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**Report of Colonel-General István Bata, Hungarian Minister of Defense, to Members of the HWP Central Committee on the Conduct of the Staff-Command Exercise Held, 17 July 1956**

Participating in the bilateral, two-stage, front-scale staff-command exercise held under the command of Marshal Malinovsky on June 21–July 10, 1956 were Soviet, Romanian and Hungarian combined-service and air-force staff. The goal of the exercise was to develop further cooperation among armies of the member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, practice the most advanced methods of operational conduct—taking into consideration the use of weapons of mass destruction—and study the organization and battle procedures of the likely enemy.

The attacking "Western" party started offensive operations based on the US organizational and operational-cum-tactical principles of deploying chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, to an operational depth of 150–160 km. The "Eastern" party, obliged to defend itself by relying on the Soviet Union's organizational and operational-cum-tactical principles—in the SW Kiev area, on the territory between the Southern Bug and Dnepr rivers—organized defensive operations and then launched a counterattack designed to surround and destroy the attacking enemy forces—while deploying nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Hungarian combined-service army, operating in the army group of the "Western" party in the direction of the main strike, broke through the tactical depth of the defenses of the "Eastern" party. It then continued forward to develop the operational depth of the offensive operation, closely cooperating with the reserve army of the army group. A counter-attack by the "Eastern" party threatened the forces of the Hungarian army with encirclement, so that it became necessary to retreat to a sector further behind and organize defenses. After this had been done, the exercise ended.

The moves in the exercise were evaluated by Marshals Zhukov and Malinovsky, who made proposals for research and study of several questions of underlying importance:

- Under modern conditions, the decisive aspect of operational planning is the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the entire planning has to be built on this.
- By contrast with earlier practice, it is worthwhile when planning defense to locate 1/3 of the forces in the main zone of defense and 2/3 at defensive depth. In other words, 1 division should be located in the first echelon during army-corps defense and 2 divisions in the second echelon. Correspondingly, the main resistance should be put up not in the main zone of defense, but in the secondary zone of defense.
- Air defenses—personnel and technical modernization, development.
- The need to develop a new type of tank operable in all field conditions—water, marsh, forest, sand.
- The era of contiguous minefields has ended, since they greatly obstruct the maneuvers of own troops; new techniques have to be developed.

The Hungarian combined-service and air force commanders and officers received a good assessment from the Soviet marshals.

*[Archives: War History Archive, Hungarian People's Army Headquarters, First Group Directorate 1956 Box 17/a, pp. 221–3]*