
**Report by Minister of National Defense (Lajos Czinege) to the HSWP Political Committee on
the Command System of the Unified Armed Forces**

20 April 1965

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

TOP SECRET

ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT

R E P O R T

for the Politburo of the HSWP on the command system of the Unified Armed Forces

In November, 1964 in my verbal report on the training meeting held at the General Headquarters I brought it up that there were several problems with the command system and the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces that had been raised several times but had never been resolved. These unresolved issues could lead to disagreement among the member states.

The Politburo made a decision that we should collect, sort and write down all the problems and the proposal to their solution.

My report on these issues is presented below.

I.

At the time of the establishment of the Warsaw Treaty – in 1955 – the governments of the member states also decided to establish the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces. Based on the resolution the Unified Armed Forces is headed by the supreme commander and the chief of staff elected (:approved:) by the member states; the ministers of national defense of the member states are deputies to the supreme commander. However, the composition and the scope of authority of the staff of the Supreme Command was not regulated by this resolution.

In its first few years of operation – between 1955 – 61 – the Supreme Command gave considerable assistance to the member states in shaping the structure and the system of training of their armies, in organizing joint military maneuvers, in planning the preparation of the seat of military operations and in establishing the unified air defense system. The basic method of operation was that the? sent out recommendations (or directives concerning training issues) to the member states, convened a meeting for the ministers of national defense (in some case the deputies to the ministers or the chiefs of staff) to discuss these recommendations and directives, and the agreements were put down in bilateral reports approved by the governments of the member states. In the first few years the nature of the tasks made it possible to work in this way.

In the meantime, however, the development of the Unified Armed Forces entered into a new phase, and since approximately 1961-62 the command has had to face more complex issues such as harmonized operational

planning, coordinating the supply of the armies with modern armament and military technology (with special regard to a wartime period), and the division of labor among the member states in developing and producing military defense technological goods, etc. In the light of these issues it has become more and more obvious that certain issues in the command need to be resolved. This was one of the fundamental reasons why certain decisions made on a high level have not been implemented, or have been carried out only with long delays.

We have raised the issue several times at the meetings of the ministers of national defense of the member states and at the talks with the . The Hungarian delegation also brought up this problem, and a possible solution to it, at the highest possible level, the June 1963 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee.

And at the January 1965 meeting it was the supreme commander himself who stated that certain problems in the command considerably hindered the development of the Unified Armed Forces.

II.

The function of supreme commander of the Unified Armed Forces is filled by one of the deputies to the minister of national defense of the Soviet Union. Formally and legally it is untenable that the ministers of the member states are deputies to the supreme commander, that is, they are subordinated to him in a military sense.

The Unified Armed Forces do not have a collective leading military body. Though the Warsaw Treaty is a multilateral treaty, the resolution of issues is done between the Soviet Union and each of the member states in a bilateral way. For instance, the military obligations of the member states are regulated only in bilateral agreements (official reports), which are in fact unilateral, for they talk about the obligations of only one of the two sides.

Since the Supreme Command does not have a staff with a proper composition and scope of authority, all the practical matters are handled by the various bodies of the Ministry of National Defense and the Staff of one member state, the Soviet Union. In practical matters the supreme commander relies basically on the 10th general group command, which serves as a mediator or liaison between the Soviet armed forces and the armies of the friendly nations. The armies of the member states are represented at the 10th general group command by a liaison officer who does not have real power or any real job.

Thus the handling of matters is unresolved both legally and from an organizational point of view, and its efficiency is highly questionable.

The supply of armament and military technology for the armies is also based on bilateral negotiations. Thus – for lack of a proper directional (coordinating) body – the proper supply of material resources in harmony with the military operational tasks in time of war is not ensured. As a result, for instance, only 10.5% of the military technological import needed for the Hungarian People's Army is covered for the first year of the war.

Nobody attends to the coordination of the military technological development, also for lack of a responsible body. Since the research work is not coordinated and recorded properly, the member states are doing parallel research in some fields, which often results in considerable and avoidable losses. For instance, the modern

radio-technological devices developed by the Hungarian telecommunications industry with significant efforts are not produced and brought into service because at the same time other countries were also conducting similar research and developed similar devices, in spite of the fact that we are responsible for this special line of development.

Although the specialization of the production of military technology is supervised by the Permanent Military Industrial Committee of COMECON, its recommendations are not binding and thus cannot get the member states to comply with the agreements. All this often results in uneconomical production. The productive capacity of certain countries is not utilized properly, while some other countries make vain efforts to create similar capacities. This is why, for instance, the Hungarian People's Army failed to provide its troops with armored personnel carriers in the second five-year plan, and for the same reason the export of Hungarian-made reconnaissance amphibians decreased significantly with respect to the demands that had been indicated earlier. We are not in the position to show the order of magnitude of the extra burdens afflicting the member countries, but it surely comes to several billion.

As far as the supervision of training is concerned, the Supreme Command practically automatically forwards the requirements and the directives valid for the Soviet army to the armies of the member states. It cannot take into account the differences that exist in each of the armies in the level of training, the current possibilities and the established training systems. The training directives sent out by the supreme commander often include details (e.g. the briefing of non-commissioned officers) that for years have not been centrally regulated in our army.

These unresolved problems in the command – though increasingly obvious even in peace – manifest themselves especially sharply in time of war. It is not made clear how the wartime leading system of the Unified Armed Forces, the Political Consultative Committee, the Supreme Command and the high command of the member states should work in time of war.

All these unresolved problems may be the source of the differences of opinion and the conflicts among the member states signs of which have emerged recently.

III.

Taking the above into consideration and in order to ensure the conditions of further development and more efficient work we believe it is necessary to clarify the legal issues related to the command system of the Unified Armed Forces and at the same time introduce a few changes in practical matters:

1. It would be desirable to establish a Military Committee of the armies of the member states as a collective leading military body which would include the ministers of national defense of the member states, possibly their chiefs of staff too, as well as the supreme commander, his deputies and the chief of staff.

The following tasks could be assigned to this new body:

- elaboration of proposals to the Political Consultative Committee;
- discussion – and approval – of practical measures concerning the implementation of decisions

made by the Political Consultative Committee;
- discussion – and approval – of conceptual and practical measures concerning the training system, the armament, the military technology and its development of the Unified Armed Forces.

2. It is desirable that the supreme commander of the Unified Armed Forces be a Soviet general, who however does not fulfill any function in his own national armed forces. The supreme commander should have independent deputies from each of the member states. In addition, a staff should also be established under the supreme commander with the adequate authority, composition and structure which could then – following the orders of the supreme commander and the resolutions of the Military Committee - attend to issues such as the planning of military operations, material and technological development in the armies (troops) belonging to the Unified Armed Forces, coordinating their military supplies and supervising their training, etc. The functions of the staff and its effective force strength should be equally divided among the member states.

3. Considering the proposed organizational structure it would be necessary to work out the fundamental rules of operation of the Military Committee and the staff of the Unified Armed Forces which would lay down their functions and scope of authority.

Budapest, April 20, 1965.

Lajos Czinege

Proposal: (hand-written)

The Politburo acknowledges the report.

It authorizes the head of the government to bring up the Hungarian ideas concerning the required changes in the command of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces at a proper time and place.

[Translation by Andreas Bocz]