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Report on the Most Important Results of the 35th Meeting of the Military Council of the Joint Forces of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty

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Summary:

The report analyses NATO's latest military readiness exercises. Moreover, the report emphasizes the need for a modernization of the Warsaw Pact's tank force in reaction to the development of NATO's Abrams and Leopard tanks.

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The Minister

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EH [E. Honecker] 20-4-1987

H Keßler [H. Kessler]

[Fritz] Streletz

General Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Socialist Unity Party of Germany and
Chairman of the National Defense Council
of the German Democratic Republic

Comrade Erich Honecker

Dear Comrade Honecker!

Between 16 and 18 April 1987 in the capital of the Belorussian Socialist Soviet Republic, in Minsk, the 35th meeting of the Military Council of the Joint Forces chaired by the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty, Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union [Viktor] Kulikov, was held.

I am taking the liberty to present you¹ in the appendix with the report on the most Important results of the meeting of the military council.

The tasks deriving from the recommendations of this meeting for the National People's Army [of the GDR] will be considered according to our capabilities in the further work of the Ministry for National Defense.

I am asking you to please take note, respectively for your instruction.

With socialist greetings
[signed Streletz]
[as representative of the Minister] Streletz
Colonel General

Highly Confidential!
GVS Nr. A 470 661
1st Copy 5 pages

¹ Translator's note: Formal address in German.

R e p o r t
on the Most Important Results of the 35th Meeting
Of the Military Council of the Joint Forces of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty

In accordance with the plan of the Military Council of the Joint Forces, from 16 to 18 April 1987, the 35th meeting of the Military Council chaired by the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty, Comrade Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov, was held in the capital of the Belorussian Socialist Soviet Republic, in Minsk.

All members of the Military Council participated in the meeting with respective delegations.

In opening the meeting of the Military Council of the Joint Forces, the Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov noted that the meeting is taking place in a time of increasing international efforts to end the arms race and during the fight for practical steps to secure the peace through arms limitation.

The states allied in our defensive coalition are successfully implementing the decisions of the Party Congresses of their communist and working parties.

In the meeting of the Military Council the following issues were discussed:

On the first item of the agenda, Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov delivered his statement on “Tasks of the Joint Forces Concerning the Further Perfection of Combat Readiness in Light of the Decisions of the Budapest Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee² and the 19th Meeting of the Ministers of Defense of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty³”.

He emphasized the need to strengthen the combat readiness of the Joint Forces as long as imperialism⁴ is increasing its aggressiveness and intensifying its war preparations.

The latter is proven, among else, by the fact that NATO is superior over the Warsaw Treaty in Europe with regard to combat ready divisions, anti-tank armaments, helicopters, and tactical air forces.

Furthermore, within the forces of the United States and NATO there are the following capacities, all with a launching time readiness of between 7 and 15 minutes:

- 990 of the inter-continental ballistic missiles (98 percent of the inventory)
- 105 of the strategic bombers (30 percent of the inventory)
- 400 of the ballistic missiles on nuclear-powered submarines (50 percent of the inventory)

² Held on 10 and 11 June 1986.

³ Held from 1 to 3 December 1986 in Warsaw.

⁴ Aka “the West”.

- 27 of the launching pads for ballistic intermediate nuclear missiles "Pershing II" (25 percent of the inventory)
- 184 of the nuclear-carrying aircraft of the tactical air forces (17 percent of the inventory)

Those are over 1,700 armaments or 40 percent of the nuclear weapons, which can, in case of their launch, hit targets with more than 5,500 nuclear loads.

In the past year as well, NATO Supreme Command has held 175 large exercises in the European theaters of war, among them more than half in direct proximity to the borders of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty.

In addition, further exercises were held and conducted by national commands. The most important aspects of these exercises were the participation of organs of the highest military-political leadership of the countries, the application of newest arms technology to a high degree, as well as the practice of different variations for preparation and surprise escalation of a war against the member states of the Warsaw Treaty.

Based on this tense military-political situation, the questions of increasing defensive power of our countries as well as the combat readiness of the Joint Forces are always in the center of attention of the Political Consultative Committee and the party and state leaderships of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty.

It could be assessed that, as a result of the work done so far, a reduction of times for transferring the troops and naval forces from state of peace to state of war and a perfection of the systems on duty, as well as an increase in operative efficiency of the leadership, has been achieved.

In the framework of the defensive character of our military doctrine established at the Budapest Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, more than ever even greater attention must be dedicated to questions of defensive operations and battles.

In conclusion, Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov emphasized that, in order to maintain the combat readiness of the Joint Forces at the necessary level, it is important to fulfill timely and comprehensively the obligations from the protocols regarding the development of the armies and to increase the quality of implementation measures pertaining to operative and combat training.

Regarding the second item on the agenda, the Deputy of the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces for Armaments and Head of the Technical Committee, Comrade Lieutenant General Mamchur, talked about "The Course of Fulfilling the Recommendations of the 27th Meeting of the Military Council on Modernization of the Tank Technology of the Joint Forces". He emphasized that the development of the tank technology of NATO, for instance regarding the tank types "Leopard" and "Abrams", does require an effective program of modernizing the tank fleet of the Joint Forces in order not to concede in this area a military-technological superiority of NATO over the Warsaw Treaty.

With the modernization of both the T-55 A tanks and subsequently also the T-72 tanks, it is supposed to be achieved to equate their combat abilities with those of the modernized Western tanks.

For one T-55 A tank, works are to be performed here over a value amount of about 2.3 million [GDR] Mark. Based on an overall stock of 1,900 T-55 A tanks in the National People's Army, and with consideration of available production capacities and financial means allocated, 500 tanks are supposed to be modernized until 1990 and respective works are to be continued afterwards.

To the same extent modernizations will be undertaken in the other allied armies.

Regarding the 3rd item on the agenda, representatives from the Hungarian People's Army and the Polish Army talked about the fulfillment of the decisions from the 18th Meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense⁵ concerning "Measures of Further Perfection of Operative Rear Services as well as Rear Services of the Troops".

It was emphasized that the predominant number of the according units and troop parts of Rear Services (transportation units, street and railway troops, medical units, et cetera) - which also is the case for the National People's Army - should not exist in peace times and are only to be set up during mobilization. This does require to tightly organize the command system for the Rear Services and thoroughly prepare the cadres in charge of mobilization for the fulfillment of their tasks.

Marshal of the Soviet Union Kulikov was able to summarize in conclusion that the required tasks are getting implemented in all the armies.

He emphasized that attention is needed especially with regard to an increase in inventories of material means (ammunitions, fuel, lubricants, and food rations), since so far in essence only the Bulgarian and Czechoslovak People's Army have achieved a stockpiling for 3 months. The other armies have inventories for a maximum of 45 to 50 days. (The National People's Army has inventories of ammunicions for about 45 days, of fuel and lubricants for an average of 45 days - however regarding diesel fuel just for 13 days- as well as food rations for about 75 days).

⁵ Translator's note: Held in Berlin from 2 to 5 December 1985.