

Ministry of National Defense¹

Secret of special significance

Copy No. 3

NOTE

In connection with a letter by Comrade Brezhnev to Comrade Gomulka regarding the improving and ameliorating the bodies set up by the Warsaw Pact and proposing to call up a conference of defense ministers on the reorganization of the command and general staff, it is known to us that the Soviet side—unwilling to impose its proposals upon the leadership of other countries—does not intend to put forward any preliminary proposals on the organization of the command and general staff of the Unified Armed Forces, but instead expects such proposals from the countries concerned.

From unofficial talks with Soviet comrades it looks that their position can be outlined as follows:

1. There is no intention to either change or amend the Warsaw Pact provisions, but rather to base [any changes] on its art. 5 and 6.

2. The intention is to set up a command and general staff of the Unified Armed Forces with the prerogatives and real possibilities of coordinating defense efforts of member states relating to forces assigned to the Unified Armed Forces in the operational, training, organization and technical area.

It is intended to position more properly than up to now the status of the Supreme Commander and the general staff of the Unified Armed Forces, and to define the place of commanders of troops assigned to these forces. A need is also seen for a different, more independent positioning of defense ministers of member countries vis-à-vis the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces.

3. It is also expected that a Military Advisory Council is to be established within the Political Consultative Committee—as an advisory body to the Committee.

Such Council would be composed of defense ministers and the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces, on equal footing. Secretary of the Council would be the chief of staff of the Unified Forces. Chairmanship of the Council meetings will be rotated consecutively among all its members. The Council would be considering general questions of development and readiness of the Unified Armed Forces, preparing proposals for the Political Committee and recommendations for the national military commands. The issues will be dealt with according to the rule of full equality.

4. The Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces would coordinate operational-training preparedness of the Unified Armed Forces, as well as matters relating to the enhancement of their development and military readiness. The Supreme Commander and the chief of staff of the Unified Armed Forces would be relieved of their functions in the Soviet Army.

¹ From 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 (Winter 1998), pp. 240-43, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/Res_Notes_ConfRep.pdf. Reprinted with the permission of the Cold War International History Project.

5. Strategic weapons will not be included in the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, and operational plans will be developed by the General Staff of the Soviet Army, as well as by general staffs of member countries in the areas of concern to them.

6. It is envisaged that in peacetime the staff of the Unified Armed Forces, employing about 600 people, will be in charge of coordinating preparations of the military to the realization of tasks assigned to them.

However, the position of the general staff of the Unified Armed Forces as a command organ in war time is still a matter too premature to be considered, as there is, among other things, a need to maintain the current procedure of working out strategic and operational plans, the rules for using strategic weapons, as well as to maneuver forces and equipment from one war theater to another.

7. The general staff of the Unified Armed Forces will be composed of the representatives of all armies in proportion to the number of forces assigned to them. It is assumed that Soviet participation in the staff will be percentage-wise smaller than their actual contribution to the Pact.

8. The following are projections of a new percentage share in the command budget of the Unified Armed Forces:

Countries	Percentage share in the budget	
	currently	Proposed
Bulgaria	7 %	9 %
Czechoslovakia	13 %	13.5 %
GDR	6 %	10 %
Poland	13.5 %	16.5 %
Romania	10 %	11 %
Hungary	6 %	9 %
<u>USSR</u>	<u>44.5 %</u>	<u>31 %</u>
	<u>100 %</u>	<u>100 %</u>

9. In the organizational structure of the command and general staff the following positions are envisaged: supreme commander, first deputy, chief of staff, air force commander, two deputies for naval operations (for the Baltic and the Black Seas), deputy chief of air force, an inspector and a quartermaster in the rank of deputies, a deputy for technical questions and chiefs of military formations: rocket and artillery, engineering and chemical. Also included in the command as deputies to the supreme commander would be commanders of assigned forces of member countries.

Key positions, such as supreme commander, chief of staff, chief of air defense, deputy chief of air force, quartermaster, deputy for technical questions, would be staffed by representatives of the Soviet Army.

In view of this purely tentative recognition, one can state the following:

The Soviet side, initiating the question of improvement of the bodies set up by the Warsaw Pact, has not presented so far any specific and official preliminary materials in this regard.

Therefore, during the forthcoming conference of ministers of national defense it would be useful to obtain in the first place the Soviet position on the following questions:

- a) Defining the role and competence of chief command of the Unified Armed Forces for a threat of war and war period;
- b) The scope of participation of member countries' political-military leadership in drawing up strategicoperational plans for particular war theaters;
- c) The subordination of the supreme commander of the Unified Armed Forces.

It is now difficult to foresee what kind of position will the Soviet side and other interested countries take on the above questions. Nevertheless, the Ministry of National Defense is presenting the following point of view, which, if accepted, might be the basis for our position at the conference of Defense Ministers and for further works on proposals for detailed solutions:

1. It is proposed to set up an Advisory Committee for Defense as a body of the Council, which is the top organ of the party and government leadership.

The Advisory Committee should be composed of ministers of national defense of the Pact members, the supreme commander and the chief of staff of the Unified Armed Forces as its secretary.

The rule of rotation should be introduced in chairing Committee meetings.

In addition, it would also be advisable to set up a Consultative Commission of the Chiefs of Staff, which would deal with operational planning and the resulting tasks for preparing the armed forces.

2. The Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces, his deputies and the chief of staff should be appointed by the Pact's Council, with the Supreme Commander and the chief of staff being relieved of their duties in the armed forces of their country.

The Supreme Commander is to be subordinated to the Council and carries out its decisions. In the intersession periods he personally coordinates with members of the Council basic questions requiring joint decisions, or does this within the Advisory Committee for Defense.

In peace time, the command and chief of staff of the Unified Armed Forces should play the role of a coordinating body, preparing the designated military forces, while in a war time they should take command of those forces on the European War Theater. The Supreme Commander and the staff of the Unified Armed Forces should participate, based on a common defense strategy of Pact members and jointly with their general staffs, in developing plans for the particular strategic directions of the European War Theater. On the basis of such plans the Supreme Commander is coordinating and preparing the staff of the Unified Armed Forces and the designated forces to the execution of tasks faced by them. Thus, he is carrying on proper operational and training activities, as well as coordinating organizational, technical, manufacturing and scientific-research activities.

The internal structure of the command and general staff should correspond to the needs of directing activities in the particular strategic areas. The position of Polish representatives in the chain of command and the general staff of the Unified Armed Forces on the Western front should correspond with the place and tasks of the Polish armed forces scheduled to be deployed in that area.

Organizational structure of the staff of the Unified Armed Forces should ensure realization of the above tasks in peace time and constitute a nucleus of proper organs envisioned for a period of war. A preliminary assumption is that these tasks could be

tackled by a staff of approximately 200 professional workers. But, it should be assumed that most of the key positions will be staffed by representatives of the Soviet Army.

Development of the command and the general staff of the Unified Armed Forces for a war period should be carried out through the inclusion of the proper chains from the general staff and other institutions of the Soviet Army, provided for in the operational plan for use in the European War Theater. It is also assumed that the backup and support units for the command and general staff of the Unified Armed Forces should be assigned from the Soviet Army within their peacetime activities and consistent with a plan of their deployment in case of war. The command and the general staff of the Unified Armed Forces should continue to be headquartered in Moscow.

3. There is a need in all Warsaw Pact countries, without exception, for a clear-cut definition of commands being in charge of forces assigned to the Unified Armed Forces, as well to define both the formations and size of those forces.

The strategic assault forces are still to be at the disposal of the Soviet Army. Their use is being planned by the general staff of the Soviet Army. However, commander of the Unified Armed Forces should be inducted in planning their use in favor of forces entrusted to his command. It also seems necessary to define an obligatory scope and method for use of the strategic assault forces for the common defense of the Pact members.

Ministers of national defense and the general staffs of the Warsaw Pact countries are to fully exercise their superior command and leadership role with regard to formations assigned to the Unified Armed Forces. They are to be held responsible for their moral-political condition, their mobilization and fighting readiness, for their operational and tactical preparedness and completeness in terms of numbers, arms and equipment.

4. Together with establishing broader tasks and new organizational structures of the command and general staff of the Unified Armed Forces there is a need to fix the size and percentage share of contributions borne by the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw Pact.

It is suggested that this question should be considered in terms of proportional efforts resulting from a threat that we face the European War Theater.

The population, economic and military potential of the NATO countries in Europe is, in comparison with the potential of the people's democracies, clearly unfavorable to us. Creation of the indispensable superiority for defense and defeat of the enemy—can be ensured by the engagement in this theater of the proper Soviet forces in the dimension of approximately two-thirds of the total Warsaw Pact potential.

The above indicator of indispensable USSR's share corresponds with the real place and potential of that country. It reflects both a probable size of its armed forces provided for the European war theater, as well as its population potential (counted for the European area of the USSR) and its share in the production of basic raw materials and strategic materials. The share of the above factors can roughly be estimated at 65-90 % in relation to the total potential of all other Warsaw Pact countries.

Besides, the relative weight of the USSR is determined by its strategic assault power on behalf of the whole Warsaw Pact.

In view of the above statements it does not seem feasible to accept unofficial

suggestions regarding the percentage share of the USSR in the budget of the command of the Unified Armed Forces (merely about 31%).

In the opinion of the Ministry of National Defense the share of member countries in the command of the Unified Armed Forces should:

- correspond percentage-wise to the share of positions held in the command and the general staff the Unified Armed Forces (this indicator with regard to the Soviet Army representatives should be 50 % as a minimum);

- remain basically within the actual percentage share kept in the budget up to now;
- take into consideration national income per capita in the particular countries;
- take into consideration a particular country's effort in the development of its territorial defense and its contribution to securing the redeployment of allied forces and thus bringing a relief to operational forces.

Taking into consideration these premises, Poland's share should not exceed the present 13.5 %, and we should be trying to obtain from our point of view more justified numbers—e.g. a minimum of 50 % for the Soviet Union, and for the remaining Pact members also about 50 %. With this assumption our share would amount to 1/5 of the share of all people's democracies, which would be about 10 % of the total budget.

However, this proposal may encounter strong opposition, based, among other things, on current membership contributions to the CMEA, which for the USSR amounts to only 32.25 %.

Independently of the ultimate settlement of percentage shares, one should assume that that budget of the Unified Armed Forces should cover exclusively the costs of the staff and accommodation facilities, administrative expenses of the staff, participation of employees in joint exercises and partial defraying of their remuneration, etc. This budget, however, should not be designed to cover expenses related to preparations for military operations, building up inventories, constructing facilities, etc.

5. Besides the above mentioned problems there is also a need is to clarify and then to decide in the forthcoming talks on the following questions:

- the rules for party and political activism within the general staff and a possible creation of a political body of the Unified Armed Forces;

- the legal status of the staff employees (duration of service, mode of rotation, remuneration, promotion, etc.);

- defining the scope of cooperation of the reorganized staff of the Unified Armed Forces with the proper bodies of the CMEA in the area of armaments and military equipment, research and experimental-construction activities.

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According to the present orientation, the conference of the Ministers of National Defense is to be held in the first days of February of this year. The conference is to set up a working body with a task of developing within the next two-three weeks a specific draft of organizational structure of the command and the staff of the Unified Armed Forces.

Submitting for approval the setting up of the above working body, the Ministry of

² Transl. note: In original text.

National Defense considers it advisable that the guidelines for our representatives in that body should be the proposals set out in this note.

In case that in the course of further works a situation arises where other proposals will need to be considered, the Ministry of National Defense will submit to the leadership additional motions.

Warsaw, 26 January 1966

[Translation by Jan Chowaniec.]