

to have sufficiently concentrated combat power to withstand the assaults of forces many times its size for extended periods before requiring reinforcement. Over time, the defence will be worn down in the face of overwhelming odds, but only at great cost in time and manpower to the attacker.

3. Geography - The ideal terrain for offensive mechanized operations consists of open, rolling plains allowing maximum speed and manoeuvrability for massed formations of tanks and armoured fighting vehicles. The more obstacles - natural and/or man-made - blocking the advance of attacking armoured forces and concealing defending forces, the greater the advantage enjoyed by the defender. The terrain in West Germany provides some formidable obstacles to a rapid armoured offensive by the Warsaw Pact. The forests and mountains of southern Germany and the urban sprawl spreading throughout the North German Plain limit the possible axes of attack open to invading forces from the East. Moreover, the 'canalization' of Warsaw Pact forces along these axes of attack allows NATO to concentrate its defences in these areas, further enhancing the prospects for successful defence of West German territory, all things being equal.<sup>10</sup>

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available forces may require units to defend longer fronts to prevent the opening of gaps along the line. These and other considerations illustrate the caution with which estimates of force-to-space ratios must be regarded.

<sup>10</sup> Certainly, other axes of attack in less hospitable terrain may be used but only at the cost of restricted mobility and slower rates of advance for attacking mechanized forces. However, the effect of tactical surprise--attacking through lightly-defended sectors in which no offensive is expected given the rough terrain--may compensate for these operational problems.