

Reforger/Certain Strike: U.S. troops crucial for the defense of Europe

by Dean Andromidas and Rainer Apel

During the closing weeks of summer and early autumn, NATO holds its annual Autumn Forge exercises throughout NATO's northern, southern, and central regions. Held in areas from the northern tip of Norway to the Black Sea, these exercises are to practice the same operations required to defend the nations of NATO.

From the last week of August through September, NATO held its most important military exercises: Reforger and Certain Strike. Their importance lies in the fact that these exercises rehearsed the ability of the United States to reinforce Western Europe in the face of an imminent Soviet attack, and to conduct a defense and counterattack. Seventy-eight thousand men and women participated from the United States, West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Great Britain, as well as France, despite its non-integrated status with respect to NATO's multinational military structure.

For the first time since NATO exercises have been held:

- The United States sent an *entire corps*, including two divisions comprising over 35,000 men and women.
- The U.S. troops were deployed to the northern part of Germany to reinforce the zone assigned to British, Dutch, Belgian, and German forces, demonstrating the continuing ability for cooperation among the multinational forces comprising NATO's Central Region.
- Counter-*spetsnaz* (the Russian acronym for special forces) operations were exercised, clearly indicating a rising concern within NATO over Soviet irregular warfare capabilities.

Not unnoticed was the fact that these exercises were held under the shadow of the proposed INF agreement nicknamed "Zero-Zero Option," which threatens to pull down the West's nuclear arsenal; and continuing calls for U.S. troop withdrawal by certain circles in Washington. At the opening press conference of the exercises on Sept. 15, the new Supreme Allied Commander, General John R. Galvin, in answer to a question on whether he agreed with the Zero-Zero Option, declared: "We are not satisfied with the level of risk" provided by a Zero-Zero Option, unless certain measures proposed by his predecessor, Bernard Rogers, were implemented. Galvin went even further in an answer to a question on the need for nuclear weapons: "I do not see a way to defend Europe without nuclear weapons. . . . It is not a question of a nucle-

ar-free Europe but a war-free Europe." He went on to state his support for the development of a new nuclear "stand-off" weapon. On the question of U.S. troop withdrawal, the general underlined the absolute necessity for the current level of American troops in West Germany, "Their presence is needed to deal with the possibility of a surprise attack from the Warsaw Pact. . . . If we drop their size the possibility for surprise attack increases."

This report should demonstrate the pertinency General Galvin's warnings, defining the necessity for American troops and the absolute requirement not only for nuclear weapons, but for systems and technologies capable of dealing with the considerable Soviet threat to the most crucial front in Western Europe.

Defending Europe's central region

The task before NATO is tremendous given the superiority in sheer numbers alone of the Soviet military machine. Under Soviet Marshal Ogarkov's war plans, new and more effective weapons systems, such as the MiG-29 fulcrum, MiG-31 Foxhound, and Su-27 Flanker, are aimed at achieving earlier air superiority. New deep-strike ground systems are also being deployed, including the new BM-27 220 mm multiple rocket launcher system, capable of firing 16 round salvos of high-explosive munitions or chemical rounds a distance of 40 kilometers. The Soviets also plan further deployment of the new generation of accurate SS-21 and SS-23 missiles with ranges of 80-100 kilometers and 500 kilometers, respectively. Both are capable of carrying nuclear or chemical warheads, and neither come under any INF agreement.

Moreover, Soviet tank divisions have not only been augmented by more new T-80 tanks, but a growing number of older models have been fitted out with the T-80's new reactive armor, capable of withstanding many of the anti-tank weapons in the NATO armies' inventories. Air defenses have been beefed up with the new SA-12A system and further deployment of the SA-11 system.

Overall force comparisons can be seen in **Table 1**.

The deployment of these very powerful and capable systems is woven into a solely *offensive* war fighting doctrine that envisions the early seizure of the initiative by surprise,



U.S. helicopters arriving at the port of Rotterdam for the Reforger maneuvers. Despite peacetime precautions, the arrival of the American forces from the United States took only two-three days.

striking deep into NATO's rear area. The doctrine would attempt to overpower NATO's air bases and nuclear installations, as well as command and control centers, through the deployment of nuclear strike, air operations, or spetsnaz capabilities most likely *prior* to the mobilization of NATO's forces. Overwhelming Soviet superiority in aircraft, armor, and firepower would assist the high-speed offensive through West Germany and Central Europe.

Soviet strategic and theater capabilities are indeed formidable; nonetheless, their very offensive character harbors a potential weakness. It is believed that the highly centralized Soviet command structure works to stifle initiative at the

lower command levels and the level of the individual soldier. Its solely offensive doctrine contributes to an inflexibility that could find it unable to adjust rapidly to unforeseen surprises, be it on the battlefield or through the introduction of new technologies, as has been seen in their reaction to the Strategic Defense Initiative. But it is this offensive character that also leads specialists to the conclusion that the Soviets would launch a first strike, if not indeed a total surprise attack not preceded by the "period of tensions" most NATO scenarios envision.

NATO's overall doctrine often takes this into account and has been premised on the balance of imbalances. It has been NATO's conviction that the technological superiority of its aircraft and ground-based systems, particularly nuclear weapons, including neutron and tactical nuclear weapons, work to offset Soviet superiority in numbers. Moreover, Western military doctrine sees its citizen-soldiers, trained in a doctrine that stresses initiative and leadership at all levels, as the crucial factor.

Reinforcing Europe

The problem confronting NATO for the defense of the Central Region is the question of *time* and *space* and the related question of *depth*. The Warsaw Pact deploys 95 divisions, 63 of them Soviet first-line Red Army divisions, directed at West Germany. These troops are deployed in a 500-mile wide corridor between the West German border and

TABLE 1
Force comparisons

	NATO	Warsaw Pact
Divisions	35	95
Main battle tanks	7,600	25,000
Armored personnel carriers and light tanks	19,350	43,000
Artillery	4,500	17,500
Fighter aircraft	1,900	3,990

the Soviet Union, including East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. This is a distance that enables Soviet reinforcement or pre-position of additional forces for attack through a distance not much further than between Boston and Washington, D.C. It is a distance an army can traverse, with its battle equipment, in a matter of a few days, a factor enhanced by the fact that the motion is along internal lines of communication. On the other hand, the Soviet Union possesses great depth for maneuver if NATO should succeed in mounting a penetrating counterattack, given the protective belt comprising Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia provided it by the Yalta Agreement.

By contrast, NATO lines of supply are immense, over exposed ocean and air space. American troops comprise almost 30% of troop strength deployed in the Central Region from the North German Danish border down to the German-Swiss/German Austrian borders. Those troops must be supplied over a distance of 6,000-7,000 miles. Meanwhile, NATO's depth is extremely shallow with a distance of no more the 200 miles between the German-German border and France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and no more than 400 miles to the northern seaports of Antwerp and Rotterdam, five days' march or less if Western defenses are broken at the border. Needless to say, this leaves little space for maneuver. While the Soviets can bring up reserves from regions at a distance from the war zone, the Allied reserves of West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, etc. would have the almost impossible task of calling up reserves in the midst of a battle zone.

These considerations and the real possibility of a Soviet surprise attack make the factor of *time* crucial. Here the question of a Tactical Air Defense Initiative that can respond faster than a "march from the barracks" and deny the Soviets air superiority, this most important of flanks, is the key imperative. Second is a nuclear capability that can be initiated in a matter of minutes and can strike deeply into Soviet staging areas and key strategic command and control targets. It is this capability that President Reagan threatens to sign away with the INF treaty.

Reforger (REturn FORces GERmany) had as its purpose the exercise of NATO and American strategic mobility, in this case the transportation of the entire American III Corps of two divisions to Western Europe in a matter of days. It is important to note that the scenario for which Reforger was planned was that of a "deterrent" move, that is a reinforcement in a period of tension *prior* to a Soviet attack. It would be highly illusionary to imagine moving such masses in the midst of a full-scale war, especially when the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp are high on the first-strike list of Soviet war planners. A point, also underscored by General Galvin, which makes current U.S. troop deployments an absolute necessity.

The III Corps is based in Fort Hood, Texas, and comprises the 1st Cavalry Division, the 2nd Armored Division, and the 4th Infantry Division. Although the first two divisions

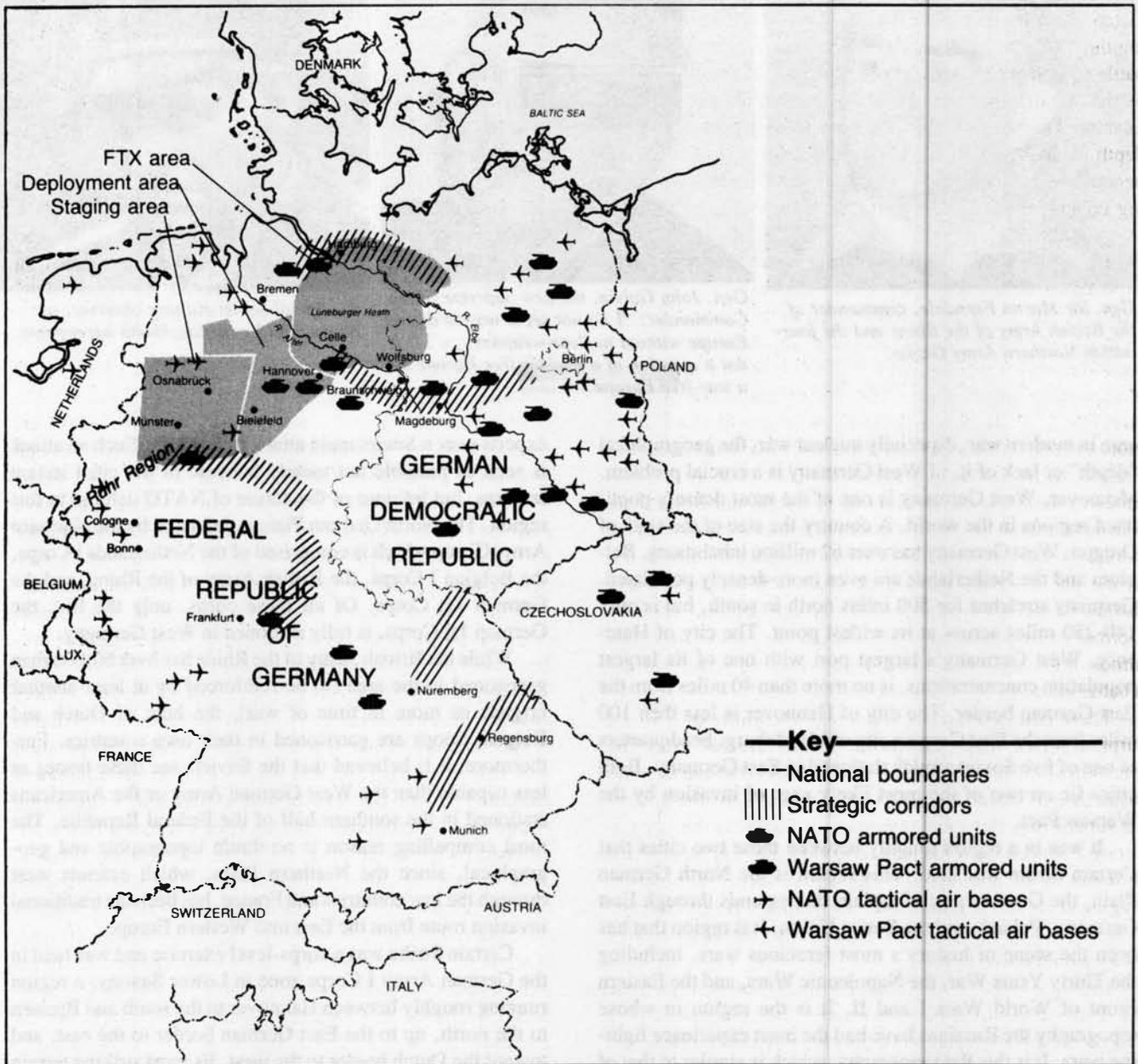
came in their entirety, the 4th Division only sent its headquarters. Although the Corps artillery was represented by only its headquarters, the Corps sent the 6th (Air Combat) Cavalry Brigade, which included its deadly new Apache attack helicopter and Black Hawk squad helicopter which had made such a good showing in the War on Drugs in Bolivia. Other personnel included the full regalia of units required for such organizations, including engineering units, signal and intelligence units, and support troops.

This is the first time the United States has sent almost a full corps to Western Europe in an operation that took four weeks, but could have taken two weeks or less time owing to the fact that a certain amount of care must be taken in moving such masses of men and material in normal times. One of the biggest questions is safety. It must be remembered that unlike in the United States where military exercises are held in rather remote military reservations in scarcely populated areas, all exercises in Europe are held literally in the backyards of the most populated regions in the world. Imagine the West German III Corps with 40,000 men being transported through the Port of New York and John F. Kennedy Airport on its way to to join 43,000 other troops, some of whom could have traveled overland from Canada and the United States to take part in an exercise to be held in the suburbs of New Jersey between New York and Philadelphia. Despite the considerable care taken to avoid mishaps, several civilian deaths occurred due to vehicular accidents, and several million dollars' worth of damage to private property.

Despite peacetime precautions, it took only two to three days for the bulk of the corps to arrive by nearly 100 flights of special troop transport aircraft. The speed of the operation was helped by the fact that 90% of the corps equipment including tanks, armored personnel carriers, engineering equipment, ammunition, etc. has been permanently pre-positioned in West Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. This matériel is called POMCUS (prePOsitioned Material Configured in Unit Sets). Other equipment, such as helicopters, arrived through the port of Rotterdam or was airlifted. If required, Apache and Black Hawk helicopters are designed to be transported in heavy transport aircraft such as the Lockheed C5s, or can be self-deployed from the United States via Iceland.

The American III Corps, equipped with the new M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank, the M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, and the Multiple Launch Rocket System, is the most modern equipped armored formation in the free world, and is designated as part of the U.S. Army Strategic Army Corps. Although based in Fort Hood, Texas, it has the reinforcement of Europe as its primary wartime assignment and maintains a permanent staff in West Germany. In fact, the Corps was fully reactivated in 1961 in response to the Berlin Crisis. In West Germany, it will join the American V Corps headquartered in Frankfurt and the VII Corps based in Stuttgart in the defense of Western Europe. When reinforced by the 49th Armored Texas National Guard Division, the III Corps alone

Certain Strike exercises defense of Central Front



is larger and has more firepower than the combined standing armies of Belgium and the Netherlands, and is one-third the size of the West German Army.

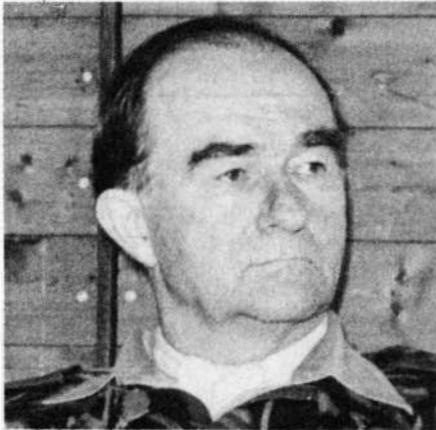
Defending the central region

Following Reforger was *Certain Strike*, an *operational and tactical* field training exercise. Here we can get a glimpse of what the battlefield of Western Europe will look like, and what it takes to deter or win a war in Central Europe.

In the defense of Europe, West Germany is the keystone.

It occupies the center of NATO's north-south border with the Soviet Union. It is opposite the highest concentration of Soviet troops and firepower in the world. Here the armies of NATO, including the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and of course, the West German army, have garrisoned troops, and each nation has a "slice" of the front. Even France, which does not participate in the military organization of NATO, maintains garrisons under the Potsdam Agreement and has participated in NATO exercises.

With the questions of time and space of paramount con-



Gen. Sir Martin Farndale, commander of the British Army of the Rhine and the four-nation Northern Army Group.



Gen. John Galvin, the new Supreme Allied Commander: "I do not see a way to defend Europe without nuclear weapons. . . . It is not a question of a nuclear free Europe but a war-free Europe."



An official Soviet military observer, as allowed under the Stockholm agreements.

cern in modern war, especially nuclear war, the geographical "depth" or lack of it, of West Germany is a crucial problem. Moreover, West Germany is one of the most densely populated regions in the world. A country the size of the state of Oregon, West Germany has over 62 million inhabitants. Belgium and the Netherlands are even more densely populated. Germany stretches for 500 miles north to south, but is only 140-250 miles across at its widest point. The city of Hamburg, West Germany's largest port with one of its largest population concentrations, is no more than 40 miles from the East German border. The city of Hannover is less than 100 miles from the East German city of Magdeburg, headquarters of one of five Soviet armies stationed in East Germany. Both cities lie on two of the most likely axes of invasion by the Warsaw Pact.

It was in a region roughly between these two cities that Certain Strike was held. This region is the North German Plain, the German part of a plain that extends through East Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union. It is region that has been the scene of history's most ferocious wars, including the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Eastern Front of World Wars I and II. It is the region in whose topography the Russians have had the most experience fighting wars. It is this flat topography, which is similar to that of Russia itself, that Soviet offensive doctrine as well as Soviet equipment have been designed for.

It contrasts sharply with the southern half of Germany, which is predominantly low mountains and broken countryside with large forested areas, a topography relatively hostile to the large armored formations and high-speed offensive doctrine of the Soviets. Moreover it is in this southern region where American and West German forces, those rated highest in capability by the Soviets, are based.

The decision to send the American III Corps to the northern region, for the first time in NATO's history, is seen as highly significant in light of the recent concern of NATO

experts over a Soviet main attack in this area. Such an attack is seen as possible not merely because of the cited terrain features, but because of the nature of NATO defense in this region. The North German Plain is defended by the Northern Army Group which is comprised of the Netherlands I Corps, the Belgian I Corps, the British Army of the Rhine, and the German 1st Corps. Of all these corps, only the last, the German 1st Corps, is fully stationed in West Germany.

While the British Army of the Rhine has over 60,000 men garrisoned in the area (to be reinforced by at least another brigade or more in time of war), the bulk of Dutch and Belgian troops are garrisoned in their own countries. Furthermore, it is believed that the Soviets see these troops as less capable than the West German Army or the Americans stationed in the southern half of the Federal Republic. The most compelling reason is no doubt topographic and geographical, since the Northern Plain, which extends west through the low countries and France, has been the traditional invasion route from the East into Western Europe.

Certain Strike was a corps-level exercise and was held in the German Army I Corps zone in Lower Saxony, a region running roughly between Hannover to the south and Bremen to the north, up to the East German border to the east, and toward the Dutch border to the west. Its most striking terrain feature is the Lüneburger Heath, a vast stretch of swampy moors covered with wheat fields, sheep grazing land, and forests. Much of its swampy ground is unable to support the weight of tanks.

In the armies of NATO countries, the corps formation, comprising between two and four divisions, is the basic *operational* formation as opposed to *strategic/theater* or *tactical* formations. There are eight corps areas in the Central Region, each occupying a "slice" of the front from the southern edge of Schleswig-Holstein in northern Germany to the Swiss/Austrian borders to the south. The First German Corps, along with the Dutch, British, and Belgian corps, comprises

the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) whose commander is General Sir Martin Farndale, who also serves as Commander of the British Army of the Rhine. The remainder of the front, comprising the American V and VII Corps and the German II and III Corps (including smaller Canadian formations) comprise the Central Army Group (CENTAG). Its Commander in Chief General Glenn K. Otis, also serves as Commander in Chief of U.S. Forces Europe. The exercise was in turn supported by the Allied Air Forces Central Europe with the exercise Cold Fire, which flew over 500 sorties a day.

The Certain Strike exercise has as its purpose to practice plans and procedures for employing the U.S. III Corps in the NORTHAG. It is an exercise dealing with the complexities of moving large bodies of men, weapons, vehicles and the logistical support needed to maintain them in the conditions of battle. Although all units were prepared to conduct the exercise under NBC (nuclear-biological-chemical warfare) conditions, the exercise was held under the so-called "nuclear escalation" theory, that the Soviets would avoid using nuclear weapons for fear of escalation. Nor did the exercise demonstrate how NATO would utilize tactical nuclear weapons, which technically require a much different operational and tactical plan.

It has been the view of *EIR* that the Soviet *might* opt not to use nuclear weapons in Europe, not for fear of escalation, but for very specific tactical reasons, because of the unpredictable nature of the weapons and certain battlefield problems they might pose. However, Soviet operational and tactical doctrine foresees the full utilization of battlefield nuclear as well as biological and chemical weapons, and Soviet troops are indeed trained for such operations.

Wartime conditions were simulated to the extent of hav-

ing a friendly (Blue) force, in this case the U.S. III Corps and the German I Corps, and an enemy force (Orange) formed of elements of the British, Dutch, and Belgian Corps. The scenario envisions a two- to three-day warning time that would allow mobilization to meet the attack. The exercise followed Reforger, with the arriving Americans collecting their pre-positioned equipment, transporting it to staging areas from where the corps deployed in pre-battle formation, into the deployment area, where they deployed into the *battle zone* following an attack by the Orange forces. The key to the exercise was the movement of the American III Corps to conduct a "passing of lines" in its relief of the German I Corps following an attack by the Orange forces, whereupon the American corps conducts a counter-attack. The passing of lines, although a common enough military maneuver, has never been exercised between the armies of two different nations of NATO. Its success was a testimony to the ability of the various national military organizations to cooperate with a unified sense of purpose.

Many eyebrows were raised when it was announced that a 200-man French Army contingent was participating in the exercise, unusual since France has withdrawn from the military command structure of NATO. Far more eyebrows were raised when it was revealed that they were simulating Soviet spetsnaz, underscoring growing concern over escalating Soviet irregular warfare capabilities within NATO. The French soldiers simulated spetsnaz surveillance teams during the staging and deployment phase while conducting simulated attacks and sabotage during the attack phase. Although the activities were not widely reported during the exercise, they were credited with knocking out at least one airfield of British Harrier ground attack aircraft.

Although the Soviet Union sent official military observ-



Pre-positioned vehicles leaving depots in Reforger '87. Ninety percent of the equipment needed to support a defense is stored in the West German forest and parks.

ers, as allowed under the Stockholm agreements, the presence of late-model civilian automobiles with unusually observant drivers throughout the area did not go unnoticed. Less low profile were sporadic demonstrations by people associated with the West German Green Party and violence-prone elements. One American officer reported that his vehicle, a small Volkswagen bus, and his driver were attacked by 60 "demonstrators" while driving through a village. Although there were no injuries, the demonstrators damaged their vehicle. It should be stated that these elements are an extreme minority and the population in general, particularly the children, were glad to see Americans and certainly hope to see them again next year.

What strikes an American observer most about such an exercise, or more fundamentally, the defense of Europe, is that the battlefield will be in the backyards, farms, and homes of the very people one is trying to defend. It is an experience the American population has not experienced since the Civil War over 100 years ago. In West Germany, there is little that is not planned without the idea that this could be a war zone. For example: In Germany the forests serve three purposes: One is agricultural, a source of timber, etc; the second is recreation, for Germans love their Sunday *spazieren* or walks through the forest; and the third purpose is to hide tanks.

In Germany, forests and nature parks are strategically located up and down the front. In these parks, armored formations in time of war can move to avoid open country and are pre-positioned in these parks and forests in special depots, where military equipment needed to support a defense is stored.

Every bridge, no matter how small or large, will have a special sign, sometimes with a picture of a tank, indicating the weight that the bridge can support. The bridges themselves are designed so they can be destroyed rapidly by military engineers if the need arises to slow down the always threatening potential enemy. Throughout the exercise itself, huge tanks and armored personnel carriers and all kinds of military vehicles traversed the streets, villages, farmlands, and forests in the midst of a civilian population going about their daily lives.

Mission tactics

Despite artificial simulation which dulls the edge of what true wartime conditions would entail, the exercise good glimpse of how armies are very different types of organizations from the civilian sector. An army must perform tremendous logistical feats, but cannot function as if it were a post office or an efficient rapid transit system. This difference can be summed up in one word: Mission. Be it the defense of the sovereignty of a nation, if not the very foundations of Western civilization at its ultimate level, or the capture or defense of a hill on the German-German border. Mistakes could mean national disaster or the death of one's fellow soldier. All must be performed in the cataclysmic environment of the modern battlefield. The concept of "exe-

cuting a mission," is a concept perfected by the same tradition that created the so-called German General Staff System. It is a concept that also has a place in the West Point tradition. The subordinate commandos from the corps, to the division, down to the level of the sergeant in command of a squad, are given the task of accomplishing a "mission," not the execution of a bureaucratic system of directives. The purpose is to foster initiative at all levels, to force the individual soldier to think with the same mind as his commander.

While visiting an American armored battalion in the field, on the ground, and then observing a "battle" between opposing battalions from the vantage point of a helicopter, *EIR*'s correspondents were able to note how highly complex the execution of a mission can be. In the American Army, the basic fighting unit or *maneuver element* is the Battalion Task Force, in the British army it is called a *battle group*, and it engages in the *tactical* battle. It is composed of several elements chosen according to the needs of the mission. It can be composed of an infantry or tank battalion supported by elements of combat engineers, artillery, air defense, and army air or air force resources. Together they form what is called the *combined arms team*. Within this task force are the *combat teams*, which can be two to four armor personnel carriers, or APCs in combination with tanks, or two to four aircraft fighting in mutual support of one another. Missions are executed through the coordinated and synchronized movement of all these elements in a tactical flanking defensive or offensive maneuver called "overwatch." The combined arms teams are the fundamental element of the U.S. Army's operational doctrine called "Airland Battle," which seeks to use strikes into the second echelon forces deep in Warsaw Pact territory to make the best use of flanking actions and maneuver.

While visiting an American armored battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division, we could see, even at this level, the complexity of traversing the countryside. It took our guide 30 minutes to find the battalion, comprising several thousand men and scores of vehicles. After sighting a lone scout vehicle, we were given directions and discovered the battalion, hidden in one of those forests where the local population loves to take its Sunday hikes. Although the scores of tanks, APCs, and other vehicles stretched out for over two kilometers deep into the forest, the commanding major pointed out how in an actual war situation, he would have traversed this area across a much broader front, assigning different zones so as not to form an easy target for conventional or nuclear strike, while at the same time being prepared for immediate combat with his flanks and main body well protected and prepared to meet the enemy.

The sense of *mission* was reflected in a scene where a sergeant, with a map taped to the side of his Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, was briefing his 12-man squad on the parameters of the mission ahead of them in the following days.

One thing was missing: We failed to see any jeeps. The vehicle that faithfully served the U.S. and other armies for more than 40 years, was replaced by the so-called High



Dutch engineering troops during the NATO "Certain Strike" exercise. The hazardous business of crossing the Aller River, one of the most dangerous maneuvers of war, was done using battalions of engineers who built the bridges through the night.

Mobility, Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle. Although larger than the old jeep, it replaces three other types of wheeled vehicles, thus shortening the very long logistical tail attached to the modern army.

The battle for these units began late in the evening and the early-morning hours of the following day, with the hazardous business of crossing the Aller River. Though no more than 100-200 meters wide, a river crossing is one of the most dangerous maneuvers of war. All bridges had to be built through the night by battalions of engineers following the securing of the bridging points by armored reconnaissance units traversing the river in special vehicles or even rubber boats. But the real danger was the necessity to concentrate entire battalions into the extreme narrow defile formed by the bridge itself, forming an easy target.

While several crossings were successful, being conducted at night, some under protective smoke screen, others were not so lucky. One was knocked out by a simulated strafing from an Orange force, a British, Jaguar tactical strike aircraft. Flying at 100 meters above another such crossing, one could see one of these bridges knocked out by a combined arms team of the Orange or "enemy" force. It turned out to be an impressive example of "interoperability" among NATO's individual armies. A combination of British grenadiers transported on German helicopters, and supported by a Dutch artillery company, "captured" the bridge. They in turn were met by a Belgian reconnaissance and combat formation, also part of the Orange forces. From this simulated "battle" the

beholder drew an appreciation of all the many tactical exercises required in modern war, from the use of camouflage, air defense, communications, and electronic warfare, to the engagement of individual combat teams maneuvering through a battlefield.

Although a fine demonstration of the *esprit de corps* among NATO's armies, which one would not find between say, Polish and Soviet troops, it also revealed some serious shortcomings. The Belgian tanks were Leopard Is, a tank that is almost as old as the average ages of the men who man them. The German helicopters were Vietnam War vintage in design.

These exercises continued for several more days with countless numbers of missions and engagements throughout the "war." While providing excellent exercise for the soldiers involved, these exercises and others like them serve to demonstrate to any potential aggressor a commitment on the part of NATO to the defense of Western Europe. This is not said with complacency but with a full view of the serious shortcomings in NATO's defensive power. They show the absolute necessity for continued American commitment to maintaining the defense of Western Europe. It is hoped that the surprising degree of enthusiasm and commitment displayed by the soldiers during this exercise and their daily duties while serving in the national armed forces of the NATO alliance, is not undermined by the current political disarray of the West, as reflected in the potential for a disastrous INF agreement or removal of U.S. troops from West Germany.