrong purpose, at the wrong time.

It is the wrong policy because it sets Canada on the dangerous path of promoting the arms race which is already proceeding at the fastest pace in peacetime history. It is noteworthy that the White Paper does not rule out direct Canadian involvement in the US strategic defence initiative (SDI or "Star Wars"), and that Mr. Perrin Beatty specifically refused to do so at a press conference. Far from making nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete", the SDI will lead to a triple arms race—for more destabilizing strategic defensive weapons, for more dangerous offensive weapons and for new countermeasures such as penetration aids and decoys.

Canada is already too heavily involved in the arms race through NORAD, joint defence production with the US and in cruise missile testing. It is in danger of being slowly sucked into actively supporting the SDI. Further down the slippery nuclear slope, there is a greater risk that, because of the rapidly growing cost of conventional forces, the military may one day begin arguing for a "bigger bang for a buck" and urge that Canada convert its nuclear-powered submarines to nuclear missile firing subs.

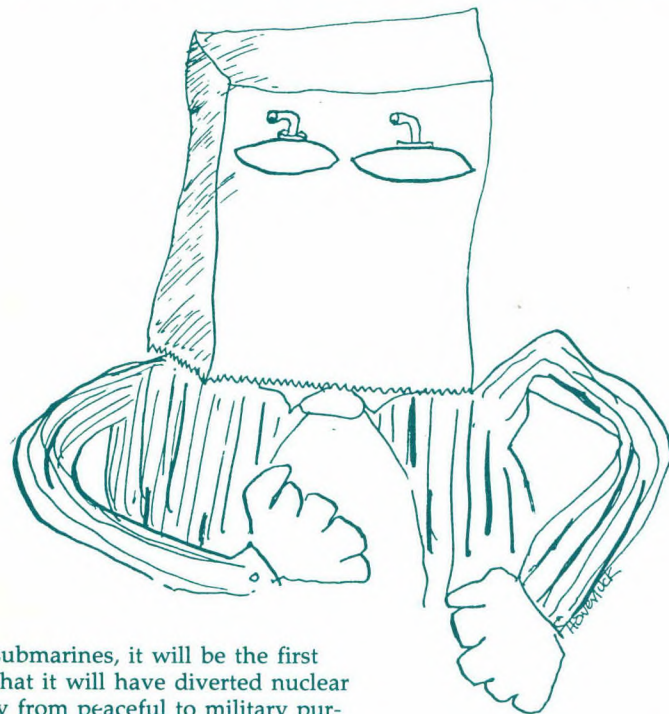
The whole idea of Canada acquiring ten to twelve nuclear-powered submarines over a period of 20 years is also a stark abandonment of previous Canadian policy that atomic energy should be used for exclusively peaceful purposes. Prime Minister Mackenzie King joined President Harry Truman and Prime Minister Clement Attlee in the Three Power Declaration in November, 1945 to prevent the use of atomic energy for destructive purposes and promote its use for peaceful and humanitarian

ends. The following month, the Canadian Parliament overwhelmingly approved the Declaration and it became firmly established and often-reiterated Canadian policy to use nuclear energy for solely peaceful purposes.

If Canada proceeds with the bizarre plan to acquire nuclear pow-

purposes will tend to weaken the entire non-proliferation regime. It will create difficult problems for the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system and for Canadian compliance with it. It could encourage other parties to do likewise.

Canada initiated the "strategy of suffocation" of the nuclear arms race



ered submarines, it will be the first time that it will have diverted nuclear energy from peaceful to military purposes. It will also be the first time that any non-nuclear party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has decided to use nuclear energy for military purposes. While this may not be contrary to the letter of the Treaty, it is certainly contrary to its spirit. The Treaty explicitly prohibits only the manufacture or acquisition of nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices; nevertheless, it seems clear that this first-time use by Canada of nuclear energy for military

at the first UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. An important element of that proposal was "to prohibit all production of fissionable material for weapons purposes." In each of the past 10 years Canada has sponsored a UN resolution which states that "the cessation of production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and the progressive conversion and transfer of stocks to peaceful uses would be a significant

step towards halting and reversing the nuclear arms race", and which called for the consideration of the matter by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. The resolution has been adopted every year by increasing overwhelming majorities with only France opposed. It seems almost grotesque that Canada should now be the first non-nuclear country to advocate the production, conversion and/or transfer of peaceful fissionable material to military purposes.

The Defence White Paper, with its reversal of established policies, will also tarnish Canada's long-standing image as a leading proponent of non-proliferation and diminish its highly respected status and influence in the United Nations. As a middle power, Canada has been and is a leading supporter of progressive policies in the United Nations. Why should it risk discarding that important role for the dubious enhancement of its lesser role in NATO where it is not a major actor?

This wrong policy also has the wrong purpose. The submarines will do little to protect or promote Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. Invisible subs cannot do this nearly as well as can highly visible planes, ice-breakers and other surface ships. Nor will the submarines increase our security or enhance deterrence in any important way in the Atlantic or Pacific. There, too, planes and surface warships could do a better job.

What will a Canadian submarine commander do if he detects either an American or Soviet sub or an unidentified one in Canadian waters in peacetime? He obviously won't fire at it. A British expert has described Mr. Beatty's suggestion to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice (whose jurisdiction is not recognized by either superpower) as "laughable".

Some British experts have also criticized the notion of Canada's acquiring the subs as "political posturing", and American defence officials have described it as "totally unreal". The entire program is exorbitantly expensive and, indeed, wasteful. (Furthermore, experience has shown that a realistic rule of thumb for a new weapons system is that the estimated cost will triple by the time the program is completed.) Moreover, since the development and production of weapons is capital intensive, such military expenditures will produce

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***What will a Canadian submarine commander do if he detects either an American or Soviet sub in Canadian waters in peacetime?***

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fewer jobs than almost every other kind of government spending.

The new defence policy is also being proposed at the wrong time. After seven lean and, indeed, barren years, it is now expected that the US and USSR will reach agreement later this year on the elimination of intermediate range (INF) and shorter-range nuclear weapons from Europe. It would also be the first time the superpowers could agree on the elimination of an entire category of nuclear weapons.

If the new Soviet thinking and its policy of "glasnost" (openness), and its declared willingness to accept intrusive verification, including on-site inspection for arms control, are carried out in practice, many more arms control agreements become possible.

Canadian policy planners would do far more good by applying their minds and our money to seeking out possible new areas of agreement rather than researching and planning untimely arms race policies that can harm the process of agreement.

What may be most unfortunate about the new defence policy is that it may receive very little public discussion and debate. The wrong Canadian decision in the early 1960's to accept the Bomarc missiles and other American nuclear weapons on its territory and for its forces (which took twenty years to correct) was at least the subject of three years of intensive public debate, culminating in a national election in 1963, before it was approved. It took twenty years for Canada to correct that decision by getting rid of its nuclear weapons.

The new defence policy deserves a like amount of attention. Every concerned Canadian, and especially the Members of Parliament, should insist on extensive public inquiry and hearings similar to those conducted by the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations concerning the SDI, before this ill-conceived reversal in Canadian policy goes any further.

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## *Letters on the White Paper*

### **Demilitarized Arctic**

First I must thank you for the excellent content of the December issue of the *Monitor*, and also of course for your courage in publishing *Arm's Canada*.

I am writing to you today because, as a retired Naval Officer and Professional Engineer, I am appalled at the proposals in Mr. Beatty's White Paper on Defence, particularly those concerning the Arctic. The whole idea that Canada should try to compete with the major powers by spending billions (which we do not have) on non-productive as well as hazardous items such as nuclear submarines is totally unacceptable.

I have written to the Minister for External Affairs today, offering the following alternative:

I propose that Canada should approach the other Arctic powers — the USSR, Norway and Denmark — to discuss the establish-

ment of of a demilitarized, weapons-free zone under the surveillance of the United Nations for all the territory north of (say) 75 degrees latitude. Such an agreement, monitored by aircraft, icebreakers, satellites and unmanned ground or ice stations, would be a positive, constructive step of Canadian leadership toward world peace.

Any support on the discussion of this proposal by Project Ploughshares would be appreciated.

Joe Barber-Starkey, P.Eng  
Victoria, BC

### **A case for non-provocative defence**

Your critique of the Defence White Paper in the June issue is admirably realistic and sensible, but a few points bother me, and perhaps other readers.

Ernie Regehr says, "Canadian territory is not militarily defensible". This

is what the Minister and his Department say; they use it to justify fawning deference to our American "protector". Surely the reality is that Canada is rather easily defensible, in the practical sense that it could be made a most unattractive target for attack by land forces, i.e., for conquest, by any power -- except perhaps the US? "Defensible" should no longer mean the ability to prevent even temporary invasion of our territory, like the English sinking the Spanish Armada off-shore. In the modern world it means only that we can discourage schemes for trespass, robbery or enslavement by realistic preparations (for non-provocative defence) that tell a would-be aggressor the price of "victory" is not worth paying.

Your article "Should Canada Have Military Forces in Europe in Peacetime?" invites a resounding "NO"; but the title implies that the answer might be "YES" in time of war... Yet you make it clear that *any* war in Europe in the foreseeable future would end our civilization, and the presence or absence of Canadian

forces would have zero significance. Your reasons for getting out of NATO are persuasive. Should we not be asking ourselves why most Canadians allegedly disagree with us (and with the NDP), and insist we remain in the alliance?

David Jackman's timely piece on non-provocative defence argues that this solution may fit Europe but not Canada, since there is no reason for us to fear a major invasion by conventional forces, as even our own Defence officials admit; and the adoption of the "porcupine principle" would not deal with our real danger, the outbreak of nuclear war between the superpowers. I think he is overlooking the political (i.e., the human) factor on both points.

Our problem, and our extreme danger, arise from the simple fact that we need massive *popular* pressure to achieve nuclear disarmament and an end to war, a support that is still lacking. Why? Do people not care about the survival of civilization, of life on earth? Of course they do! Then what holds them back from action to assure it? A major part of

the answer is that most Canadians do indeed fear invasion, occupation by tyrannical Soviet forces; and they are prepared to accept the dangers of complicity with nuclear-dominated NATO policies *as they see no practical alternative*. The "Peace Movement" tends to be dismissed as a collection of idealistic pacifists whose policies would leave Canadians nakedly defenceless.

We need to develop and popularize, with the help of organizations like VANA and Generals for Peace, realistic plans for inoffensive defence which all serious peace workers could actively support, at least as a major step away from nuclear catastrophe and toward the de-militarized world they (and Mikhail Gorbachev!) ultimately desire. Given such plans we can hope to convince the people of Canada that old-style military habits of thought, as illustrated by Perrin Beatty's White Paper, have become suicidal nonsense; and that it is we in the Peace Movement who are the realists advocating genuine defence.

Peter Pentz, Ganges, BC.

## News Briefs

### Peace Award at Science Fair

In April of this year, Project Ploughshares Niagara presented its first series of Awards for Peace and Human Potential at the Niagara Regional Science and Engineering Fair. As at other science fairs across Canada, the Niagara Regional Fair annually brings together hundreds of students from grades five to thirteen for academic competition, with awards being given for top exhibitions. Besides representatives of industry and school boards being present, members from branches of the American and Canadian armed forces present awards.

In considering how the presence of the military representatives might lead peace activists to protest their influence at this education-based event, members of the Ploughshares group offered the Regional Science Fair Committee a new award: the Project Ploughshares Niagara Award for Peace and Human Potential. The award was to be given to exhibits investigating interaction behaviour among humans, or exploring methods by which people use resources to overcome food and health problems.

At the awards ceremony, Project Ploughshares Niagara chairperson Timothy Healey distributed certificates and cheques for \$15.00 to the four selected projects. The projects chosen were on the topics of how marigolds can be utilized as a natural inhibitor of insects; how first impressions of people are shaped; various methods for erosion control; and futuristic systems for increasing water supply. For more information about peace prizes and science fairs, contact Bob Malcomson, 58 Woodrow St., St. Catharines, ON L2P 2A3

### Crafty commies strike again...

Observers of the Soviet Union's recently-ended 18-month moratorium on nuclear testing might be surprised to learn that, according to the Pentagon, the Soviet Union is "significantly" ahead of the United States in nuclear warhead technology. Why surprised? Well, 12 months and zero Soviet nuclear tests prior to this Pentagon assessment, the previous Pentagon assessment had been that the two countries were about equal in warhead technology. How did the

crafty commies pull *this* one off? According to the paranoia boys at the Pentagon, if the Soviets felt that they didn't need to conduct any nuclear tests in 1986, then they *must* be ahead. ...The mind boggles.

As arms races go, this could be the start of something big: the US could end all Star Wars testing in order to prove how much progress has been made on the project; the Soviet Union could counter by dismantling a few hundred missiles to demonstrate overwhelming nuclear superiority with a combined arsenal between them of some 60,000 nuclear weapons, the possibilities for new intimidating acts of disarmament are practically endless...

### NATO and the Pill

Beecham Wulping of Germany is developing a new medication for soldiers suffering from radiation exposure in time of war. "BRL 43694", which is expected to please NATO, would suppress the initial symptoms of radiation sickness and so enable soldiers to fight a few extra days. Research on the "pill" is to be finished by the end of the year.



**Canada's White Paper Doesn't Add Up** *by Bill Robinson*

According to the recent White Paper on defence, 47,000 Warsaw Pact tanks face 20,000 NATO tanks in Europe. According to the Pentagon, on the other hand, 32,000 Warsaw Pact tanks face some 19,600 NATO tanks in Europe.

What's a little discrepancy of 15,000 tanks between friends? In this case, it's part of a persistent pattern of exaggeration of the "Soviet threat" to be found in the White Paper. The White Paper's statistics on the "threat" are wrong, exaggerated (even by Pentagon standards), or misleading in almost every case.

The section of the White Paper devoted to the "military threat" compares 8 main categories of "conventional forces in the NATO area" (NATO and Warsaw Pact forces available with "minimal mobilization"). All 8 comparisons are reproduced below, with comments:

**Bias #1 - Divisions:** *NATO 38, Pact 90 (2.4 to 1 for the Pact).*

By comparison, the Pentagon puts the balance at NATO 90, Pact 133 (only 1.5 to 1 for the Pact). Even these figures greatly exaggerate the size of Pact forces compared to NATO forces. The two forces are actually about equal, as noted in the accompanying article on the conventional balance in Europe. It is interesting to note that, while the White Paper follows in the NATO/Pentagon tradition of excluding France and Spain from NATO's side of the balance, it does count the 3 French armoured divisions that are based in West Germany -- as if to argue that France wouldn't fight along with NATO in any future war, but that its divisions in Germany would!

**Bias #2 - Manpower (ground forces):** *NATO 1,900,000, Pact 2,700,000 (1.4 to 1 for the Pact).*

The Pentagon doesn't provide a figure for this. However, a more accurate calculation of the numbers from the White Paper's source (*The Military Balance 86-87*) is roughly NATO 2,450,000, Pact 2,250,000 -- or 1.1 to 1 for NATO (count includes all NATO forces in Europe and excludes all Soviet forces not in Europe).

**Bias #3 - Main Battle Tanks:** *NATO 20,000, Pact 47,000 (2.4 to 1 for the Pact).*

The Pentagon puts the balance at NATO 19,600, Pact 32,000 (only 1.6 to 1 for the Pact). As with the division numbers, even these Pentagon figures greatly exaggerate the size of Warsaw Pact forces compared to NATO's.

**Bias #4 - Artillery:** *NATO 9,000, Pact 24,000 (2.7 to 1 for the Pact).*

The Pentagon puts the balance at NATO 14,200, Pact 23,000 (only 1.5 to 1 for the Pact). Again, these figures exaggerate the Pact advantage.

**Bias #5 - Armed Helicopters:** *NATO 700, Pact 2,100 (3 to 1 for the Pact).*

The Pentagon puts the balance at NATO 650, Pact 960 (1.5 to 1 for the Pact), shifting to NATO 1,250, Pact 960 (1.3 to 1 for NATO) after reinforcements.

**Bias #6 - Principal Surface Combatants (large naval vessels):** *NATO 321, Pact 196 (1.6 to 1 for NATO).*

These figures include French naval forces, but depart from those listed in the *Military Balance* by adding some 70 Warsaw Pact "light frigates" to the Pact total. In a comparison of normal frigate-sized vessels and above, NATO (adding Spain) outnumbers the Pact by 344 to 126 (2.7 to 1 for NATO). Even these figures conceal the overwhelming nature of NATO's superiority in surface naval vessels, however, because NATO ships are generally far more capable than their individual Pact counterparts.

**Bias #7 - Attack Submarines:** *NATO 173, Pact 192 (1.1 to 1 for the Pact).*

This is apparently a mistake. The actual figures given by the *Military Balance* are NATO 183, Pact 191. Adding Spanish submarines makes it NATO 191, Pact 191. Once again, even these figures conceal NATO superiority. NATO submarines are generally far more capable than their Pact counterparts. Furthermore, NATO's antisubmarine capabilities (sensor systems, aircraft and surface vessels, as well as submarines) are vastly superior to those of the Pact.

**Bias #8 - Land Combat Aircraft:** *NATO 3,250, Pact 5,300 (1.6 TO 1 for the Pact).*

The Pentagon's numbers are similar, or even less optimistic. However, in neither case do these figures include aircraft from France and Spain or reinforcement aircraft from the United States. These additional aircraft make the numerical balance quite close. In qualitative terms (aircraft capabilities and pilot training), NATO aircraft are far superior. Such qualitative factors can be far more important than numbers alone (as was dramatically demonstrated by Israel in 1982, when it destroyed more than 80 Soviet-made Syrian aircraft for the loss of 1 of its own). Contrary to the numerical picture, NATO is widely considered to hold a large advantage in combat aircraft.



**Guns for peace?**

Quoted from the conclusion to the 1987 White Paper on Defence:

For the future, we will take a number of initiatives which will represent a significant and visible increase in the effectiveness of the Canadian Forces. We will create a modern navy... We will bolster our capacity for surveillance and defence... We will revitalize and enlarge the Reserves... We will consolidate our land and air commitments in Europe on the central front, thereby providing a more credible and sustainable contribution to collective security.

The Government will implement this program vigorously. Over time, our endeavours will produce a defence posture responsive to the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. Canadian security and sovereignty will be better served. Canada will become a more responsive ally. We will then have a firmer basis from which to contribute to peace and freedom.

Quoted from the conclusion to the 1964 White Paper on Defence, 23 years earlier:

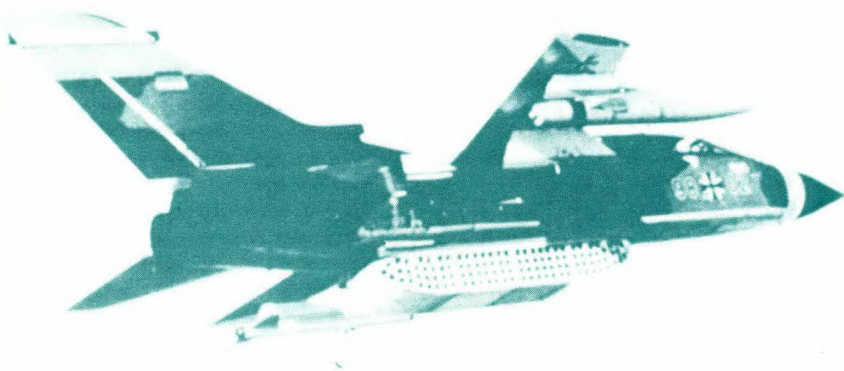
What [national and international] circumstances will be in the future no one can foretell. It is certain, however, that force is not the solution to the problems of peace and security in the world. Force alone, as all history shows, is not able to establish an enduring and creative peace...

The maintenance of adequate force [for deterrence] gives us the time in which men of wisdom, persistence and goodwill can work together to build a world where peace will be secured by stronger means than force.

If we fail to take advantage of the opportunity that time gives us, then peace, and with it civilization, may be lost.

## The conventional balance in Europe: Is NATO Hopelessly Outnumbered?

by Bill Robinson



**NATO is arming at a feverish pace with weapons like this German cluster weapon dispenser, but is all the worry about Soviet superiority really justified?**

*To men in forward units the [Warsaw Pact] enemy seemed everywhere. Their roaring aircraft filled the sky, ripping the earth with raking cannon fire. Their tanks came on in clanging black hordes, spouting flames and thunder. The fighting vehicles of their infantry surged into and between the forward positions of the Allied defence like clattering swarms of fire-breathing dragons. It looked as though nothing could stop the oncoming waves. There seemed to be no hope, no refuge anywhere."*<sup>1</sup>

This dramatic picture painted by General Sir John Hackett in his 1978 "future history" novel, *The Third World War*, describes a beleaguered NATO, outgunned and outmanned by the huge Soviet hordes pouring across the inter-German border -- a NATO saved only by a fictitious re-armament program undertaken a few years previously.

The picture the General painted is a common one: NATO analysts and NATO governments work from the

same paint-by-numbers kit when portraying the balance of conventional forces in Europe today. The most recent Pentagon figures, for example, tell us that the Warsaw Pact has 32,000 main battle tanks ready for combat in Europe to NATO's 19,600 and that the Pact has 133 combat divisions in Europe to NATO's 90.<sup>2</sup> The recent Canadian White Paper on defence includes figures suggesting an even greater Warsaw Pact force superiority (see sidebar story). The message comparisons like these are intended to relay is that NATO is hopelessly outnumbered by the Warsaw Pact in conventional forces in Europe.

The numbers seem convincing -- and NATO produces plenty of them -- but the reality is not so neatly tabulated. The "bean counts" NATO publicizes are created for public consumption, not for military planning. It is possible to select numerical comparisons that make NATO look strong -- for example, NATO outnumbered the Warsaw Pact in ground forces in Europe by about 2,450,000 to

2,250,000 and in total ground forces by about 3,200,000 to 2,800,000.<sup>3</sup> But such comparisons are not chosen. The comparisons NATO chooses are intended to make NATO look weak. In this way, the purveyors of these statistics build public support for existing defence policies and for even greater defence spending.

It is because these numbers provide much of the rationale for western defence policies that it is worth re-examining the accuracy of some of these counts and seeing what they really say about the balance of conventional forces in Europe. It is important to note at the outset of this effort that our examination of the conventional balance of forces is *not* based on the assumption that the Soviet Union is bent on the military conquest of Europe and will attempt to carry out that aim if NATO's relative conventional strength should ever fall below a certain level. To the contrary, the evidence suggests that the Soviet Union has a far greater interest in stability along the border between the military alliances, in increased commercial contact with Western Europe, and in peaceful relations in general. As Jonathan Dean, a former US ambassador to the mutual force reduction talks in Vienna, has commented, "the possibility of deliberate, aggressive Soviet attack for the sake of conquering and holding Western Europe ... has become so small as to be negligible."<sup>4</sup>

The reason for looking at the conventional balance in Europe is that the myth of overwhelming Soviet conventional superiority reinforces the attitudes of confrontation and fear that work to keep the arms race alive. The conventional balance is used as proof of the "aggressive intentions" of the Soviet Union; it is used as evidence of a need to build up NATO's conventional forces; and it is used as a justification for the continued presence of the thousands of nuclear warheads stockpiled throughout Western Europe and for NATO's associated "first-use" nuclear policy. It is because perceptions of the balance of forces

have real effects on the chances for peace that it is important to begin to separate myth from reality on this topic.

**NATO Numerology**

By carefully selecting the data it presents, NATO governments have created the impression of overwhelming conventional force on the side of the Warsaw Pact. The two examples mentioned earlier, the division and tank figures for the balance in Europe, are typical of the kinds of figures NATO presents. A re-examination of these comparisons reveals that they present a profoundly misleading picture of the conventional balance of forces.

According to the Pentagon, the standing balance in combat divisions in Europe (those "in place or rapidly deployable" to Europe) is 133 Pact divisions to 90 NATO divisions, or 1.5:1 in favour of the Pact. Taken at face value, NATO appears substantially outnumbered.

This "in place..." balance is more realistic than comparisons of the fully-mobilized reserve and regular forces of the two sides, but there are still several problems with the Pentagon's counting. Included on the Pact side of the count are some 15 Soviet Divisions that comprise the high-readiness divisions of the Soviet Union's Central Reserve, based near Moscow. These divisions would probably not be used in any invasion of Western Europe, but would be held back from battle in order to act as a reserve force. In line with this assumption, even previous NATO and Pentagon assessments did not include them in the "in place..." balance.<sup>5</sup>

Also counted are some 7 Soviet Divisions and at least 18 Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish and Romanian divisions that are kept at an extremely low level of combat readiness (so-called Category III divisions). Despite being based close to potential battle areas, these units are unlikely to be available for combat for 2 or more months after being mobilized.<sup>6</sup> They should not be counted in the "in place..." balance either.

Missing from the NATO side of the count, on the other hand, are some 20 French and Spanish divisions which are not counted at all.<sup>7</sup> French and Spanish forces are excluded by NATO from all NATO-Warsaw Pact comparisons on the ostensible grounds that these forces are not integrated into the NATO military struc-

ture. This is true, but it ignores the fact that both countries are nevertheless members of NATO -- both are committed to the defence of the other NATO members. France actually has 3 armoured divisions permanently based in West Germany for just that purpose.

Adjusting the Pentagon's numbers to account for all of these factors produces a very different estimate of the balance of divisions in Europe: 110 NATO divisions to 93 Pact divisions, or 1.2:1 in favour of NATO! This assumes that all of the NATO divisions listed as being "in place or rapidly deployable" can be brought up to combat readiness in a reasonably short time (which is probably the case).

Of course, varying the assumptions used in such counts will produce different results: for example, if the Soviet Central Reserve force is counted after all, then the balance of divisions is almost 1:1. A balance in the Pact's favour might be produced by assuming significant mobilization delays among NATO forces or a much greater than expected level of early mobilization among Pact forces. However, what is clear from these figures is that, contrary to the popular myth, the normal balance of forces in Europe is quite close.

Furthermore, there is another problem with these division comparisons, which is that "division" is a very imprecise unit of combat power: different divisions from different countries have very different compositions. Warsaw Pact divisions generally have more tanks, but NATO

divisions tend to have more personnel and support units. "On the average," according to Jonathan Dean, "NATO divisions are much larger than Pact divisions, with 18,000 men in Federal German or US divisions, as compared with 13,000 in recently enlarged Soviet motorized rifle divisions or the 9,500 men of an East German armoured division. [Federal] German divisions actually have 22,000 men at full wartime strength when their assigned replacement personnel are taken into account, about twice the size of the average Pact division."<sup>8</sup>

NATO credits the divisions of both sides as having "similar combat power," on the grounds that the Pact units have "more tanks and artillery." Many analysts, including Dean, disagree with that assessment, arguing that many NATO divisions are considerably stronger and more effective than Pact divisions. If this is true, then NATO's position in Europe is even stronger than the division numbers alone would indicate.

**The balance of tanks**

The other comparison frequently cited as proof of Soviet conventional might is the balance of tanks in Europe. The Pentagon counts 32,000 Pact tanks in Europe to NATO's 19,600 -- 1.6:1 in favour of the Pact.

These figures are not as outrageous as some earlier official figures have been (in 1982, NATO put the balance at 42,500 to 13,000), but they still suffer from many of the same failings as the Pentagon's division counts. Included in the Warsaw Pact count, for example, are the tanks



**Soviet tanks on maneuvers: armoured forces are very closely matched, as the table (over) indicates.**

### *An Alternative "bean count"*

#### *NATO-Warsaw Pact Balance of Ground Forces*

	NATO	Warsaw Pact
1. Ground forces personnel (normal peacetime): total	3,200,000	2,800,000
2. Ground forces personnel (normal peacetime): Europe	2,450,000	2,250,000
3. Divisions (in place or rapidly deployable): Europe	110	93
4. Main Battle Tanks (in place or rapidly deployable): Europe	21,600	23,100
5. Ground-attack aircraft (reinforced)	3,450	2,600
6. Attack helicopters (reinforced)	1,250	970

NOTES: 1,2,3,4: see text; 5,6: US Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power 1987*, p. 92-93.

(about 3,400) equipping the 15 or so Soviet Central Reserve divisions. Also included are the tanks (about 5,500) equipping the 7 Soviet and 18 non-Soviet Category III divisions that the Pentagon counts as "in place..." Subtracting these 8,900 tanks from the Warsaw Pact total leaves about 23,100 Pact tanks "in place or rapidly deployable" in Europe.

On the NATO side of the count, French and Spanish forces (about 2,000 tanks) are once again incorrectly excluded. Adding these to the NATO total brings it up to about 21,600 tanks.

Precise tank counts are difficult to obtain and depend on a number of different assumptions; however, assuming that the Pentagon's tank figures are basically correct (after the above adjustments), the balance of tanks "in place..." in Europe is about 23,100 to 21,600, or 1.1:1 in favour of the Pact -- once again, a very small difference in force size.

Furthermore, as with division numbers, simple tank numbers are misleading. NATO tanks are considerably more effective than Warsaw Pact tanks. As Tom Gervasi comments in his recent book, *The Myth of Soviet Military Supremacy*, NATO tanks are "more heavily armoured and more manoeuvrable. They also have more sophisticated sighting and range-finding equipment. They carry more ammunition, and can fire it more quickly, with greater accuracy, at higher muzzle velocities and consequently with far more lethal effect, than their Soviet counterparts do."<sup>9</sup>

Pact tanks are more prone to

mechanical failure, breaking down as frequently as every 200 kilometres. In addition, Pact divisions have a much lower capability to repair their tanks and return them to action (one of the consequences of their smaller divisional manpower), meaning that the balance between *working* tanks on each side is likely to be even closer.

Pact tanks can even be dangerous to their own crews. According to one report, the automatic gun loader on some Pact tanks "sometimes selects either [the tank gunner's] leg or arm and loads that into the breech instead. One US Army officer has been quoted as suggesting 'this is how the Red Army Chorus gets its soprano section.'"<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the many different anti-tank weapons, such as guided missiles and anti-tank guns, must also be considered: tanks don't just fight tanks. The Warsaw Pact may have thousands of tanks, but NATO has some 400,000 anti-tank weapons available to defend against armoured attack, some of which are extremely effective. NATO also has superior ground-attack aircraft (both in numbers and in quality), which would be devastating in attacks against armoured vehicles.

#### **What do the numbers really mean?**

As the division and tank examples show, the "bean counts" upon which the myth of overwhelming Warsaw Pact force is based can be wildly inaccurate. Even when the counts are correct, the balance they imply can be very misleading -- as when qualita-

tive factors are ignored.

"Bean counts" are also misleading in a deeper sense. The size of a force rarely pre-determines the outcome of a war. Strategy, leadership, training, morale, supply, air support, and many other factors -- including luck -- play crucial roles.<sup>11</sup> Numbers counts ignore all of these factors.

As a result, assessments based on a few numerical comparisons, even when carefully pieced together, can only give a crude outline of the military balance: such comparisons do not foretell the future. The selective and often contrived comparisons that NATO publicizes are essentially meaningless.

#### **The conventional balance**

How does NATO stack up against the Warsaw Pact in the balance of conventional forces? When NATO's numbers are examined a little more realistically, the forces of the two alliances appear very nearly matched. It is possible to argue for different figures, favouring the Warsaw Pact, by, for example, postulating a much greater Pact mobilization of reserves. What is clear, however, is that the unstoppable Warsaw Pact hordes of popular repute are a myth.

This fact is actually fairly widely recognized in the analytical community. John Mearsheimer, for example, argues that "...the conventional wisdom is wrong; NATO presently has the capability to thwart a Soviet attack."<sup>12</sup> Jane Sharp contends that "the strengths of NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces are such that neither side could seriously contemplate attacking the other."<sup>13</sup> Even the International Institute for Strategic Studies, which tends to publish "bean counts" like those of NATO, concedes that "the conventional overall balance is still such as to make general military aggression a highly risky undertaking for either side."<sup>14</sup>

On rare occasions, this fact is even acknowledged by the military. In 1983, in a statement that must have set alarm bells ringing all through the NATO military establishment, the Commander of the US Army in Europe, General Frederick Kroesen, stated that

It disappoints me to hear people talk about the overwhelming Soviet conventional military strength. We can defend the borders of Western Europe with what we have. I've never asked for a larger force. I do not think that conventional defence is any-

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