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The Balance of Military Power

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Carter. Mr. Hurt's volume lacks, unfortunately, any illustrations, carries no bibliography, and offers only an occasional bit of annotation. But there is a good index. Best of all, the narrative is unfolded clearly, the characters developed persuasively. Here is what just may become a classic in the double-agent genre. No naval officer should miss it.

CURTIS CARROLL DAVIS
Lieutenant Colonel, USAR (Ret.)

Miller, D.M.O., Kennedy, William V., Jordan, John and Richardson, Douglas. *The Balance of Military Power: An Illustrated Assessment Comparing the Weapons and Capabilities of NATO and the Warsaw Pact*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981. 208pp. \$24.95

This volume may be the most valuable ever produced on the military balance. Written by professionals, for professionals, *The Balance of Military Power* surpasses other works of this genre because of the depth of its analysis of all facets of the balance. It provides both prose and charts that analyze the weapons systems available to both major treaty organizations, indicating strengths and weaknesses not merely in systems performance, but equally, if not more important, in the tactical and strategic concepts for their utilization. The excellent photographs that accompany the text provide the reader with a clearer understanding of the material being discussed—truly an instance where a picture is worth a thousand words.

The book is divided into four major sections dealing with the balances of "strategic," land, naval and air forces, and prefaced by an essay by Nato Secretary General Luns and a brief description of the structure of both Alliances. Each major section has an

introduction of its own, followed by discussions of the major types of systems in each force category.

The "strategic" forces section by Lt. Col. D.M.O. Miller, of the British Army, is particularly noteworthy for its graphic and textual discussion of the meaning of different measures of "strategic" capability—such as effective megatons or counter-military potential—as well as of weapons effect terminology. The extended analyses of balances that frequently are overlooked by all but strategic forces specialists are also helpful: active and passive defenses, and space systems. One wonders, however, why the section hardly mentions the D-5 missile, perhaps the most revolutionary naval "strategic" forces development since the introduction of Polaris.

The conventional forces discussion opens with a highly contentious introduction. It argues convincingly that Nato simply cannot ignore the importance of the Middle East, and indeed, East Asia, to its own security. Other propositions are less compelling: it is not at all obvious, for example, that the Marines train in cold weather for an invasion of Siberia (!) and it is simply erroneous to assert the US Navy decided to abandon conscription, when in fact it had never conscripted sailors in the first place.

Col. William Kennedy's thoughtful introduction to the land forces section includes a discussion of the reliability of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces and an excellent set of maps and tables showing who would face whom in Europe. The land forces discussion itself is notable for its breadth—rarely in the "balance literature" is one provided with as much detail on critical support elements such as engineering, reconnaissance, and surveillance equipment. On the other hand, it is surprising that there is no discussion of the US light armored

vehicle program and of its implications for the firepower/mobility equation, although Kennedy does provide an excellent discussion of the relative merits of tracks versus wheels for such systems.

John Jordan's discussion of naval forces attaches considerable importance to the battle of the Norwegian Sea, in which aircraft carriers would seek to strike the Kola Peninsula while Soviet forces, including *Kiev*-class carriers, would try to prevent them from doing so. This scenario has, of course, been the subject of much contention within the US Navy and outside it. Jordan's discussion of ways to assess the naval balance, of the constraints upon the Soviet fleet, and of the hardware itself, is most useful. One wishes that there had been some analysis of the Oscar class of cruise missile submarine, however, as well as of the implications of Soviet operations in the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic for a larger Nato/Pact conflict. Finally, it is surprising that Jordan virtually ignores recent arrangements for prestocking Marine equipment in Norway and says nothing about the revolutionary implications for ship-to-shore tactical mobility embodied in the Marines' new air cushioned landing craft (LCAC).

Douglas Richardson, author of the section on tactical air, will be known to many *Review* readers for his incisive articles in *Flight International*. His section is lucidly written, and is replete with technical data, more so than the naval or land forces sections. His introductory charts will be of equal utility to both novice and professional. Of even greater value is his discussion of some of the lesser known, but critical, factors in the air balance—training, airfield availability, combat experience. Some readers are likely to find his evaluation of the Aimval/Aceval trials somewhat one-sided, however, since Richardson general-

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izes results derived from very small samples.

No book of this kind and scope is flawless. It is vulnerable to the passage of time: for example, it discusses a cruise missile carrier program that has since been abandoned by the Reagan administration, but dismisses a plan for acquiring 50 C-5s that has since been adopted as DoD Policy. It is also susceptible to typographical errors—in which the book abounds; to errors of fact (for example, the S-3A is not a reconnaissance plane), and to the use of acronyms and technical terms that sometimes are not even defined in an otherwise excellent glossary. Nevertheless, anyone seeking to learn about unfamiliar systems, concepts, or indeed any aspect of the balance between the West and the Soviet bloc, would be wise to turn first to *The Balance of Military Power*.

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Jones, David R., ed. *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual: Vol. 5, 1981*. Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1981. 329pp. \$45

Timeliness and comprehensive coverage of the topic are two prime criteria for any successful annual reference series. The International Institute for Strategic Studies' annuals, *Strategic Survey* and *The Military Balance*, offer proof enough of that proposition's validity. So does the volume at hand.

Just as its four predecessors, *SAFRA-5* is a high-quality reference work on Soviet military affairs of definite benefit to both experienced specialists and serious researchers with little or no background in this area. While placing primary focus on the major trends and events in Soviet military affairs during