

May 25, 1988

**Georgi Shakhnazarov, 'Comments on the Report of
[Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Treaty
Organization Marshal] V.G. Kulikov at the
Conference of the PCC [Political Consultation
Committee] of the Warsaw Treaty'**

Citation:

"Georgi Shakhnazarov, 'Comments on the Report of [Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Treaty Organization Marshal] V.G. Kulikov at the Conference of the PCC [Political Consultation Committee] of the Warsaw Treaty'", May 25, 1988, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Published in G.Kh. Shakhnazarov, "Tsena svobodi" [The Price of Freedom], pp. 355- 357. Translation by Vladislav Zubok.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/134750>

Summary:

Reaction to V.G. Kulikov's report at the Conference of the Political Consultation Committee of the Warsaw Treaty regarding arms sales and military armaments in socialist countries, compared to NATO military policies.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Georgi Shakhnazarov. Comments on the report of [Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Treaty Organization Marshal] V.G. Kulikov at the Conference of the PCC [Political Consultation Committee] of the Warsaw Treaty.

May 25, 1988

1. I gain the impression that, despite many assurances in loyalty to the defensive military doctrine, the real reappraisal of strategic conceptions in this direction has not even started in our country.

On page 3 of the report [Kulikov] attempts to prove a thesis that, despite the INF Agreement, war danger in Europe will not decrease, but, in fact, will increase. Arguments brought to prove this thought are not convincing. Meanwhile it effectively justifies a program of reactive [otvetnogo] increase of our military power. When planning rearmament of all branches of military forces, [the military] do not provide data about resources that this would require, although the list alone makes it clear that military expenditures would not go down, but would significantly go up. And this is proposed when the process of disarmament has begun and, in particularly, the prospect of talks and achievement of an agreement on conventional arms reductions and military forces in Europe is getting brighter.

2. It is known that for a long time the Romanians have been bluntly rejecting our programs of military build-up, and the leadership of other [East European] countries accept them without enthusiasm, tied by the Alliance discipline. Nevertheless, the report addresses a rebuke to the fraternal countries who increasingly decline to purchase [Soviet] armaments (p. 6).

Military expenditures in Eastern Europe (although according to Western data) per capita are twice as high that in the majority of NATO countries. Our friends understandably cannot afford to carry this burden any further, all the more so under conditions of a pre-crisis economic situation in almost every [East European] country. What is more profitable for us: that they continue their armament and march towards economic disaster or, on the contrary, that they spare on military expenditures and improve their economic situation, reinforcing de facto the security of the commonwealth?

3. Doubtful is the thesis that the role of "chemical support of combat actions of troops" has increased (p. 5). The report says also that chemical troops will be reinforced with flame-throwers and the means of camouflage (p. 11). How does this correspond to our declarations of our readiness for a complete ban on and liquidation of chemical weapons?

4. The document contains a declaration about the need to support military-strategic parity with NATO (p. 7).

This thesis under current conditions should be spelled out to avoid its "verbatim" implementation.

5. It is not clear what it means that the combat and numerical strength of each Allied army "is intended to be preserved on the level prescribed by the Protocols by the end of 1999." Does it mean a plan over-fulfillment, building up a larger military might ahead of time?

6. As an example that [the military] understand the concept of defensive doctrine in highly bizarre way can be found in the thesis about the intention to devote in the next five year plan more attention to the air-borne paratrooper formations [udarno-shturmovim otriadam] (p. 9). Until now this arm of the service existed predominantly not for defensive tasks.

Another example. On page 11 the report recommends to increase the stockpile of fuel, ammunition, to create their stockpiles on the territory of Hungary and Bulgaria,

to create stockpiles of armaments and equipment for deployment of formations from the reserves, etc.

On p. 12 the report points out the need to expand the net of air-strips, to continue equipping protective hangars for military aircraft.

In general the report admits that implementation of the prescribed tasks, which should maintain the military-strategic parity, would require big efforts from the Allied Command and the Ministry of Defense in procurement of troops, [and] large-scale mobilization of the scientific and industrial potential of the socialist countries.

In other words, overall the report speaks not about a reduction of military efforts, but, on the contrary, their intensification. It would not be at all surprising that even if the report of the Commander-in-Chief does not leak to the West (and in present circumstances in the WTO such leaks cannot be excluded), the West were able easily to conclude on the basis of the facts and those measures for a build-up that would be implemented that in reality we do not want to disarm -moreover, we do not even want to lower the level of armed confrontation.

In essence, the presented document does not indicate that any attempt is about to be made to reassess the real military-strategic situation in Europe. The key component of this situation is the continuing Western intention to preserve nuclear arsenals on a certain level. The focus is still on nuclear deterrence, but not on the task of waging an offensive war by conventional means. With this in mind, we should remake our strategy. The existing nuclear means guarantee us from a direct aggression and thereby makes redundant a further increase of conventional armaments and military forces.

On the other hand, as many politicians from the Left are telling us, with some justice, only our concrete steps in reduction of armaments will trigger corresponding measures in the West. This will provoke such a wave of popular movement there that governments will have to move towards us.

Then should we provide bourgeois militarists with arguments to continue and intensify the arms race?