

## **Report of Colonel-General János Stock, commander of the National Air-defense Headquarters, on the UAF air-defense tactical exercise of 1971. March 1971**

### III.

#### PERFORMANCE OF THE COMBAT ACTIONS BY THE PARTICIPATING PARTIES

According to the concept of the exercise, the first massive air strike was executed by conventional means.

Before the enemy's first massive air strike, the participating staffs, based on the reconnaissance data, received information about the introduction of a state of full combat readiness among NATO forces. Afterwards, at 14.30, the central battle position of the 7th Air Army of the -SSR gave warning of the aerial approach of the enemy. According to the plans, the participating radio-technical troops informed one another of the targets appearing, while the fighter-plane units occupied the appointed airspace for patrol, and the command positions took measures to carry out the military actions in line with the evolved situation.

The success of the military actions was ensured by the decision of the 1st National Air-defense Division Headquarters of the HPA and the 2nd National Air-defense Headquarters of the CPA to repulse the enemy air strikes from their military positions, by deploying fighter squadrons by sectors, acting with some of the forces in full range, by handing and taking over the direction of fighters and participation of the fighter and air-missile units in one zone, and by zones in some cases, by distributing targets. They kept each other informed of their decisions.

During the period of combat command, the activity of the first army air-division staff was rightly based on the principle of one-person leadership. It generally provided the divisional headquarters promptly with the information needed to command the combat. Based on this, the commander was aware of the situation of troops and the success of their combat actions.

At the same time, it was found in the work of the division staff on conveying, evaluating and processing information, that the individual units learnt about changes in the situation of the enemy and their own troops only after significant delays in some cases. Initially, the prescribed reports to the National Air-defense Headquarters were passed on after long delay and inaccurately.

Within the division staff, participation of the chiefs of services in the command system has still not been regulated clearly—in terms of proportions and methods. This naturally rebounds harmfully on their proposals and experiences, and of course on the functioning of the information system too.

In this period, remarkable development could be experienced in the cooperation of staff and points of conduct, compared with previous years, visible in the mutual, continual information about the air situation that evolved and the readiness and activity of own troops.

Based on information received and correct evaluation of the evolved situation, the HPA 1st Army and CPA 2nd Army air divisions ensured promptly full-range action by some of the fighter-plane forces, with landings at participant airports, as reinforcement in the threatened directions. The methods used when handing-taking over the direction of fighters—on the ground and in the air—were correct and ensured successful execution of the assignments. The linguistic difficulties experienced at previous exercises occurred to a lesser degree in the exercise "CLOUD."

Regrettably, planned deployment of the 5th Fighter wing of the 11th fighter division during the first massive air strike the 1st Army air division headquarters met with difficulties, as direct assignment of tasks by a detailed representative of the 5th fighter regiment was not ensured.

The above problem was later solved by having a representative of the 36th Air Army on duty at the Central Division.

The activity of the air staff regiment:

The 54th operational aircraft staff wing division provided successfully the radar cover for command of the combat action and the fighting by the armed-service troops.

It detected the air targets active in the defense district of the 1st Army air division and provided continuous information about them. It detected the majority of targets promptly and some of them after a delay.

The most important experiences in executing the combat work were the following:

- The wing commander and auxiliary wing commanders directed the detection activity of their subordinates properly, using correctly the principle of executing military work according to responsible sectors, which was a step forward.

- Based on experiences at the ZENITH-70 exercise, due attention was paid to determining the affiliation and composition of air targets and continuous tracking of them. Use was successfully made, apart from technical means of doing so, of data reported by aircraft pilots through fighter wing combat positions.

- Cooperation with neighboring radar systems, primarily with the Czechoslovak participating party, occurred in line with the orders to that effect.

- Alongside the achievements in the work of the wing command, some deficiencies were also experienced. For instance, it relied on the 54/1st Central Wing Command to an extent greater than justified, which was apparent in the fact that in numerous cases, it obviously renumbered targets detected earlier by the 54/2nd Central Wing Command to the target numbers of the 54/1st Central Wing Command. All this slows down the trend towards improving cooperation between the Central Wing Commands.

- With combined use of the traditional and VOZDUKH systems, deficiencies of view could prevail in cases when the semi-automated facilities were used for passing on data—about less important targets—ignoring the tactical-*cum*-technical scope of these.

The activity of the fighter wings:

The fighter wings found a successful solution to the enemy's first massive air strike, parallel with its transfer to a state of full combat readiness, in cooperation with the air-missile units.

During the first massive air strike, they fought successfully against the hostile air targets flying into the division's defense zone. They ensured when executing military actions successful control of the aircraft taken over for direction to the targets. I consider it positive that almost for the first time and despite tricky weather conditions, the points of command resolved the transfer of fighter direction and aiming the fighters received at the targets. At the same time, we cannot be satisfied with the quantity of transfers of direction made.

I suppose that if the good-weather version of the exercise had been executed, these numerical data would have been more positive. We must pay greater future attention to the transfer of fighter direction and increase the number of these. This is demanded and necessitated because if it is not practiced as necessary, we will not be able to carry out reinforcement of threatened directions in each other's interest with full-range activity.

The readiness of the Central Army Group pilots deserves unconditional praise, who managed to land at Taszár, an airfield hitherto unknown to them, despite the tricky weather conditions.

The technical force of the wings prepared the participating that planes landed at the airfields reliably and quickly for repeated deployment, despite being overworked in some cases. The naval force gave proof of its good training and readiness to perform its assignments, despite the weather conditions.

I consider as positive the endeavor by the 1st Army air division headquarters to develop correct air-power relations and the way the fighter forces of the participating parties executed their assignments under tricky conditions, in cloud, in the lower height domain of deck locators. The increase in the proportion of instrumental flying of fighters over targets marks a step forward, but we still cannot be satisfied, as we do not make proper use of the capabilities of the VOZDUKH technology. The conditions for this must be created and ensured in everyday training, of course.

The importance of instrumental flying of fighters over targets, in connection with cooperation, is underlined by the circumstance that it resolves the linguistic difficulties of cooperation. This is also apparent in the way the 515th fighter wing of the Southern Army Group, in the period of activity of reconnaissance targets and in very tricky weather conditions, managed to fly two transferred planes of ours over targets, although completion of this was prevented by the rapid deterioration in the weather.

Although the standard of radioactivity evaluation by fighter wings had improved since earlier, the fighter controlling points of the 1st Army air division ignored the evolved radioactivity situation in the air while flying over targets, thereby endangering the further combat ability of the naval force. This demonstrates again that certain commanders failed to create situations as close as possible to reality, despite orders in this respect.

The power relations in the air were favorably influenced—mainly during the second massive air strike—by the planes deployed by the 36th airborne army. The power relations evolved would have ensured the destruction of air targets in a real situation with high probability.

#### The activity of air missile defense regiments

In the period of combat actions, the targets flown into the military activity zone of the 1st Army air division missile units and the cooperating 177th air missile defense regiment, were conditionally destroyed—with the exception of 5 targets. In addition, we regret to say, 3 of our own fighters were also destroyed (including one by the 1st Army air division, two by the 177th air missile regiment).

Execution of the military assignment of the 177th air missile regiment of the Southern Army Group—which was active in 51 cases during the exercise—deserves special appreciation.

The average utilization of missiles by air missile defense units of the 1st Army air division was 1.88 missiles/target. The efficiency of combat action—by probability of destruction—was 0.87. These indicators prove numerically as well the adequate readiness of the air missile defense units. However, we found additionally some detrimental practices, such as air missile defense units—failing to analyze the air situation properly and ignoring the characteristics of air targets and complexity of their elements of motion—regularly using 1–2 missiles per target.

Although the proportion of our own fighters destroyed was lower than on earlier exercises, we still cannot be satisfied with the results. The deficiencies described above can be traced to problems at the command posts of the HPA national air-defense troops and the Southern Army Group, concerning the numbering of air targets. At present, command posts do not observe in every case the instructions laid down—in the cooperation plans—for numbering air targets. Identical air targets—in some cases in parallel—were given their own numbers, which made more complicated a uniform interpretation of the air situation, the setting of assignments, rational use of the forces and equipment at hand, and finally, successful execution

of the joint military assignments. The above problem must and will be resolved together with the Southern Army Group.

As the concept before us makes plain, the main command post of command of our 11th division air missile regiment, at the Kinizsi Barracks [in Budapest] fell out of the command [structure] during the first massive air strike. Its contacts with superior and subordinates were severed. Consequently, activation of a reserve command post and realization of combat command over the subordinate air missile defense divisions became necessary.

The reserve command post of the regiment could not carry out its assignments at the above point of time, as there was still no contact with subordinates. So they carried out independent military activity according to their plans of military activity. Their activity was hindered further by the fact that their evaluation of the air situation was based on information from the air staff wing, with a usual delay of 4 minutes.

Another negative experience was that the command posts of the participant fighter wings and air-missile regiments of the 1st Army air division did not inform each other adequately of the evolving air situation, the activity of their own troops, which was harmful to cooperation.

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To sum up, the national air-defense troops executed in an organized fashion the assignments at higher levels of military readiness within the time norms set in their plans of transfer to combat readiness. During these, 10 radar stations were deployed to reserve positions.

During execution of combat actions, the forces of the parties repulsed successfully the means of air attack active in their combat action zones. The HPA 1st Army air division fighter troops executed 47 captures in 97 deployments, the CPA 2nd Army air division fighter troops 34 captures in 33 deployments, the Southern Army Group fighter troops 27 captures in 53 deployments, and the Eastern Army Group 159th fighter regiment 31 captures in 28 deployments. For mutual reinforcement, the parties deployed were 6 fighter-bombers from the HPA 1st Army air division and 4 fighter-bombers from the SSR, including landings at participating airports.

The air missile units of the HPA 1st Army air division fought successfully against 58 targets in 70 actions, the CPA 2nd army air division air missile units against 34 by 37 actions, the Southern Army Group air missile units against 51 targets by 51 actions. The experiences of the exercise are proved by the fact that our participating staff and troops completed their assignments successfully and testified to their proper readiness. They completed their assignments under complicated circumstances and conditions without incident. All this proves their high level of morale and political state.

During the execution of joint assignments, the comradeship in arms of our personnel, both officers and soldiers, and their readiness to solve common assignments together became stronger.

The exercise revealed, alongside the positive experiences, areas where we have to make further joint efforts to act more successfully. In our opinion, these areas are the following:

1) We must improve further the conditions of cooperation, modernize our plans for it, improve the information relations among commanders and staff and the working methods of information about the evolved situation, and improve the communications conditions for cooperation.

2) To increase the readiness for command and functional reliability of the 1st Army air division reserve command post, the division commander should conduct a staff-command exercise by June 30, 1971 involving lengthy functioning of the reserve command posts—ensuring links with the superior, participating and subordinating command posts of the TH division TH [marginal handwritten note: reserve tactical command post]. At the TH division, the work of the command group should be directed in all cases by a general as deputy commander to the division commander.

3) To further reliable command of the air-defense fighter force located in the territory of the HPA and better the quality of information about air targets, the division should increase the scope for using the VOZDUKH system, especially for directing fighters. This calls, during the execution of training flights, for increasing the proportion of instrument flying of fighters over the targets, with the situation with execution of this being examined carefully every month.

4) We must find the opportunities to practice cooperation assignments in everyday training. To drill full-range combat action to a reliable degree, troops of the 1st Army air division should carry out fly-ins in squadron formation at the participating airports planned for 1971.

5) To improve the direction mechanism and conditions of the 1st Army air division staff, the division headquarters should supervise—using the experience of the exercise—the place and role of the chiefs of services (including their position) in tactical direction—thus ensuring more effective participation by them in leadership.

The tactical-cooperation exercise cover-named "CLOUD" achieved—in our opinion—its basic training goals. It contributed successfully to fulfilling the requirements defined for us in the Unified Armed Forces Headquarters 1971 Directive. Thus it formed a decisive part and assignment of the process of our combat training. After further processing of our experiences, it will contribute usefully to addressing our next assignments.

Comparing the achievements and revealed deficiencies of the exercise, I evaluate the air-defense tactical cooperational exercise as

"SATISFACTORY".

The 1st Army air division headquarters should evaluate the exercise by 15 April, based on the written reports of regiment arbitrators and its own experiences, before the division staff and their subordinates.

The 2nd Army air division headquarters should use the experiences gained for the fruitful preparation for the June exercise!

Finally, I would like to emphasize the helpful contribution and give thanks for the participation of the CPA 7th national air army and the 2nd Army air division headquarters and staff, the Soviet army Southern Army Group air defense and 36th air army headquarters, in executing our joint assignments with friendly armies and representatives of our comrades in arms present, which was perceptible from the period of preparation to the end of the exercise, through the procession of experiences.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the 1st Army air division commander and staff, the party and CYL committee of the division, and the entire personnel for their preparation for the exercise and conscientious, strenuous and on the whole successful work during the exercise.

I would like to express appreciation to the commander of the 2nd Army air division and of the Kilián Aviation Officers' School for their effective assistance in covering the exercise, and for the work of the arbitrators, drawn into the exercise from the force of the Miklós Zrínyi Military Academy and the National Air Headquarters subordinate formations.

Also to the force of the National Air Headquarters Staff, who carried out successful and good work on the planning, organization, control, execution and evaluation of the exercise.

I will be evaluating in the next days I will be issuing evaluating orders referring to individual persons.

I wish all participants in the exercise further good results and success in executing our joint tasks.

*[Archives: War History Archive, HPA Headquarters Secretariat 1972 Box 132 Unit 256 pp. 8–22]*