

November 27, 1987

**Letter, Heinz Kessler to Comrade Erich Honecker
[about the 20th Meeting of the Committee of the
Ministers of Defense of the Member States of the
Warsaw Treaty]**

Citation:

"Letter, Heinz Kessler to Comrade Erich Honecker [about the 20th Meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty]", November 27, 1987, Wilson Center Digital Archive, DVW-1-115512, bl. 231-285. Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau. Contributed by Stephan Kieninger and translated by Bernd Schaefer.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/291099>

Summary:

Defense Minister Keßler highlights the necessity to defend the Warsaw Pact's territory at the borderline between East and West Germany. Soviet Defense Minister Jasov looks into the military consequences of the Warsaw Pact's new defense military doctrine.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Council of Ministers
of the German Democratic Republic
Minister for National Defense
The Minister

Berlin, 27 November 1987

Highly Confidential!

VVS.-Nr.: A 471-160

1st Copy = 3 pages

handwritten:

EH [E. Honecker] 1-12-1987

HK [H. Kessler] 3-12-1987

General Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Socialist Unity Party of Germany and
Chairman of the National Defense Council
of the German Democratic Republic

Comrade Erich Honecker

Dear Comrade Honecker!

From 24 to 27 November 1987 the 20th Meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty took place in the capital of the Socialist Republic of Romania, in Bucharest, chaired by the Minister of National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Comrade Colonel General [Vasile] Milea.

In the center of work, in which all members of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense participated with respective delegations, stood the discussion and adoption of decisions regarding

- the methods of operative and combat training in the allied armies and the ways of their further perfection under consideration of the Military Doctrine of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty contained in the document of the Berlin Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee¹ and the final document of the Stockholm Conference²
- the status of the Unified System of Aerial Defense of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty and measures towards its perfection

¹ Translator's note: Held on 28 and 29 May 1987.

² Translator's note: Meeting in Stockholm from 17 January 1984 to 19 September 1986, the participating states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) adopted a series of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs), including the prior notification and observation of certain military activities and the exchange of an annual calendar for such activities.

- the positions of NATO regarding psychological warfare, experience, and tasks of the political-ideological struggle against the imperialist propaganda in the allied armies.

At the same time, the agenda was discussed for the 21st Meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense, which is supposed to take place in July 1988 in Moscow chaired by the Minister of Defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Comrade Army General [Dmitry] Yazov.

The following subjects are supposed to be discussed at that meeting:

1. The status and perspectives for development of the armed forces and the infrastructure of NATO in the European theaters of war in the period up to 2000
2. The general directions of the development of the Joint Forces and their equipment with armaments and military technology in the years between 1991 and 1995
3. The Agenda for the 22nd Meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense.

All subjects discussed at the 20th Meeting were agreed by all members of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense based on the prepared decisions. The tasks derived from there will be implemented based on the protocol approved by you³ concerning the development of the National People's Army in the years between 1986 to 1990 according to our capacities.

At the side of the meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense, on 26 November 1987 an internal consultation was held by the Ministers of Defense concerning the military-technical aspects of the Military Doctrine of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty as outlined at the Berlin Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee.

On 26 November 1987 the members of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense were received for a visit by the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu.

In the appendices I take the liberty to send you the essential content of the

- statement of Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu at the visit⁴
- the statement⁵ of the Minister of Defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Comrade Army General Yazov, during the internal consultation of the Ministers of Defense.

At the same time, I am taking the liberty to present you again with my remarks at the internal consultation.

In their contributions, the other Ministers of Defense supported the statements by Comrade Minister Yazov and myself regarding the military-technical side of the military doctrine of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty.

During the farewell,

- Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu,
- Comrade Army General Yazov, as well as
- Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union [Viktor] Kulikov

³ Translator's note: Erich Honecker (informal address).

⁴ Translator's note: Not part of the document.

⁵ Translator's note: End of the document.

asked to forward their most cordial greetings to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED and Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Comrade Erich Honecker.

The candidate of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Minister of Defense of the USSR, Comrade Army General Yazov, informed me it is to be expected that in the first decade of December 1987 [sic] the new Supreme Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, Comrade Army General [Boris] Snetkov, will be appointed.

An according decision by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU is supposed to be adopted on 27 November 1987.

When the short biography of Army General Snetkov will be available, I would report to you⁶ on short notice.

I am asking you to please take note.

With socialist greetings
[signed Kessler]
H. Kessler
Army General

⁶ Translator's note: Informal address in German.

Highly Confidential!
GVS Nr. A 471 218
1st Copy 18 pages

handwritten:
EH 1-12-1987

Statement

of the Minister for National Defense [Heinz Kessler]

at the Meeting of the Members of the
Committee of Defense Ministers

On

Military-Technical Aspects of the Military Doctrine
of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty

Comrades Ministers!

I cordially want to thank the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Comrade Army General Yazov, and the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces, Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov for their initiative to hold this consultation.

We are of the opinion that a united approach to all questions concerning our joint military doctrine is of general importance, as this substantially determining the efficacy of our peace offensive and the efficiency of our defense measures.

The meeting of the Chiefs of the General Staffs convened in mid-October in Moscow on initiative of the Soviet comrades has demonstrated that there are joint positions existing with regard to the fundamental problems, as resulting from the political and military-technical guidelines of our military doctrine for the socialist national defense.

Of course, this does not mean that there already have been satisfactory answers found on all issues coming up both in theory and practice. However, we are aware of the main directions and areas of concentration. Therefore, we can now move step by step towards the implementation of the tasks resulting from our military doctrine into military reality.

In this context, I want to express my agreement with the statement by the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Comrade Army General Yazov, with one exception: The proportion of the National People's Army of the overall population of the GDR is not 0.9 percent⁷ but 1.6 percent.

It appears important to me to underline that our defense efforts have to be always strictly commensurate with the level of military threat and the character and intensity of NATO war preparations - in order not to become surprised and, if there still occurs an attack against the states of the Warsaw Treaty, to repel the aggressor and subsequently destroy it through determined offensive operations.

According to the information we have about the results of the recently ended meeting of the Nuclear Planning Group of NATO and the decisions prepared for the meeting of the other supreme leading organs, there can be no doubt about the aim of leading NATO organs to continue with the course towards military superiority.

Evidence for such are especially the plans

- to compensate for the option of nuclear strikes, which has become limited as a result of the double zero option, through the further modernization of the strategic and operative-tactical and tactical nuclear arms potential of NATO
- to increase the conventional combat power of NATO armed forces in direction of a so-called "new dimension", as well as
- to build a NATO system to combat missiles of both tactical and strategic range.

All that, and the current insistence of the Reagan Administration on the SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] concept, which is supposed to put in question the just started disarmament process and to hinder further practical steps towards the reduction of armed forces and armaments, is showing that

- there are still many major efforts needed to establish an irrevocable turn from confrontation towards detente
- the struggle for a permanent and secure peace will still be protracted and complicated, and
- abrupt turns of the international situation and in individual geographical regions cannot be excluded.

This is underlining the necessity not to drop our military vigilance and to fully unfold the advantages of socialism also in the military area.

This is even more so, since our joint military doctrine is demanding not to allow for a war to occur, neither one fought with nuclear nor with conventional means. With that, the requirements for the socialist national defense are increasing further.

⁷ Footnote in the document: "When telling the percentage number, Minister Yazov had talked about the part of the National People's Army belonging to the Joint Forces. He apologized that he had made a false connection." See also the original reference by Army General Yazov in the appendix.

We are fully aware that the main burden for the military protection of peace and socialism is still being carried by the Soviet Union. We are also aware that, especially by our Soviet comrades, very complicated issues are in need to be resolved, especially so in the field of strategic nuclear forces - within the framework of steering our military doctrine towards defense and reactive operations at the beginning of an aggression launched against the member states of the Warsaw Treaty.

This is about

on the one hand to demonstrate the firm conviction of the [socialist] community to demonstrate that the elimination of nuclear weapons and global disarmament is not just necessary, but also possible.

on the other hand, though, also about not feeding any doubts regarding the defensive ability of the fraternal states, since such would only reaffirm NATO in its aggressive plans and could induce it towards adventurist actions.

The GDR is fully aware of its responsibility - on the side of the Soviet Union and the other fraternal countries - for the sensitive dividing line between NATO and Warsaw Treaty; so that the existing military balance will not be destroyed and all elements of the defensive potential of the Warsaw Treaty are guaranteed at the level needed, in order not to get surprised and to be able to deal any aggressor a destructive response at any time.

In this vein, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED and Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Comrade Erich Honecker, emphasized in his meeting with the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Comrade Army General Yazov, and the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces, Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov, at the occasion of the joint command staff exercise "Soyuz 87", that the GDR will also in the future fulfill its alliance obligations, and that it will do what needs to be done respectively in the area of national defense.

We are operating from the premise that the socialist community of states, as far as the Western theater of war is concerned, will have to be defended at the Western border, this is on Werra and Elbe⁸.

For the National People's Army, this means specifically to prepare the ground and naval forces for - jointly with the Group of the Soviet Forces of Germany and the organs for protection and security of the GDR -

- leading the defense at the state border with the FRG and not conceding any inch of territory
- defending the territory, the air space, and the coast of the GDR actively and persistently as an inseparable part of the socialist coalition
- not allowing any deep penetrations, bringing the adversary to a halt in the tactical zone of defense, and destroying it in the theater of war directly after repelling its first strikes through a determined counter-offensive of the allied armies.

⁸ Translator's note: Border rivers between East and West Germany.

Based on the decisions by the state and party leadership of the GDR, the Minister for National Defense has, in coordination with the commands of the respective services, determined the main [military] directions and areas of concentrations, which are resulting - by implementing the joint military doctrine of our alliance under consideration of the specific conditions and capabilities of the GDR - for the further political and military activity

- in the National People's Army and beyond, and
- in all areas of our national defense.

Especially valuable for us were in this context

- the joint command staff exercise "Soyuz 87" and the exchange of thoughts at this occasion with the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Comrade Army General Yazov, and the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces, Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov,
- the meeting in mid-August with Comrade Marshal [Sergey] Akhromeyev, Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union [Nikolai] Ogarkov, and the Supreme Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, as well as
- the consultation held in mid-October in Moscow with the Chiefs of the General Staffs respectively Main Staff of the fraternal armies.

First important results have been already incorporated in guideline documents, and they will be step by step further developed and implemented in close cooperation with the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany.

In this context we focused especially on

- the further increase in capabilities of all kinds of intelligence,
- the improvement of combat readiness of command organs,
- the increase in reaction capacities and efficiency on the side of commissioned forces and military material,
- the perfection in methods of transitioning the armed forces and the country from a status of peace into a status of war, especially with regard to mobilization, and
- the expansion of options for combat cover of forces in defensive operations as well as during the transition from one type of combat to another.

Although all these tasks are not easy to solve and raise in part complicated issues, in our opinion the problem of reliable intelligence about the adversary is of utmost concern.

Based on the key importance of preventing a surprise from the adversary in our joint military-strategic concept, we do have to perfect from our perspective the military intelligence organs and their operations in such a way that they achieve their highest effectiveness, in coordination with other intelligence services, already in peacetime and constantly have the adversary under control.

Based on the key importance of preventing a surprise from the adversary in our joint military-strategic concept, our perspective is that we do have to perfect the military intelligence organs

and their operations in such a way that they achieve their highest effectiveness since, in coordination with other intelligence services, we already have the adversary under control in peace times.

The necessary measures should be worked out through joint coordinated proceeding in coordination with other organs and the conditions should be established to implement those.

Regarding the further perfection of structure and equipment of ground and naval forces within the period envisaged, measures to increase the abilities of the actually existing personnel, material, and financial resources should be undertaken to increase combat capabilities to fight a forced-upon conventional war, without neglecting the preparation for a nuclear war.

We are also operating on the assumption that the determining direction of further development of the National People's Army of the GDR has to consist, within the newly envisaged period, in a qualitative improvement of combat potential and in the further perfection of the organizational structure and technical equipment.

In this context it needs to be mentioned that the armed forces can only develop with regard to personnel, material, and funding within the framework of resources built and created by society and as provided by the socialist state.

On this basis we are especially focusing on:

Regarding the ground forces: the further accommodation of our units with the type structures of the Joint Forces and their equipment with new and modernized tanks and armored personnel carriers, as well as self-propelled gun artillery, and the increase in numbers of modern arms pertaining to tank and air defenses, especially in the units designated to operate as the first squadrons.

Regarding air forces and air defense: the increase in combat potential in order to destroy the aerial adversary at all altitudes through the further conversion to most modern fighter aircraft, air defense missiles, and automated command systems.

Regarding the People's Navy: the expansion of combat capabilities, especially pertaining to naval aircraft, flotilla, submarine, and minesweeper forces through the commissioning of new combat technology.

We want to continue with the operative preparation of the territory of the GDR, with a focus on the objectives of

- increasing the stability of the command systems of the Joint Forces and
- perfecting the conditions for the operations and movements of the Joint Forces on the territory.

In this context, the attention also has to be drawn to what the potential consequences are for the equipment of our armies in general and with regard to each individual army, in particular for the next five-year planning period, for instance, with regard to the proportion between anti-tank armaments and tanks.

In general, there arises the question whether it is all appropriate to have an identical structure and equipment for all regiments and divisions of the ground forces.

These brief statements are supposed to illustrate that, according to its actual capacities, the GDR is thinking about and undertaking multiple efforts in order to fulfill the tasks resulting from our joint military doctrine at a comprehensive and high level.

We also let ourselves be guided in this vein with regard to the fulfillment of the protocol obligations for the development of the National People's Army within the framework of the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty and the preparation and implementation of the plans until 1990.

In the same spirit we are also approaching the forthcoming tasks to prepare for the next development period between 1991 and 1995. According to the decisions of our party and its demand to intensify the entire military life - I want to emphasize this here again -, we are focussing on the qualitative improvement of the combat power and combat readiness of the National People's Army. For objective reasons we cannot and do not undertake any quantitative increases.

Comrade Minister!

Comrade Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces!

Comrade Chief of Staff of the Joint Forces!

Please allow me to explain from the perspective of the Minister for National Defense of the GDR some thoughts and problems for further improvement of cooperation within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty.

1. We can state with satisfaction that the combat power and combat readiness of the National People's Army could have become substantially increased in recent years through the systematic addition of combat technology, armaments, and equipment from the fraternal countries, especially from the Soviet Union.

The agreements signed in this respect have been essentially implemented.

However, from our perspective it would be appropriate to move in the future in general towards signing complex agreements regarding the import of main combat technology as well as of the required back-up technology, training equipment, and documentation for use, maintenance, and repairs.

This means that our thoughts are following the line of our party to view all aspects as a complex and geared towards the long run, especially under strict economic aspects.

2. Still, the lack of timely and adequate provision of spare and supply parts, especially so for missiles, artillery, tank, aircraft, and other technology, does result in a decrease of combat and operative readiness of our forces.

In this context, I am taking the liberty to propose to review the option whether central storage facilities, respectively depots, could be built within the framework of the coalition for such combat technology, armaments, and equipment that are available in the individual fraternal armies only in low numbers. This might guarantee a faster delivery of the required spare parts.

3. Since, as it appears, the share of national incomes devoted to national defense will not be increasing substantially, if at all, the development of prices is leading to growing extent to a slowdown in the introduction of modern combat technology, armaments, and equipment.

This definitely applies to the quantitative side. For instance, the conversion of a fighter aircraft squadron currently costs 14-times as much as at the beginning of the 1970s.

Therefore, joint deliberations should be undertaken to arrive here at solutions acceptable to all sides in the interest of our defense mandate.

4. The influence exerted since the beginning of the 1970s by the Technical Committee on measures to equip the fraternal armies with armament and combat technology, as well as the resolution of related problems, has stood the test from our perspective.

Increasingly it has succeeded to direct the joint efforts towards focal points, like for instance to the modernization of medium-sized tanks, the further development of anti-tank armaments and the establishment of an automated battlefield command system. At the same time, in many areas the current effectiveness of the Technical Committee is not yet satisfactory.

Here we are thinking especially about

- the avoidance of parallel developments of military technology in order to fully exploit the existing scientific potentials.
- the issuing of licenses to the effect that times for the start of productions become shortened and a needs-based and economic production is guaranteed, and
- the drafting of military recommendations for the development perspectives of military technology and its handover to the allied armies as soon as possible for the period up to 2000.

It also seems to be appropriate for us to move towards such a procedure that decisions regarding specialization and licensing of the countries are made already during the stage of research and development.

Overall, we are of the opinion that the place, role, and tasks of the Technical Committee have to be rethought in the short term. We must operate from the basis that the entire economic activity - at least that is how it is and will remain in the GDR - is organized according to the guidelines of the socialist order of society according to the principles of state planning, combined with the multiple democratic initiatives of the working people.

Therefore, a significant role is to be played by the central economic organs in each socialist country, and within the context of Comecon, regarding the "How" and "How Much" pertaining to the material equipment and armament of our armies.

It always has been impossible, and it is even more so in the future, that the material guarantees - no matter of what kind - cannot be left to whatever subordinate organs when it comes to fundamental directions and decisions.

Quality and quantity of armaments, equipment, and all related issues have to be central state affairs according to our experience and opinion.

Therefore, special attention is needed already now to preparations of all measures and plannings for the period between 1991 and 1995. We have to take into consideration all these measures in the context of the military-political situation, the development of our national economies, the prospective time period of the Comecon, and other significant factors.

It would be worth a consideration to discuss these coordinated concepts at a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty during the course of 1988.

5. The mastering of the new tasks is demanding a specification and a higher level of collaboration of the Technical Committee with the Standing Committee for Defense Industry of the Comecon, according to the just outlined principles of cooperation between the national economies of our countries.

The results of the 43rd (extraordinary) meeting of Comecon are mandating us to raise the collaboration to a higher level also in the military-technical and military-economic area and to utilize the growing performance capacity of the national economies of our socialist fraternal countries effectively for the military guarantee of peace according to the requirements of a comprehensive intensification.

6. In addition to the mentioned military and military-economic problems, in our opinion also the questions related to the political aspect of our military doctrine do require a further perfection of our cooperation.

According to information we are having, in NATO circles the willingness is growing to display an interest in our proposal and to launch consultations with the objective to compare the military doctrine of both alliances.

For this we have to prepare ourselves. Even if the United States are currently viewing this proposal still negatively, we can nonetheless expect in the near future activities from NATO countries from different circles and societal forces.

Therefore, it deems to be appropriate to work out coordinated positions between our Defense Ministries in order to guarantee a united and joint appearance already in advance of potential talks.

This does concern both the subjects of non-aggression capabilities and conventional disarmament, something that had been referenced also at the recent meeting of the Committee of [Warsaw Treaty] Foreign Ministers in Prague.

Such an approach would also guarantee from our perspective that the participation of representatives from our Defense Ministries in the special committee of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty on questions of disarmament would develop as effectively as possible.

It would be desirable if this task would be assumed by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR.

Comrade Minister!

Comrade Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces!

Comrade Chief of Staff of the Joint Forces!

In our opinion, the exchange of opinions on the most important questions of the military-technical aspect of our joint military doctrine is a good foundation for the search for more effective ways to reliably fulfill also in the future the class mandate concerning the reliable military protection of socialism and peace as mandated by our parties and peoples.

This way we are acting in full accordance with the Berlin Document concerning our joint military doctrine where it says:

“The Armed Forces of the allied states will be maintaining such a level of combat readiness which is sufficient in order not to become surprised. If nonetheless an attack will be launched against them, they will deliver a destructive response to the aggressor”.

In conclusion, I want to assure that the National People's Army will always fulfill its alliance obligations in the Warsaw Treaty, as it has been repeatedly underlined by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED and Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Comrade Erich Honecker. The National People's Army will do everything at the side of the Soviet Union and the other fraternal armies in order to contribute, according to our capacities towards not allowing a military superiority of the United States and NATO.

I am thankful for your attention!

Highly Confidential!
VVS Nr. A 471 238
1st Copy 7 pages

Main Content
of the Statement by the Minister for Defense of the USSR,
Comrade Army General Yazov,
at the Meeting on Issues Regarding the Military-Technical Aspect
of the Military Doctrine of Member States of the Warsaw Treaty
on 26 November 1987

After the adoption of the military doctrine of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty, which has a defensive character, at the Berlin Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, there have been many talks to assess this doctrine, not just by civilians but also by the military.

The opinion has been raised that times have changed under the conditions of the doctrine and that our armies are too large, that is pacifism has affected a certain part of our people.

This opinion is not correct since the relevance of the armed forces consists in guaranteeing the protection of the interests of the state.

When discussing issues of combat training, the opinion was voiced⁹ that a future war will be a people's war.

Already in 1905 after the fall of Port Arthur¹⁰ Lenin had noted: "The times are over when wars were led by castes that are separated from the people".

Marx and Engels had also already commented on this: "If the war is supposed to be fought by a people, then the armed forces must already have everything available in peace times to arm the people so that the people can defend the interests of the state".

If this is the case, then the state has to do everything that the Army is capable to prepare the male population for a war.

What is the population the two blocs, the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO, have available:

- the Warsaw Treaty about 330 million
- the NATO about 649 million
-

⁹ Footnote in document: "Army General Yazov referred to the remarks of the Romanian comrades".

¹⁰ Translator's note: 5 January 1905 in the Russo-Japanese War.

With the start of a war, NATO is thus capable to deploy armed forces that will be not smaller but larger than those of the Warsaw Treaty.

As a result, we need trained armed forces for the preparation for a potential war, and it is important to prevent the latter.

There is no way back for our military, or that we get along with small armies and without spending of state funds for maintaining these armies in peace times. This is the first question we have to talk about.

Secondly, we have to continuously monitor how the adversary is equipped; we need to have analogous means at our disposal. The modern adversary has everything what science has accomplished:

- Fuel with new chemical characteristics and large thrust
- Explosives with 5 to 6 times larger yield
- Ammunition resembling precision armaments

Ever more guided ammunition and bombs and targeting mines are getting produced. These weapons cost a lot and cannot be realized with the means of just one state. We have to cooperate.

The NATO states have a higher national income than the states of the Warsaw Treaty and they increase their arms budgets annually. They understand that without the necessary funds you cannot build weapons.

We are holding all our talks on the basis of how we can disarm. We are not in favor of maintaining a huge army, but it has to be equipped with the most modern armaments. We do not have such large armies.

The proportion of the strength of the army relative to the population of a country is as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| - the Soviet Army | 1.5 % |
| - the Bulgarian People's Army | 1.4 % |
| - the Hungarian People's Army | 1.2 % |
| - the National People's Army | 0.9 % |
| - The Polish Army | 1.2 % |
| - The Army of the SRR [Romania] | 0.8 % |
| - The Czechoslovak People's Army | 1.5% |

The NATO bloc has 1 % and the United States do have 1.4% of the population under arms. Not the number of people is determining the weight of the army, but the equipment's the armies do possess.

Only through this strength the adversary is getting forced to the negotiation table. The Americans are doing everything to avert a strike at the United States. The example here are the negotiations over strategic arms.

At the same time, the United States are not concerned about their security since, for instance, they want to extend the range of their missile system "Lance" to 500 kilometers.

We are talking a lot about parity but just by wishful thinking there is nothing to achieve here. For that, major efforts of the peoples are necessary. The member states of the Warsaw Treaty have to make an according contribution towards that parity.

When you assess the NATO states, you can note their efforts towards collective defense and, where it is suitable, efforts towards individual defense.

For that, the United States are providing cruise missiles which they are deploying in other states. They are in favor of both the collective as well as of the individual power, if those are in the interests of their states.

Parity depends on the production capacities of each country.

Such conditions have to be created in order to arm the people, to build up reserves, or to utilize production capacities in order to produce the arms for the equipments of the army.

Regarding the case of a potential war, we are operating on the assumption of defense. During the exercise "Soyuz 87" we have talked with Comrade Honecker about the need to organize the defense at the state border. Comrade [Gustav] Husak and Comrade [Wojciech] Jaruzelski are having the same opinion. The main territorial strip of defense has to be selected where the territory is most favorable, where the adversary can be misled or directed into dead ends.

Certainly, the territorial strip to secure cannot be 40 to 50 millimeters deep. However, it must guarantee that the adversary is getting forced to spread out and to subject its battle formations to our strikes by which we can inflict high losses on them.

Maybe it is possible to organize the line of defense along the state border. In this case the artillery of the adversary must not impact our battle formation. Given the status of development of armaments, the defensive has to remain active and must enable the striking at the control and command structures of the adversary; as well as holding firm in pioneer-regards against the impact of precision weapons from the side of the adversary.

We are of the opinion that these problems have not yet been resolved. In 1988 we have to further work on this and to conduct dry-runs during troop exercises.

Given the status of the current and future technological means of warfare, we have to be prepared for a general war with conventional means as well as with nuclear weapons.

The United States are talking about the beginning of a war with conventional means and the possibility of the selective use of nuclear weapons during the later course of war.

Such selective strikes, however, will trigger a response strike with the full range and with full force.

We must not let ourselves be deceived by this kind of opinions, because with this one they just wants to “lull” us.

At the meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense it was talked about, during discussion of the agenda item concerning air defenses of our countries, to conduct massive strikes with cruise missiles. These missiles with a conventional warhead of high yield (up to 500 kilogram of explosives) can be targeted by the adversary with a deviation of 10 to 20 meters. Targets can be such objects as water dams, energy facilities, chemical factories, nuclear power plants, et ceters. It is currently not yet clear what the consequences of this mean. We are seeing it in case of the nuclear power plant Chernobyl, where significant parts of the territory are still contaminated and there is no end in sight to this.

There are, however, 100 to 150 nuclear power plants in Europe. What happens if they get destroyed? Is this not the equivalent of a nuclear war?

We have to think about this and draw respective conclusions.

These questions have to be worked through in combat training, when guaranteeing the mobilization readiness, and when organizing the methods of strategic unfolding of the armed forces.

In all countries there are efforts to reduce the workforce, this does also apply to the armies. In front of us there is the adversary and behind us is the rear area, without which the armies cannot be successful.

This is why also questions of civil defense need to be resolved if the industrial factories are supposed to continue working.

Besides the army, there also is the need for a ‘construction army’ to keep the production and transportation facilities running.

Recent examples we are seeing here in Iran and Iraq, where special troop units have been formed to restore crude oil facilities, pipelines, and other production sites.

In Vietnam alone, 130,000 men were dispatched for restoration works.

These problems of the military-technical side of the military doctrine have to be resolved as well.

No army can be kept constantly on the highest level of combat readiness. Also, a sudden alarm alert is not possible everywhere.

This is why we are considering the covered transition of the ground and naval forces from a state of peace into a state of war based on respective orders as the main method. This way it is possible to build up in time the respective units in threatened directions and to move towards defense.

At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War there had been no transition towards defense although the attack preparations of the adversary had been known. One wanted to keep him [the adversary] refraining from activities by [not provoking him through] inadvertent actions. Under consideration of experiences made, it is not important to expand battalion or regiment defensive areas. During peace time the defensive areas are supposed to be identified and the firing positions measured, as well as the tasks to fulfill to be made aware.

On this basis, the required tasks pertaining to the immediate transition towards defense are easier to fulfill.

A passive defense does not exist, it will be destroyed by the adversary. The activities in defense are consisting in the tenacious holding of adopted defensive areas and the conducting of counter-attacks and counter-strikes.

When there will be the move from defense towards counter-attack, it is supposed to occur on orders of higher-ranked superiors and based on the so far known parameters.

The counter-offensive is occurring in any case with the participation of allied armies.

In this context it seems to be appropriate to provide the supreme commanders of the different directions with officers who are proficient in respective languages. This will be certainly a benefit to them [supreme commanders].

Under the condition of the military doctrine with defensive character, combat command intelligence has gained in significance.

One of the most important types is electronic warfare.

Whether in the Suez Conflict, in Vietnam, or in Lebanon, everywhere means of electronic warfare were used to major extent by the U.S. armed forces.

In potential conflicts as well they will also conduct the electronic warfare.

We do not, however, have such respective means at our disposal. This is something to think about.

Also, the protection of the troops from weapons of mass destruction of the adversary has to be reviewed.

Not the least, questions of rearguard provision are also of importance. If somebody is thinking, that rearguard provision can be organized with the beginning of a war, then this somebody is wrong.

At the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Defense in July 1988 in Moscow also questions of development of the Joint Forces for the years 1991 to 1995 will be discussed.

In this context it is necessary to organize a technology exhibit the Ministers of Defense should attend.

There it could be decided which new technology is acceptable and which is not.

Regarding the guarantee of planning for the current Five-Year-Plan (1986-1990), pertaining to the issue of technology provision "everyone is mad at someone else". Frequently economic problems are placed in the foreground.

Many issues can be resolved amicably. The Hungarian comrades as well had some issues that could be resolved at the government level. We have to prepare the governments for the problems.

For provision of the armies with armaments and combat technology one has to begin to study the economic capacities of the states - this means who can produce what, who has to produce what.

In addition, other issues require as well to deal persistently with theory and practice. Among else, this does also concern the entire problem of the military doctrine.

Also, the respective requirements in the scientific-technological field should be drafted so that the respective facilities do not fall behind in this area.