The Soviet-East German
military alliance
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DOUGLAS A. MACGREGOR
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Foreword

S. N. MACFARLANE

The question of the role and reliability of non-Soviet forces in Warsaw Pact operations has enjoyed considerable attention recently. This is not surprising. The USSR’s Eastern European allies make a sizable quantitative contribution to Warsaw Pact forces. Accurate threat assessment depends to some degree on an understanding of the significance of this contribution.

Western analysts have frequently dealt with the question of reliability in rather general terms. We are all familiar, for example, with the view that nationalism in Eastern Europe reduces considerably the reliability and hence utility of non-Soviet forces. But the Eastern European states are quite different one from another. Factors such as nationalism and resentment of the USSR impinge in different ways in each of the polities of the region. The USSR has over the years developed differentiated policies for dealing with each of its allies. For these reasons, it is difficult to generalize usefully about Soviet–East European relations.

There have been several notable efforts to deal with this problem through the preparation of anthologies, bringing analysts together to comment on the country of their expertise. Some of these have been very useful contributions to the literature on Soviet–East European military relations. But the limitations of the genre make it difficult to deal in a comprehensive fashion with each case. There is clearly room in the literature for monographs devoted to Soviet military relations with specific East European states. Condoleezza Rice’s recent work on Soviet–Czech military relations provides an able and useful beginning to this effort.

Douglas MacGregor’s The Soviet–East German Military Alliance continues it in a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the
military relationship between the USSR and the German Democratic Republic. The book makes several important contributions to our understanding of the subject. His argument that in historical terms cooperation between Germany and Russia on regional security issues is as common as conflict is a useful corrective to the comfortable assumption that animosity between the two peoples runs so deep that there is no natural basis for cooperation between the two.

His stress on the critical role of the East German military both in Soviet force posture towards NATO and in Soviet efforts to maintain stability within the bloc – and particularly vis-à-vis Poland – demonstrates the centrality of the GDR in Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. This is particularly helpful since East Europeanists tend to focus on the Slavic states and Hungary in their analyses of the region while Germanists are predominantly West European in their orientation. As a result, the GDR has been insufficiently studied and its significance underappreciated. This is important in the security sphere, since Soviet–East German military relations are held up as a model for the rest of the bloc.

Two further attributes of this work should be highlighted. For those interested in civil–military relations in East European states, Dr MacGregor has provided a very useful characterization of relations between civilian and military elites and of the role of the military sector in the East German economy and society. Beyond this, the study breaks new ground in its analysis of the structure of Soviet–East German military integration. The latter aspect – and in particular the discussion of the structure of command – has important implications for assessing East German reliability.

In short, the work is a significant and overdue contribution to our understanding of relations between the USSR and what may be its most significant ally.

The University of Virginia
Preface

This book is about the nature and political consequences of institutionalized military cooperation between the East German and Soviet states in Central-East Europe. It was written not only for the specialist in Soviet and Warsaw Pact security studies but also for the student of European and international affairs in general.

In writing this work I relied on the patience and assistance of several people. Professor Neil MacFarlane of the University of Virginia guided me through the dissertation and the subsequent revisions that produced this book. Professors Vladimir Reisky, Paul Shoup, Audrey Kurth-Cronin, and Inis Claude provided useful criticism and constant encouragement. Colonel James Golden, Lieutenant Colonel John Reppert, Lieutenant Colonel Dick Norton, Major Jack Midgley and Major Jim Warner suggested many helpful revisions. I would also like to express my thanks to Dr Jeffrey R. Simon of the National Defense University, Mr Andrew Marshal, Director of the Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, my close friends in Germany, Werner Binder and Lore Freytag and, of course, my wife, Julie. I am, however, most deeply indebted to Lieutenant General William E. Odom, Director of the National Security Agency, and his wife Anne whose unrelenting confidence and support really made this work possible. None of these people or institutions should be held responsible for the views, arguments and deficiencies of this book.

Lastly, I would like to thank Colonel Lee Donne Olvey, Professor and Head of the Department of Social Sciences at West Point, who gave me the opportunity to write the study while I was teaching in the department. Colonel Olvey has been for many generations of army officers what George Kennan once said of Reinhold Niebuhr – “the intellectual father of us all.”

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Abbreviations

ADN  East German News Agency
CAF  Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact
CC   Central Committee
CDM  Council of Defense Ministers of the Warsaw Pact
CGSF Central Group of Soviet Forces (in Czechoslovakia)
CMEA Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
CPA  Czechoslovak People's Army
CPSU Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE Conference on European Security and Cooperation
CSSR Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
CST  Conventional Stability Talks
DM   Deutsche Mark; West Berlin and West German currency
FBIS Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FDJ  Free Germany Youth Movement in East Germany
FRG  Federal Republic of Germany
GDR (DDR) German Democratic Republic
GSFG Group of Soviet Forces, Germany
HPA  Hungarian People's Army
INF  Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces
JPRS Joint Publications Research Service
KGB  Soviet Committee for State Security
KPD  Communist Party of Germany
LRTNF Long Range Theater Nuclear Forces
MBFR Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks
MC   Military Council of the Warsaw Pact
MD   Military District
MRD  Motorized Rifle Division
MVD  Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
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<th>Abbreviations</th>
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<tr>
<td>NES</td>
<td>New Economic System</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGSF</td>
<td>Northern Group of Soviet Forces (in Poland)</td>
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<td>NKFD</td>
<td>National Committee for a Free Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>NKVD</td>
<td>Soviet People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs</td>
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<td>NSWP</td>
<td>Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact</td>
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<tr>
<td>NVA</td>
<td>Nationale Volksarmee (National People’s Army)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMG</td>
<td>Operational Maneuver Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPA</td>
<td>Polish People’s Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUWP</td>
<td>Polish United Worker’s Party (ruling communist party in Poland)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFE</td>
<td>Radio Free Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAG</td>
<td>Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaft (Soviet limited company)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBZ</td>
<td>Soviet Zone of Occupation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Socialist Unity Party (ruling communist party in GDR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGSF</td>
<td>Southern Group of Soviet Forces (in Hungary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMAD</td>
<td>Soviet Military Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>TASS</td>
<td>Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNK</td>
<td>Tank</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVD</td>
<td>Theater of Strategic Military Action or Theater of Military Operations</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>Warsaw Treaty Organization</td>
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