

Memorandum of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Mladenov) to the Politburo of the CC of the BCP, 26 November 1987

Sofia, November 26, 1987

To: Politburo of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party

MEMORANDUM

From: Peter Mladenov – Minister of Foreign Affairs

Subject: The Necessity of reassessing the foundations of the secret nature of data on military spending and the defense budget of PR Bulgaria

Under the currently existing practice, the member-states of the Warsaw Pact, including Bulgaria, do not publish extensive data on their defense budgets.

[...]

The new political thinking being established in the international system poses the question of making public data on the defense and security budgets. In order to contribute to a non-increase in military budgets, to limit them to a level of rational sufficiency, and to increase international confidence in glasnost and openness, including the questions on military spending, the Soviet leadership has repeatedly raised for reappraisal the subject of the foundations of the secret nature of information about the defense budget.

In Mr. Gorbachev's policy statement "Reality and Guarantees for a Secure World," the question on publishing information about the defense budget was raised. The possibility has been stipulated that in the course of the next 2-3 years we can be able to juxtapose the numbers that concern our partners and us, numbers that reflect symmetrically the spending of the countries. The move to implement this task is already under way in USSR.

[...]

Bearing in mind the latest tendencies in the development of international relations, I think that the necessity has developed to follow the example of the USSR and to reassess the approach toward the secret nature of military spending of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. The following arguments can be put forth to buttress this assertion:

From the point of view of Bulgaria's participation in future negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons and on confidence and security building in Europe, it is necessary that we be ready to take steps toward promulgation of certain data on our military expenses;

Larger openness on the question of the country's defense budget will serve to take away from the NATO countries the argument that a basis for comparison is needed;

There is a strong probability that other allied states will take up a new approach concerning the military spending. We need to be ready as well. (Romania gave the UN some data about its military spending by filling out an insignificant number of columns in the table "Standardized International Military Spending Accounts")

The publication of military spending data by the People's Republic of Bulgaria will contribute to the strengthening of confidence in the Balkans; it will boost other initiatives in that direction; it will eliminate the possibility that Turkey, which gives the UN data about its defense budget, will criticize us about this in its anti-Bulgarian campaign.

Based on the above, I propose that Politburo take the following decisions:

The Ministry of Defense, in conjunction with the Ministries of Interior and of Economy and Planning, work out new approaches for reflecting the defense budget and military spending with the goal of making possible the publication of information that presents the opportunity to juxtapose the data that interests our partners and us and reflects the expenses of the countries symmetrically.

Using an appropriate occasion, the readiness of the PRB to follow the example of the USSR and reassess the secret nature its defense budget will be declared.

[Source: Bulgarian Central State Archives, Sofia, Fond 1b, Opis 35, a.e. 810-887. Summary by Vasil Yovchev]