

armed with nuclear devices or conventional ones. Chemical weapons also present some difficulties, since they are more like mass-destruction nuclear systems, than conventional weapons, in their effects. These complexities cause problems in calculating the military balance and in working out reductions.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME FIGURES

The front line

There is a good description of the state of NATO armies on and near the front line in *The Economist*, 30 August 1986, in a special survey entitled "NATO'S Central Front." Pages 4 and 7 contain maps showing that we need to count not only these troops and weapons right on the front line, but also those a little further back in the various sectors assigned to the allied national armies. NATO has divided the front up into Dutch, German, British, Belgian, and American sectors, organized mainly in two large formations: Northern Army Group (NORTHAG); and Central Army Group (CENTAG). The Canadian mechanized brigade group and many other allied forces are not in these forward sectors, but in rear areas starting about 160 kilometres behind the front line.

The maps on page 7 of this *Economist* survey also show the deployment of Warsaw Pact armies in Central Europe. All the Soviet and East German ready divisions in the German Democratic Republic have to be considered close to the front line — because the country is small and narrow — as do the Soviet and Czechoslovak divisions in Western Czechoslovakia.

Another helpful map of the deployment on the two sides is provided in an article by Peter Almond, entitled "Soviet tank outguns the best in the West," in *The Washington Times*, 6 January 1988. If you want to go a little further and look at lists of the main NATO and Warsaw Pact divisions and brigades in Central Europe, a good reference is Appendix H of a book by Tom Gervasi, entitled *The Myth of Soviet Military Supremacy*.

Judging by these sources, NATO has about 21 divisions on or near the front line plus about a dozen specialized brigades or regiments — a brigade is usually about one third of a division while a regiment is generally smaller. The Warsaw Pact has about 34 divisions on or close to the front line. These are the forces that would be ready almost immediately, on the battle line, if a war broke out suddenly.

However, these figures are not much help when it comes to comparing the true strengths of the two sides on the front line, because, as already noted, the sizes of different divisions can vary a great deal. Manpower levels and equipment holdings can differ radically depending on the tasks of the divisions, their location on the line and so on.

When the above figures are converted to Armoured

Division Equivalents (ADEs) like the one mentioned earlier, we arrive at figures along these lines: the Warsaw Pact has about 30 ADEs — 24 Soviet and 6 other East European — close to the front line, with a total of about 9,000 main battle tanks; NATO has about 20 ADEs with almost 6,000 main battle tanks. Each side also has a range of other equipment including attack helicopters, artillery pieces, bridging systems, armoured fighting vehicles, anti-tank weapons and surface-to-air missiles.

Wider geographic zones

In most circumstances, a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact starting on the Central Front in Europe would rapidly draw in forces other than those already on the front line. Warsaw Pact divisions in Poland and Eastern Czechoslovakia would be pushed forward, while NATO rushed to bring up its own divisions stationed in the rear parts of Germany or in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Reserves would also be called out to man territorial army or similar formations, and American and British troops would be flown in to Germany to man tanks and other equipment which are prepositioned there. As the fighting continued through the first week and beyond, additional reinforcements would pour into the Central Front from the Western parts of the Soviet Union, from the United Kingdom, France, Canada, the United States and other countries.

There are many different estimates of the numbers of troops, tanks and other equipment in the various geographic areas. Counting divisional organizations and manpower is especially difficult since it depends whether we count reserve divisions as equal to active ones, what assessments we make of mobilization capabilities, whether we count frontier guards and amphibious forces among the ground forces, and so on. For example, in the MBFR negotiations, East and West have never been able to agree on the numbers of ground troops the Warsaw Pact has in Central Europe: estimates of this figure vary from about 800,000 to over 1 million.

One of the best sources of information on the world's military forces is the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, England. This organization recently produced a new table on the East-West conventional military balance in Europe which is likely to be a standard reference for those interested in the field. In *The Military Balance, 1987-88*, it set out figures showing forces in: the NATO Guidelines Area — the same as the Central European zone we discussed earlier; in Europe from the Atlantic to Urals; and then on a global basis. There are also useful figures on the balance of naval forces and naval air forces in European/Atlantic waters as well as globally. (See Table 1.)