
NOTE OF DISCUSSIONS

On 28 September 1968, comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, President of the State Council, together with comrade Ion Gheorghe Maurer, member of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party and of the Permanent Presidium, President of the Council of Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Romania, received Marshal of the Soviet Union I.I. Jakubovsky, Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and Army General S.M. Stemenko, Chief of General Staff of the Unified Armed Forces.

Colonel General Ion Ionita, Minister of the Armed Forces, and Colonel General Ion Gheorghe, chief deputy of the Minister of Armed Forces and Chief of the General Staff, took part in the reception.

A.V. Basov, ambassador of the Soviet Union to Bucharest, attended the meeting.

Before the discussions began, Marshal Jakubovsky conveyed to comrades Nicolae Ceausescu and Ion Gheorghe Maurer the greetings from the comrades Leonid Brezhnev and Aleksey Kosygin, and introduced Army General Stemenko.

Marshal Jakubovsky gave a briefing about the activities carried out in order to fulfill the indication of the Conference of the Consultative Political Committee at Sofia in March, 1968, concerning the drawing up of the draft statute of the Unified Armed Forces of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and of the Unified Command, Military Council, and Joint/ Common Antiaircraft Defense System of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

[Marshal Jakubovsky pointed out that] after these documents had been analyzed at the Conference of Deputies of the Chiefs of General Staff at Moscow, their drafts were sent to all the ministers of defense, and afterwards – in the last period – he went to each country participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization and had personally discussed [with the ministries of defense], as well as with the first secretaries and the chiefs of the relevant governments.

As a result of these discussions, some observations of the ministers of defense became apparent, as follows:

- In the matter, whose should the statute be, the Unified Armed Forces' or the Unified Command's, the conclusion was reached that it was advisable for it to be the Unified Armed Forces', which are to be understood as the armed forces of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, intended – in keeping with the agreement – for acting in common, and of the Unified Command as leading organ;
- Starting from the fact that it was not good for the ministers of defense of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization to be deputies of the Supreme Commander as well – people had come round to the idea that the deputies of the ministers of defense or of the chiefs of general staff be appointed to the Military Council - the ministers of defense were no longer included in the Consultative Political Committee and the Military Council;

As a result, the idea emerged of creating a Military Council composed of the ministers of defense of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the Supreme Commander, and the Chief of General Staff of the Unified Armed Forces, with the staff of the Unified Armed Forces Command as working organ.

This idea was adopted by all of the ministers of defense.

· As regards the Consultative Political Committee, he pointed out that – in compliance with Art. 6 of the Warsaw Treaty – each state was represented by a government member or another specially appointed representative. In practice, however, each country was represented by its first secretary and its chief of government. It was deemed necessary, therefore, that the Consultative Political Committee include the first secretaries and the chiefs of governments.

The Czechoslovak party proposed that it would be good to include the President of the Republic, too. The difficulty appears, however, that some countries have presidents, others do not.

· As to the terms of convening the Consultative Political Committee, once a year is proposed, and for the extraordinary meetings – when needed – the terms proposed by two thirds of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization;

· Another observation refers to the way the recommendations and the proposals are adopted by the Military Committee. It was stipulated that they be adopted by a simple majority of votes, and now the adoption by a majority of two thirds of the votes is proposed.

All these observations made by the ministers of defense have been introduced in the draft documents.

Continuing the discussions, Marshal Jakubovsky pointed out that the draft documents had been discussed point by point by Army General Stemenko and Colonel General Ion Gheorghe, and, as a result, the editing was improved, only a few issues still needing editing and improving; these issues are few, even very few.

Answering Marshal Jakubovsky, comrade Nicolae Ceausescu expressed thanks on his own behalf and on behalf of comrade Ion Gheorghe Maurer for the greetings extended to them, and asked him to convey their warmest greetings to comrades L. Brezhnev and A. Kosygin.

Referring to the draft documents [already] drawn up, [comrade Nicolae Ceausescu] expressed the opinion that the work done was good, and if the wish existed to finalize the draft documents, that would be done.

[Comrade N.C.] pointed out that a number of issues of principle still remained [to be dealt with], but – in his opinion – they would be solved. These issues are:

· Concerning the Consultative Political Committee: the issue of its composition and when it should convene is solved by the Warsaw Treaty (it is true that the practice was different). We are ready to discuss this issue, but separately, not within the framework of the military statute, where the issue of the Consultative Political Committee should not be raised;

· Concerning the Military Committee: as regards this issue, [comrade N.C.] pointed out that, in principle, we were not against its creation, with some small observations, and we agree on the proposed attributions. This problem, however, should not be included in the statute, but discussed separately in the Consultative Political Committee. There must be a decision of the Consultative Political Committee regarding the creation of the Military Council as an auxiliary body to it;

· Naturally, it is better that the recommendations and the proposals be adopted in the Military Council with a majority of two thirds of the votes than with a simple majority. This, however, does not solve the problem. One must aim, strive to attain a unanimity of opinions.

As a rule, the recommendations and the proposals should be made with the agreement of all the parties.

In order, so to say, not to block the activity of the Military Council, in case of divergences on the part of a state these divergences should be mentioned in the protocol of the meeting, and they must be submitted – for consideration and solution – to the relevant ministers of defence and to the Supreme Commander (just as is normally done within the framework of COMECON).

At this point Army General Stemenko cut in, saying that this should not be – by any chance – the right of VETO, and that it was better to maintain the majority of two-thirds.

Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu answered that it was not a question of the right of VETO, and that there was no point in speaking about the two-thirds majority any longer as it had a different meaning; the question was to fight for achieving unanimity, and in case of divergences to solve them as he had shown earlier.

Marshal Jakubovsky stated that he was not against what comrade Nicolae Ceausescu had said, but – since there was no statute of the Consultative Political Committee – the formulations already drawn up should be maintained.

Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu answered that he did not agree to the provision, in a military statute, of issues concerning the Consultative Political Committee. Rules of the Consultative Political Committee are needed, and we agree to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or their deputies meeting in order to prepare draft rules to regulate the Consultative Political Committee's activity.

As regards the Military Committee, it should not be provided in the military statute as it is not subordinated to the Supreme Commander. It is an auxiliary organ to the Consultative Political Committee, and, therefore, it should be created by the latter.

Within the framework of the discussions, Army General Stemenko also raised the following issues:

· The inclusion, in the draft statute of the Unified Command, of the provisions under Art. 4 of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, stating that he agrees on the Ministry of Armed Forces' proposal, however without the references to the UN.

Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu declared his agreement with Army General Stemenko's proposal.

· The maintenance, in the draft statute, of the provisions referring to Supreme Commander's representatives in the armies of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu agreed, with the observation that [these representatives] can be found in the armies of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, upon request of, or with the agreement of, the relevant governments.

· Regarding the appointment of the Supreme Commander for a period of 4-6 years, and his release from other tasks, [Marshal J.] proposed that the Supreme Commander be not released from his tasks within the framework of the ministry with which he worked before his appointment.

Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu agreed to the [Supreme Commander] not being released of other tasks, but he requested that the fact be stipulated in the draft statute that the appointment was for 4-6 years.

· As regards Supreme Commander's right to deploy the troops of the Unified Armed Forces, [Marshal J.] pointed out that the Czechoslovak party made a good proposal.

Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu replied that the Romanian proposal was better as it gave the Supreme Commander the right to make recommendations, concurrently putting things in order in other respects.

Deploying an army in another country is not a pleasure trip (as it involves transport problems, expenses, etc.), it must be regulated by a clear agreement that should be observed to the letter. Without a clear agreement in which the obligations of the governments in this matter are provided, the troops will not have any sense of security. (He gave, as an example, what the Bulgarian People's Republic should ensure for the troops of the Socialist Republic of Romania – accommodation, food, treatment in hospitals, transport, etc.).

Army General Stemenko pointed out that this issue was discussed at length, and that Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu was right, but he did not understand why it was necessary to stipulate in the draft statute that the agreement of all of the countries was needed. What link can have the Bulgarian People's Republic with the German Democratic Republic or conversely?

Answering him, comrade Nicolae Ceausescu pointed out that if we went outside the Warsaw Treaty, there was no link. But if we acted on behalf of the Treaty, it would be better to discuss the issue within the framework of the Consultative Political Committee, and we all should assume responsibility, we all should decide whether we acted on behalf of the Treaty or not.

Marshal Jakubovsky stated his agreement with what comrade Ceausescu had said, and pointed out that he proposed a new editing [of the draft statute], where provisions be included to the effect that the deployments were to be carried out with the agreement of all the governments, the Supreme Commander was to give recommendations, and the deployment conditions were to be agreed upon in bilateral understandings between the countries involved.

Marshal Jakubovsky expressed thanks for the reception, showing that he would continue working for the finalization of the documents, and after that he would submit them to the Consultative Political Committee for their consideration.

Winding up the discussions, comrade Nicolae Ceausescu said that he was ready to take part in the Conference of the Consultative Political Committee, naturally after a date of the Conference convenient for all the parties had been agreed upon.

For conformity,

CHIEF DEPUTY OF THE MINISTER OF ARMED FORCES
AND CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF,

Colonel General Ion Gheorghe

[Source: Arhivele Militare Române (henceforth AMR) [Romanian Military Archives], fond V2, vol.3, dosar 13/37, ff.64-70]