

February 4, 1966

**Report on the meeting of the Chiefs of the General
Staff of the Armies of the Warsaw Pact**

Citation:

"Report on the meeting of the Chiefs of the General Staff of the Armies of the Warsaw Pact", February 4, 1966, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AMR [Romanian Military Archives], fond V2, vol.3, dosar 7/59, ff.1-7. CWIHP DR, vol.1, pp.253-59.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112047>

Summary:

The meeting focused on the need to create a more unified command structure and general staff for the Warsaw Pact. A draft protocol was produced, which the delegates signed.

Original Language:

Romanian

Contents:

Translation - English

Report on the meeting of the Chiefs of the General Staff of the Armies of the Warsaw Pact, held in Moscow between 4-9 February 1966.

R E P O R T

1. During the period 4-9 February, 1966, there took place in Moscow the meeting of the chiefs of general staff of the armies of the member-countries of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The purpose of the meeting was to draw up proposals of principle regarding the Unified Armed Forces, and the organization of the leading organs of the Supreme Command.

The military delegations of all the member-countries of the Warsaw Treaty Organization participated in the meeting, except for [the military delegation of] the People's Republic of Albania, which - according to the assertions of Marshal Grechko - refused to take part. The delegations were headed by the chiefs of general staff and were composed of five to seven officers (in general, the chiefs of the Operations Directions or their deputies, specialists in equipment, aviation, navy).

On behalf of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR there participated a delegation of three generals headed by the deputy minister of defense in charge of combat readiness training preparations, Army General Penkovsky. The Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces was represented by: the Supreme Commander, Marshal Grechko; the deputy Supreme Commander, Marshal Sudets; the chief of staff, Army General Kazakov, and other generals and officers of the Supreme Command.

On the first day of the meeting the chiefs of delegations took the floor, and presented their point of view on the issues on the agenda.

The first to take the floor was Marshal Grechko, and afterwards the chiefs of the other delegations, in alphabetical order (Bulgarian People's Republic/ BPR, German Democratic Republic/GDR, Hungarian People's Republic/HPR, Polish People's Republic/PPR, Socialist Republic of Romania/SRR, and the USSR).

Except for Marshal Grechko and the chief of the [Romanian] delegation, who put forward - in their presentations - principles regarding the organization and operation of the Unified Armed Forces Command, the other delegations presented short exposés, where - generally speaking - they expressed their agreement with the proposals made by Marshal Grechko.

At the end of this meeting, in compliance with the proposal of the [Romanian] delegation, it was agreed that the texts of the exposés be multiplied through the good offices of the Unified Armed Forces Command and handed over the following day to the delegations so that they might consider them more attentively for the following meeting.

On 5 February 1966, the delegations were given all the relevant materials, with the exception of Marshal Grechko's exposé, instead of which the Draft Statute of the Unified Armed Forces Command, along with a diagram of the organization of principle of the Command were handed over to them.

In compliance with the agreement, the meeting on 7 February 1966 took place with the participation of the chiefs of delegations, accompanied by one or two aides-de-camp, Marshal Grechko, and the Army General Kazakov. At the beginning of this meeting, the Romanian delegation proposed that the issues of principle referring to the organization and operation of the Unified Armed Forces Command be discussed on the basis of the presentations. The other delegations opposed this

proposal, and it was decided that the Draft Statute put forward by Marshal Grechko be discussed point by point and page by page.

The [Romanian] delegation decided not to take part in the discussion of the details of the Draft Statute proper; however, during the meeting, they raised -within the framework of the debates - issues of principle concerning the organization and operation of the Unified Armed Forces Command. The point of view of the [Romanian] delegation was included in the document that was drawn up.

During the meeting, the proposals of each delegation were analyzed (the discussions held are indicated in the appended Note).

On the basis of the discussions, a document was drawn up in which the Draft Statute proposed by Marshal Grechko was included; this document was handed over to each delegation for further consideration at home.

On 8 February 1966, the chiefs of the delegations were informed that a meeting would take place with the Chief of Staff of the Unified Armed Forces Command, Army General Kazakov, in order to discuss the project of a joint communiqué to be published in the press.

The same day, at 13.00 hrs, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Unified Armed Forces Command, Colonel General Dagaev, called on the chief of the [Romanian] delegation and informed him that no joint communiqué will be published, but a draft protocol would be drawn up instead, where the issues agreed upon by the delegations would be indicated, and asked that the Romanian delegation analyze this document and express their opinion about it.

The [Romanian] delegation analyzed the draft protocol and the proposals made were included in it.

The Deputy Chief of Staff of the Unified Armed Forces Command, Colonel General Dagaev, asked the chief of the Romanian delegation whether he agreed that this protocol should be signed by all the delegation chiefs. He answered that, since the meeting was a working meeting for a preliminary exchange of ideas, it was not necessary that the protocol be signed. Subsequently, it was proposed to the participants that the document be signed by Marshal Grechko in his capacity as chairman of the meeting. The [Romanian] delegation agreed with this proposal. (The drawn up protocol is appended to this report).

The plenary meeting for winding up the conference took place on 9 February 1966. Marshal Grechko read the draft protocol that had been drawn up, which was unanimously approved [by the delegation chiefs], and signed it in his capacity as chairman of the meeting .

In his concluding speech, Marshal Grechko expressed his personal view about the way the work of analyzing the issues should continue. This was to be done in each country, and afterwards the conclusions should probably be analyzed within the framework of another conference, desirably of the same level or a superior one, so that common opinions be reached. He asked, however, that the study of these issues not take too long. Referring to the fact that, on certain issues, no full agreement had been reached, he expressed his conviction that this should not upset us because he trusted we would reach common conclusions about these issues, too.

2. The conference that has taken place allowed all the delegations to reach an agreement on the following issues of principle specified in the protocol:

- the fact should be considered advisable that, at the basis of the Supreme Command's norms... regarding the relationships with the national troops intended for inclusion in the Unified Armed Forces there should lay the drawing up and the coordination of the common efforts with a view to achieving measures in the interest of the Unified Armed Forces;

- to deem it necessary for the Unified Armed Forces Command to deal with the drafting of proposals regarding weapons systems and technical equipment, the coordination of scientific research plans and of experimental constructions, and for this purpose to create an adequate body;

- the need to set up the General Staff of the Unified Armed Forces as a working organ; in the activity of this organ generals and officers from all the participating countries are to take part, according to an established percentage and a certain length of service. The structure of the General Staff should correspond to its activity determined by the operative-strategic directions provided in the operational plans;

- the need to create a Consultative Military Council as an auxiliary organ to the Consultative Political Council or of a Military Council of the Unified Armed Forces Command;

- the provision of the position of deputies of the Supreme Commander appointed from the marshals and generals of each country;

- the further improvement of the methods of operational and combat training by common maneuvers, mutual visits for exchanges of experience, etc.;

- the need to continue the study, the organization of consultations in various ways and forms with a view to finalizing the document (the Statute of the Unified Armed Forces Command).

3. The special issues which emerged during the proceedings of the conference from both the documents set forth and the discussions, are the following:

a) As regards the rights of the Consultative Political Council, the delegation of the BPR and of the CSR, as well as the other delegations, are of the opinion that this organ has the right to decide in military matters, and, as a result, the Supreme Command is to be appointed by the decision of this Council

Marshal Grechko, although he adopted the point of view put forward by the Romanian delegation to the effect that, according to Art. 6 of the Warsaw Treaty, the Consultative Political Council is a consultative organ and, as such, does not make decisions, [pointed out that] in the Draft Statute the formulations adopted by the other delegations stipulate this very right.

b) The Soviet delegation, just like the other delegations, see in the Unified Armed Forces Command an organ for the command and control of the troops intended to act in common. This is apparent from both the provisions of the Draft Statute and, especially, the discussions held and the assertions of Marshal Grechko. The latter, referring to the right of control of the General Staff over the troops included in the Unified Armed Forces, said: "If we decide that the General Staff does not have the right to come to the army (to control it), then there will be no General Staff, and I will report this to the governments and I will ask to [have my title]be changed, not to be appointed Supreme Commander any more, but "Supreme Commentator".

In the Draft Statute and the discussions held, the other delegations referred to the establishment of the rights and attributions of the Supreme Commander and of the Chief of the General Staff, and not of the [Supreme] Command and the General Staff, as our delegation argued.

c) The way the troops of the Unified Armed Forces should be led in war-time was also discussed. The delegations of the BPR, CSR, and HPR made proposals to the effect that the combat actions be led by the Unified Armed Forces Command.

Marshal Grechko pointed out that the Unified Armed Forces Command will not be able to fulfill this role, and that only a General Staff will be capable of ensuring this. The General Staff of the Soviet Union will lead the combat actions in accordance with the decisions of General Headquarters, but who will this General Headquarters be, who is it composed of, Marshal Grechko asserted that "he cannot know and we are not to read in the coffee cup. If there is a war, the leadership will be assumed by General Headquarters and the General Staff of the USSR "irrespective of whether we like it or not, for war is a terrible thing, and it does not take into account what is pleasant and what is not."

In the event of war, the General Staff of the Unified Armed Forces will help the General Staff of the USSR in leading and coordinating the combat actions.

As regards the troops included in the Unified Armed Forces, Marshal Grechko affirmed that they would remain subordinated to the national commands from all points of view, except for the operational one, being subordinated on that score to "the person who was entrusted with it" (to the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces).

d) Regarding the creation of a Military Council, all the other delegations agree that it should be set up as an auxiliary to the Consultative Political Council. It will be formed from the ministries of defense, and will have a consultative role. The Romanian delegation proposed a Military Council of the Unified Armed Forces Command. During the discussions, Marshal Grechko asserted that "he does not need another military council, he has been Supreme Commander for six years, and he has not felt the need for such a council so far; if he wants to consult with his deputies, he will do it, if he does not want, he will not do it. He asked the chief of the Romanian delegation to report to comrade Ceausescu accordingly, and to ask him and the Minister of the Armed Forces to agree to the creation of the council proposed by him.

e) The other delegations proposed the establishment of the position of deputy of the Supreme Commander for each army, but this deputy, however, is to perform his activity in both his country and in conjunction with the Supreme Commander, as the Romanian delegation proposed.

Likewise, all the other delegations agreed to the establishment of the position of chief deputy and deputy of the Supreme Commander for each service. In that regard, Marshal Grechko said that they should be distributed as follows:

- Chief deputy - Polish People's Republic;
- Deputy for combat training - Socialist Republic Romania;
- Deputy for the fleets in the Baltic Sea - German Democratic Republic;
- Deputy for the fleets in the Black Sea -Bulgarian People's Republic;
- Deputy for the rear - Hungarian People's Republic;
- Deputy for the air forces - Czechoslovak Socialist Republic;
- Deputy for anti-aircraft defense and the deputy for military procurement - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

f) Referring to the representation quotas in the General Staff of the Unified Armed Forces, the PPR and HPR delegations proposed that for the USSR the percentage be 50% and not 30% since the USSR's contribution to the Unified Armed Forces is the biggest, and in case of war it will be the USSR that will bear the brunt of it. In [the Romanian] delegation's opinion, these proposals are based on the fact that these delegations back the participation in the budget of the Unified Armed Forces Command with a smaller percentage than the one proposed in the Draft Statute.

g) All the delegations, except for the [Romanian] delegation, supported the need for the representatives of the Unified Armed Forces Command to remain further in the relevant countries.

4. Normal working conditions were ensured for the delegation of the Ministry of Armed Forces [of Romania] during the conference, and the attitude manifested towards it was adequate. Towards the end of the conference, the [Romanian] delegation noticed a more careful preoccupation with it on the part of the Unified Armed Forces Command, a preoccupation that materialized in a more intense consultation of [the Romanian delegation] with a view to finalizing the proceedings of the conference.

5. The delegation of the [Romanian] Ministry of Armed Forces puts forward the proposal that the materials received from the Unified Armed Forces Command be further considered, and that suitable proposals be made.

CHIEF OF DELEGATION,

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

Lieutenant General

Ion Gheorghe