

## **Memorandum on the Warsaw Treaty and the Development of the Armed Forces of the People's Republic of Poland, 10 January 1957**

The Warsaw Treaty agreement, adopted in May, 1955 (especially its military provisions), as well as different bilateral agreements signed by the representatives of the USSR and People's Republic of Poland prior to the Warsaw Treaty and ratified after the adoption of the Treaty require a thorough analysis and revision. This mostly concerns Polish obligations regarding organizational, quantitative and technical supplies of the Armed Forces, in the production of military equipment and the strategic positioning of the country.

The need to revise earlier agreements is caused by the political and economic conditions of our country. The earlier agreements and the ensuing obligations do not correspond to the policy of independence and sovereignty of our country pronounced by the Party and the Government of the People's Republic of Poland. Despite the constant changes of obligations acquired by Poland on the basis of the bilateral agreements, their implementation would not be feasible without considerable financial expenditures assigned to the Armed Forces and military industry. Such a policy would be inconsistent with the course of the Party and the Government aimed on constant improvement of the living standards of the Polish people.

Taking into consideration above mentioned situation, the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces has analyzed the obligations and provisions deriving from bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union as well as the Warsaw Treaty and our obligations deriving from them. Our proposals are listed below:

Military obligations originating from the Warsaw Treaty.

The present balance of power in the world, our strategic position as well as our ideological ties with the socialist camp prove the importance of the Warsaw Treaty and of the unification of the military efforts of the member-countries for the further protection of our common interests.

Nevertheless, we believe that the military protocols originating from the Treaty require radical revision. The organizational concept of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces foresees the allocation of the part of the member countries' Armies under a Joint Command.

The above mentioned concept is similar to the structural concept of NATO. Some parts of the Armies of the United States, Great Britain, France and other countries are placed under the Joint Command. Nevertheless, the structural position of the NATO countries is somewhat different to the position of the Warsaw-Treaty countries. The only exclusion to the rule is the Soviet Union.

The strategic interest of the major participants of NATO is applied to the numerous theaters of war operations, therefore the specific theater of war would require only part of the Armed forces of the respective countries, with the remainder of the forces allocated to different pacts, the Baghdad pact, for instance.

The conditions under which the Warsaw Treaty was created are completely different. Our interest is in the European War Theater that involves all the participants of the Treaty, excluding the Soviet Union (the interests of the latter are only partly lie in Europe). Therefore we believe that the total composition of our Armed forces should participate in our common defense initiative in Europe.

The above mentioned facts illustrate the superficiality of the partitioning of the Armed forces by the participants of the Warsaw-Treaty; namely, the structure in which one part of the Armed forces is under the joint command and other part is under the command of the national armed forces. In the current situation, Poland cannot allot one part of the Armed forces under the joint command due to the unrealistically large number of divisions required (see part II of the memorandum). Despite the recent reduction of 5 divisions in Polish Armed forces, the number of required divisions for the joint command was only reduced by 1.

The organizational structure of the Joint Command of the Armed forces is based on a single authority. The collective decision-making process bears only a formal character (it is not mentioned in a treaty). The process of the Supreme Commander's subordination to the international political body is not clear.

The above mentioned determines the supra-national character of the Supreme Commander and his Staff, which does not correspond to the idea of independence and sovereignty of the Warsaw-Treaty participating countries. The supranational positioning of the Supreme Commander and of his Staff is illustrated in "Statute" in the chapters dealing with the rights and responsibilities of the Supreme Commander and his Staff.

The authority of the Supreme Commander in questions of leadership in combat and strategic training is incompatible with the national character of the armies of the corresponding states. This imposes the introduction of common rules and regulations determining the order and conditions of military life (for example, the Garrison Duty Regulations, Drill Regulations, Disciplinary regulations, etc)

The Supreme Commander has widespread rights in the sphere of control. The volume of the report information required from the General Staff is tremendous. The Staff of the Joint Armed Forces is not an international body in a full sense. The rights and responsibilities of the representatives of the corresponding armies are not stated clearly. The existing practice demonstrates the formal character of their functions.

The relations between the Staff of the Joint Command and the General Staff are based on the complete subordination of the latter to the former.

Current events prove continuously the unilateral character of the obligations acquired by the People's Republic of Poland. No international agreement dealt with the judicial state of troops located or passing through the territory of the Warsaw-Treaty country.

The above listed questions should be regulated in a spirit of the Declaration of the Soviet Government issued on October 30, 1956.

In order to correct the above-mentioned organizational and structural concepts, we suggest the following changes to the military articles of the Warsaw Treaty agreement:

a) the Warsaw Pact countries are interested in using all their armed Forces for defense purposes; the Soviet Union would agree with other member countries on the quantity of Soviet troops to be allotted to the Warsaw Treaty common actions in Europe;

- b) the involvement of troops of any of the Warsaw Pact countries in military operations would require the prior approval by the appropriate body in its home country according to the Constitution;
- c) In peacetime the Armed Forces of each of the countries are subordinated to their national command.
- d) we recognize the need for close cooperation of all Warsaw-Pact countries in the following areas:  
in strategic plans and tactical issues;  
in logistics prior to tactical moves;  
in standardization of the major types of weapons;  
in regulations of military production and deliveries in times of war and peace;  
in joint strategic training on the territory of one of the countries.
- e) we recognize the need to create a "Military Consultative Committee" for the implementation of the above mentioned proposals. The Military Consultative Committee would consist of the Ministers of National Defense and the Chairmen of the General Staff of the Warsaw-Pact Countries.  
The Chairman of the Committee would be one of the members of the Committee elected once a year.
- f) the working body of the Military Consultative Committee would be the Permanent Staff Committee. It would consist of the officers and generals of the Warsaw Treaty countries. The Supreme International Political Body would stipulate the number of the officers allotted to the Permanent Staff Committee by each country.
- g) the Supreme International Political Body would determine location of the Military Consultative Committee.
- h) all proposals concerning the issues listed in part b must be approved by the Supreme Political Body. They become compulsory to all Warsaw-Treaty countries if approved.
- i) the Permanent Staff Committee can present its recommendations regarding the issues in part d to the General Staff.

The implementation of these recommendations depends on the decisions of the responsible parties of the national government of Warsaw-Treaty countries.

In the situation of war the International Political Body can appoint the Supreme Command of the Joint Armed Forces.

The Staff of the Supreme Command will consist of officers and generals of the respective states, and their appointments will be confirmed by the Supreme International Political Body.

[...]

*(Source: Vojtech Mastny, "We Are in a Bind: Polish and Czechoslovak Attempts at Reforming the Warsaw Pact, 1956-1969," Cold War International History Project Bulletin 11 (1998): 230-50, at pp. 236-38. Translated by Lena Sirota for the Cold War International History Project.)*