

NATO, Warsaw Pact face off in Europe

by Luba George

Western Europe became a battleground this week, as both NATO and the Warsaw Pact initiated the largest maneuvers since World War II.

The NATO maneuvers, the annual Autumn Forge, include over 500,000 troops, with at least 130,000 elite British troops who are simulating a landing into Western Europe.

The Soviet maneuvers, called Shield '84, are comprised of somewhat over 100,000 troops, concentrated in Czechoslovakia. Unlike the NATO maneuvers, however, the Soviet exercises are only the latest phase in a continuous series of maneuvers which began in January 1984, and have tested the invasion of northern Germany, the shutoff of Europe from the United States, and a breakthrough into the Aegean Sea—to name only a few operations.

While few expect that the Soviets will proceed with an actual invasion while the Autumn Forge maneuvers are ongoing, the result of the Soviet maneuvers to date has been to soften up Western Europe for a potential invasion. Both Yugoslavia and Austria are currently warning about the potential for Soviet invasion of their countries. In addition, Soviet allies in the Kissinger-Carrington group in Western Europe are playing their part to disrupt NATO defenses—weakening the alliance politically and militarily in the face of threatened Soviet aggression.

If this political course is not reversed by initiatives from the United States, the conclusion of the NATO maneuvers will find Western Europe more vulnerable than ever to a Soviet adventurist action which will be geared to take control of Western Europe once and for all.

The Warsaw Pact Shield '84 maneuvers are only the latest phase in what is one continuous series of maneuvers that have been ongoing since January, a “dress rehearsal” for a blitzkrieg, in the words of the West German weekly *Bayernkurier* Sept. 6. The paper quoted officials of the Yugoslavian and Austrian general staffs to the effect that their nations are “operative targets” of the Soviet maneuvers.

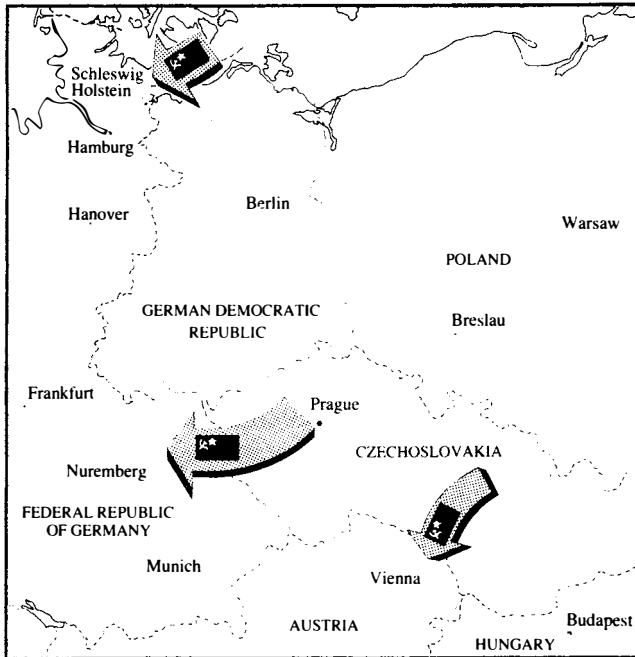
Preparations for nuclear war

Whatever the Soviets intend, they apparently did not want the maneuvers observed. According to West German spokesmen on Sept. 12, the Soviets did not invite Western observers to the maneuvers. Nor did they accept an invitation to send their observers to NATO exercises currently under way.

Two recent articles in the Soviet “civilian” press underscore the fact that these maneuvers are intended to rehearse the full integration of conventional and nuclear war-fighting capabilities by the Red Army.

Soviet Commander of Ground Forces Marshal Vasili Petrov wrote in *Pravda* Sept. 9 that Soviet tank forces “are now marked by a cohesion and solidity that allows large tactical and operational self-sufficiency in action cut off from that of the main forces. . . . *They are now more adapted to swift actions in conditions where nuclear weapons are being used* [emphasis added].”

Col.-Gen. M. D. Popkov, the political commander of the Soviet Ground Forces, released a similar message in *Izvestia* one day earlier.



Another unusual feature of the maneuvers was the fact that they were preceded by a sudden convocation of the defense ministers of all the Warsaw Pact countries in Prague. The meeting, presided over by Defense Minister Ustinov, included commanders from Romania, Mongolia, and Cuba, as well as the traditional Warsaw Pact participants.

Crumbling on NATO's flanks

The Warsaw Pact drive on southeastern Europe is taking advantage of one of the Soviets' strongest flanks. For while the Soviets practice driving into the Aegean, the Social Democratic government of Greece is doing everything possible to sabotage NATO defenses, if not to join the Warsaw Pact.

Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, who recently scuttled the Sept. 17 joint Greek-U.S. maneuvers, announced this past week that Greece will *shut down air traffic over the Aegean and intercept approaching military aircraft* if NATO goes ahead with the planned air maneuvers scheduled for later this month.

scheduled to enter Athens-controlled air space. This raises the possibility of either a conflict between Greece and NATO, or the cancellation of this section of the NATO maneuvers.

The reason given by Third Rome puppet Andreas Papandreou? "For us, Turkey and not the Soviet Union is the only visible danger." (See *Attic Chronicle*, page 48.)

The Greek government threat was given prominent play on nationwide Greek state TV and radio on Sept. 4, just after it was "officially" announced by the Soviet news agency TASS that Igor Andropov, son of the former president Yuri Andropov, has been appointed Soviet ambassador to Greece.

The Sept. 2 edition of the Soviet daily *Izvestia* lauds the anti-American actions in Greece aimed at shutting down American bases.

Soviet intimidation is also having an obvious effect on the northern flank. It was in early July that the Soviet marines demonstrated their capability to land on the main Danish islands which guard the entrance to the Baltic, including the island which contains Danish capital Copenhagen! But this week, the political response came.

On Sept. 7, the Danish Radical Party, a small left-liberal grouping in the parliament, called on Denmark to leave NATO. Should the Danish Social Democracy follow suit, this would produce the same alignment that killed the cruise missile deployment in Denmark, and would rupture NATO's northern and central fronts.

Rogers' warnings to Soviets

In response to the severity of the Soviet threat, a series of "get tough" measures have been announced by NATO commander Gen. Bernard Rogers this past week. Rogers bluntly informed the Soviets of penalties they would incur should they invade Western Europe—including the use of nuclear weapons very quickly following any Soviet attack. Rogers added that Soviet chemical warfare would be matched by NATO's use of chemical weapons.

"If attacked conventionally, under my guidance, I would have no option but to request the release of nuclear weapons fairly quickly," warned Rogers on Sept. 4 at a press conference in Brussels on the opening of the "Autumn Forge" maneuvers. Here he also called for the renewed development of chemical weapons, halted by the United States since 1969. But Rogers stressed that he is already "prepared to retaliate in kind against the use of chemicals against us."

In an unprecedented move that underlined the commitment of NATO to defend West Germany, General Rogers one day earlier had announced the appointment of Gen. Hans-Joachim Mack, a German, to head the NATO Nuclear Weapons Planning Group. Hitherto responsibility for nuclear matters has always been assigned to the British deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander.

The NATO maneuvers themselves indicate the same attitude toward the seriousness of the Soviet threat that General Rogers has indicated. Correctly concluding that Warsaw Pact military doctrine calls for massive use of chemical warfare measures, this year's NATO maneuvers include serious training against the Soviet use of chemical weapons. The other new element on the NATO side is that the maneuvers, for the first time ever, are to include the participation of major units from the West German *Bereitschaftspolizei* (military preparedness police) and the *Bundesgrenzschutz* (border guards). They will be a component in anti-*spetznaz* (Soviet special forces) exercises, e.g., against saboteur activities targeting major NATO military installations.