

1986

U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: 1980-1985

James L. George

John M. Collins

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

George, James L. and Collins, John M. (1986) "U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: 1980-1985," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 39 : No. 4 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol39/iss4/13>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

students of naval history should acknowledge *Little Ship, Big War* as the historical building block it is. Small unit histories may pave the way for a new vision of naval warfare in World War II. Finally, junior officers in surface warfare school and ship division officers will gain a sense of reality and purpose from reading this book. This is what it was, and will be, all about.

Collins, John M. *U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: 1980-1985*. Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1985. 360pp. \$50 paper \$29.95

This book, chockablock with figures and tables, is probably not the kind you would curl up with before a fire. On the other hand, if you are the least bit interested in national security matters, it had better be in your library.

The book is split almost evenly between narrative chapters and statistical annexes. The major annexes are full of every table conceivable, although the narrative chapters are also laced with charts and tables. The narrative is split into four parts. Part I, "Postures and Policies in Perspective," has introductory chapters on the military balance and the changing policies from 1960-80. Part II, called "Building Blocks, 1980-85," looks at defense budgets and manpower as well as defense technologies and industries. Part III, "Nuclear/Chemical Trends," has chapters on strategic and theater nuclear weapons with a separate very interesting chapter on "Naval Tactical Nuclear Trends" and then another on "Chemical and Biological Warfare Trends." Part IV, "Tactical/Mobility Trends," has a chapter on policy and then another

on the "Conventional Force Inventories" listing all conventional forces including sections on amphibious forces, the 600-ship navy, and sealift programs. Finally, Part V, called "Integrated Trends," has chapters on the various regions of the world: NATO/Warsaw, Middle East and Northeast Africa, East Asia and Western Pacific, a separate chapter on the "Naval Balance Related to Regions," and then a wrap-up chapter on the "Global Balance Compared with 1980."

There are five annexes, with the major one being the 130-page Annex A on "Statistical Summaries and Force Characteristics." Included in this annex are charts and tables on manpower comparisons, nuclear forces, general purpose forces, and mobility forces—these include merchant marine, regional balances, organizational summaries of the U.S. and Soviet military forces, and then a recapitulation by country. (I did not see a table comparing the proverbial kitchen sinks, but that was about the only thing missing.)

Annex B, "U.S. Budgetary Statistics," has interesting data in both constant and current dollars on military spending broken down by title, program, and service and as a percent of Federal spending and GNP. These

date back to 1947 with figures on real growth in DOD spending from 1964. Annex C is a very useful glossary of terms with short paragraph explanations of military expressions. Annex D is "Abbreviations and Acronyms" and Annex E is a glossary of names for weapons systems.

It's very hard to find fault with this book as long as you realize its composition. The narrative chapters are not in-depth analyses but very short, only about five-page introductions on each subject. While they appear to be adequate and well footnoted, because they are so short, it might have been useful to have a selected bibliography or better yet, a "for further reading list" for each chapter. Most of the tables and charts have no source listed although there is a general note that many were supplied by the Department of Defense. Again, for someone wanting to do more research, this could be a problem. In his chapters on policy, he has some comparative charts on roles and missions which, because of the short explanations and lack of sources, could be confusing or at least challenged. Finally, about the only statement that one might seriously challenge is his description of the Soviet military planning to fight a nuclear war from the outset of any hostilities. Pioneered by James M. McConnell of the Center for Naval Analyses and others, most analysts now believe the Soviets are preparing for a conventional, even protracted war. Interestingly, in another section he includes quotes by Secretary of Defense Weinberger commenting on

the Soviet military planning for a protracted, conventional war. But these are all truly minor nitpicks.

The most outstanding feature of Collins' book is its comprehensiveness. There is simply no other single volume, classified or not, that has all this information. Between this and his earlier book covering the period 1960-80, "everything" is covered. It's also nice to see important, although usually neglected areas such as defense technology, industrial base, merchant marine, and chemical and biological weapons included. And, despite the title, all the tables are actually from 1975 to 1985 so there is a nice 10-year comparison. Also, despite the title, there are comparisons of other countries, especially the other NATO and Warsaw Pact states. The tables are interesting, comprehensive, and you can easily find yourself poring over them for hours.

JAMES L. GEORGE
Center for Naval Analyses

The Military Balance 1985-1986.

London, England: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1985. 200pp. \$21

Just as all newlyweds deserve an unabridged dictionary for resolving arguments, so every professional library concerned with military affairs must have *The Military Balance*. Specialists interested in the Soviet or U.S. Armed Forces will bolster their use of this volume with much bulkier and more detailed sources of data,