Sources:

The Military Balance 1985-86, pp. 16-36, and The Military Balance 1986-87, pp. 31-54; "Warsaw Pact Forces in Europe: A New Survey--Part One," Jane's Defence Weekly, 28 March 1987, pp. 650-653; Gervasi, pp. 440-486; and, Mako, p. 44.

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Conflict Scenarios - The Assumptions

Why do assessments of the conventional theatre force balance differ? Most agree that the peacetime balance of forces - those currently stationed in East and West Germany - would not necessarily constitute the actual order of battle in a possible armed confrontation. The forces included or excluded from consideration depend upon the conflict scenario as defined by the analyst. Factors determining the scenario include mobilization and warning time, other theatre commitments, and the reliability of allied forces.

1. Mobilization and Warning Time - With the order to mobilize, active and reserve forces are raised to peak combat readiness and then transported to the theatre of operations. The rate at which mobilization proceeds depends upon the training and equipment of forces and their distance from the front lines, rates which differ within and between armies. All assessments measure the balance of forces, whether implicitly or explicitly, at some stage in the mobilization process, ranging from M+4 (i.e. four days after mobilization begins) to M+120. This accounts in part for differences in the absolute and relative balance of forces as presented in various analyses. For example, some may include forces ready for combat after only four days of mobilization while others may include those mobilized after ninety days. The choice depends upon the analyst's estimation of the time available for mobilization before hostilities erupt.