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**Lecture by Sergei Akhromeyev, 'The Current State  
of Soviet Military Doctrine'**

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**Summary:**

This is a transcript of a lecture delivered by Sergei Akhromeyev, the Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, to the Polish General Staff about Soviet military doctrine in early 1988. The document defines what the Soviets meant by military doctrine, differentiating between the doctrine of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact by stressing the former's wider range objectives, especially concerning the use of strategic nuclear weapons. In addition, it identifies contemporary issues facing Soviet doctrine and analyzes topics such as nuclear non-proliferation, reduction of nuclear stockpiles and refutes the idea that nuclear weapons should be used in a counter-offensive operation. It stresses the importance of defense, negating offensive military preparedness in lieu of purely defensive Warsaw Pact capabilities (albeit altogether sufficient to successfully deter a NATO attack from the West). It also discusses the results of the March 2-3 1988 NATO talks and concludes that the West is not willing to stop the arms race and is increasing its offensive capabilities. The Warsaw Pact's response should include increased military research, better vigilance to capture signals of a possible attack and more tactical and technical training for the military command. It asserts that even though a war is less likely than in the past, quoting Gorbachev, "the nature of capitalism itself can be the cause of war."

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## THE CURRENT STATE OF SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

(a lecture given by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR at the Polish Army General Staff College.)

Honored Comrade Lieutenant General Józef Uzycki, Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army!

Honored Comrade Major General Wladyslaw Mróz, Commandant of the Polish Army General Staff College!

Honored Polish comrades!

Permit me, first of all, to thank everyone most sincerely for the privilege of appearing before you and to transmit greetings, as well as best wishes to the College's team from the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Army General Comrade Dimitri Yazov, from the generals, admirals and officers of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces.

In my talk I should like to present the fundamentals of Soviet military doctrine closely linked to the principal directions of the military doctrines of the nations of the Warsaw Pact.

It is no accident that currently much is written and said throughout the whole world about military doctrines. Everyone is threatened by the danger of nuclear war. Mankind's greatest task is to survive in an era of space flight and nuclear power. New political thinking requires also new attitudes in military thinking.

It was emphasized at the meeting of the Annual [illegible handwritten word] Political Committee of the Warsaw Pact Countries in Berlin that, in the current situation, there is a greater need to understand correctly the aims and intentions in the military sphere of countries, as well as of political-military alliances, as embodied in other military doctrines. For it is in military doctrines that we find a reflection of the real essence of military policy, the thrust of weapons' development, of production and of the armed forces' preparations.

Allow me in this lecture to focus on a few current issues, first of all of Soviet military doctrine.

### I. CONTENT AND THRUST OF SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

What do we mean by military doctrine? Why, in addition to the study of war, do we also have the concept of military doctrine? Well, in the study of war we can find various views on the issues of national defense and military matters. From a theoretical point of view this is both good and desirable. After all, the process of the clash of ideas leads to truth, based on defensible premises. However, some disputes can be never-ending, while the practical work of strengthening a country's defenses requires legally-sanctioned views on the most pressing issues of the armed forces' development and preparations.

Military doctrine - is not simply a collection of theoretical views, but a system of decisions, which firstly: reflects officially-accepted views, which are binding on military personnel; secondly - military doctrine does not encompass the whole of military-political and military-technical knowledge, but only the most important, basic conclusions indicating the key thrust of the armed forces' development and

preparations.

From the scientific point of view the military doctrine of socialist countries is based on Marxist-Leninist teaching on war and the army, military thought, as well as on the whole system of knowledge about war and the army. Military doctrine selects from the whole system of knowledge and sanctions in official documents the most important, key decisions emanating from specific military-political tasks in the current phase, from intentions to ensure the socialist countries' security and defense at the present level of military threat, and from our country's and the socialist countries' economic and military potential.

The Warsaw Pact's military doctrine was drawn up by the combined efforts of the political leadership of the allied countries and adopted by the Advisory Political Committee of the Warsaw Pact. The ministers of defense and general staffs of the fraternal armies are responsible for specifying its military-technical dimension.

In the USSR military doctrine is drawn up, ratified and implemented by the Defense Committee of the USSR, the Soviet government and the leadership of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR.

The military doctrine of the countries of the Warsaw Pact reflects the commonality of the socialist countries' military-political defensive goals. Each of our socialist countries has its own national defense doctrine. Our common military doctrine in no way interferes with or contradicts any country's national interests. These doctrines organically reinforce and permeate one another, representing an expression of the general, basic tenets of the defense of socialism.

While the military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact Organization covers defense issues basically applicable to Europe, Soviet military doctrine also embraces a set of national goals dealing with the use of nuclear weapons, the country's defense in the East and elsewhere, in other words with the defense of the achievements of socialism, on more or less a global scale. This indicates the scale, the complexity, the many-sidedness and mutual connections of the defense problems which we have to solve. Of course, we solve these problems in consultation with our allies both in Europe and elsewhere.

The Warsaw Pact countries' adoption of common, agreed guidelines for military doctrine is of great significance. In the international context it allows us to eliminate the mutual suspicions and lack of trust, accumulated over many decades, between countries with different systems, to achieve a better understanding of fears and mutual goals. From the point of view of solving the defense problems facing the socialist countries this represents a unified approach to understanding military doctrine as well as co-ordinating our efforts on behalf of our socialist homeland.

Summing up the issues, it is possible to state that current Soviet military doctrine represents a system of officially-accepted, basic views on the issue of preventing war, the development of armed forces, the preparation of countries and armed forces to repel aggression as well as to conduct military operations in defense of socialism.

While our earlier military doctrine was seen as a system of thoughts about preparations for war and its conduct, its current fundamental thrust is to prevent war. The task of preventing war is the primary objective, the essence of military doctrine, the fundamental function of a nation and its armed forces.

Obviously, preventing a world war is primarily a political issue. But politics, in their purest form, do not exist. They can be realistic only when they take into account the close interconnection of a country's social, economic, ideological and defense interests.

In this connection, the Ministry of Defense, as well as the General Staff, must focus ever more vigorously on solving problems connected to preventing war, arms reduction, strengthening trust between countries based on the document of the Stockholm Agreement and others. In order more effectively to deter aggression, constant analysis, especially by higher-ranking officers, of the current state and potential development of armaments and military equipment of one's own and one's adversary's armed forces is essential. At the same time, one should act in such a way as not to create an intensification of the arms race. This is a cardinal principle, which has become the basis for the emergence in our military doctrine and strategy of a new direction relating to the problems of preventing war. For the General Staff in the Soviet Union it is this very principle which is probably the reason for its reconstruction.

Our military doctrine has a political and a military-technical side. Military doctrine's political side has a leading role. It defines the attitude towards the problem of war and its prevention in the nuclear age, the thrust of tasks associated with strengthening the defense and ensuring the security of a country based on Lenin's statement that: "a revolution is only worthwhile if it can defend itself."

The essence of our military doctrine's political side depends on the fact that the socialist countries unhesitatingly reject war as a means of solving political, economic and ideological differences between countries. They treat no country, no nation as an enemy and make no territorial claims on any nation.

The socialist countries resolutely oppose nuclear war and any other war. In current conditions world war has ceased to be the continuation of rational politics by the use of other - forceful means. Nuclear war, should it be begun, could lead to the destruction of mankind. Likewise a conventional war can take a much more destructive and murderous form.

A system of international security can be created only as part of a whole network of accomplishments in the military, political, economic and humanitarian fields. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries have suggested a number of concrete proposals along these lines.

We attach great importance to the initiative of the People's Republic of Poland proposed by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Comrade W. JARUZELSKI, on the 8th of May 1987 at the Second Congress of the Patriotic Movement for National Revival.

As you know, this initiative envisages:

- in the area of nuclear weapons - a gradual withdrawal and reduction of jointly-agreed categories of nuclear weapons (operational, tactical and battlefield nuclear weapons);
- in the area of conventional weapons - a gradual withdrawal and reduction of jointly-agreed categories of conventional weapons, initially the most powerful ones used for sudden assault (at present negotiations on this subject are taking place);
- in the area of military doctrines - giving all military doctrines an exclusively defensive character so that, accompanied by a ceaseless maintenance of military parity, one could aim to achieve a level of armaments on either side which would not permit of a sudden attack. The objective of this evolution would be the mutual recognition of military doctrines as purely defensive;
  
- in the area of accompanying measures of trust and security - defining security and confidence-building measures going further than the Stockholm ones; adopting undertakings not to use nuclear weapons first; a prohibition on concentrating large

numbers of forces or carrying out military exercises along the demarcation line between the military blocks; a ceiling on the size of permitted military exercises. Detailed control mechanisms would be worked out.

Expressing their support for these proposals the USSR and the other Warsaw Pact countries believe extending confidence-building measures to naval and air exercises to be appropriate.

The meeting of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail GORBACHEV, with the President of the United States, Ronald REAGAN, the diligent efforts of the Soviet leadership have brought the first positive results which have an historical significance. The signing of the agreement on the decommissioning of medium and short-range missiles represents in practical terms the beginning of a world free of nuclear weapons. Negotiations are being conducted on a radical (50%) reduction of offensive strategic weapons while maintaining the terms of the agreement on anti-missile systems.

The essential characteristic of the military doctrine of the countries of the Warsaw Pact is that it is entirely defensive in nature. These countries have confirmed that there are no circumstances under which they would start a war, be it nuclear or conventional, against any country unless they are the object of an attack. They will never use nuclear weapons first.

It would be in the interest of the countries of the Warsaw Pact to achieve the lowest possible level of military confrontation between nations. Under the present circumstances the lowest possible level of armaments guarantees mutual security. However, since this level is limited by the military preparations of the imperialist countries, the defensive strength of the socialist countries should be so calculated that between the USSR and the USA, the Warsaw Pact and NATO, it be even, similar; their security be mutual and, on the international scale, universal. The socialist countries do not insist on greater security, but they will not settle for less. Out of concern for their security, the countries of the Warsaw Pact are forced continually to improve their defensive capabilities so as not to be at a military disadvantage.

The military-technical side of our military doctrine, starting from military-political premises, identifies a basic potential opponent and the nature of the military threat (for what kind of war should the armed forces be preparing); what armed forces are indispensable for conducting such a war and what should be their dispositions; methods of employment; thrust of preparations.

Examining the nature of the military threat one can state that an analysis of the factors defining the development of the political-military situation confirms that we are facing a military threat. We still are. As Mikhail GORBACHEV emphasized at a ceremony on November 2, 1987 commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution, despite some changes on the part of capitalism, its very being represents the principal threat of war.

This is a function of the NATO countries' aggressive policies. In its military doctrine the USA officially outlines and sanctions the notion of eradicating socialism as a socio-political system, using military means if necessary. Accordingly, the USA has adopted the doctrine of 'direct confrontation' calculated to impose American hegemony throughout the world, while the NATO doctrine of 'flexible response' anticipates war being waged using nuclear, as well as conventional weapons.

In the current conditions of military-strategic parity, the imperialists are continually seeking ways to achieve their objectives both without war as well as by means of war. Nor, in their military doctrine, do they exclude the use of nuclear war whose aim is

thus to achieve victory through sudden, incapacitating attacks aimed at weakening our strategic forces, using in this nuclear attack munitions and explosives which do not produce (dangerous to them) nuclear radiation, as well as launching attacks from space with weapons based on new principles of physics. This all emphasizes a strategy of using nuclear weapons first.

Recently, the USA and its allies have come to the conclusion that their current strategic nuclear arsenal does not allow them to achieve military superiority over the USSR and the Warsaw Pact countries. The USA is attempting to get out of this blind alley by means of the SDI program: deploying an anti-missile system for national defense with some weapons based in space, with an offensive weapons system launched from space, and with the accelerated development of new, more effective conventional weapons.

In its offensive strategic arsenal the USA is developing the MX ballistic missile and the B-1B strategic bomber. It continues to build OHIO-class nuclear submarines carrying TRIDENT 2 missiles. New guided weaponry for the strategic air force is planned. Work is being carried out on the new MIDGETMAN ballistic missile and the STEALTH bomber, which are to be introduced in the 90s.

With reference to NATO's general maneuver forces, we see a continuing increase in their combat effectiveness in line with the 20-year development plan adopted by the NATO leadership in December 1985. This involves equipping the ground forces, air forces and naval forces with new tanks, artillery, aircraft and other long-range weapons systems, with precision targeting capabilities and capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear munitions.

There has been an increase in the scale and intensity of different exercises involving NATO armed forces, during which large forces are deployed near the socialist countries' borders. NATO military doctrine anticipates that its armed forces will operate mainly in a sudden, unexpected manner deep into the Theater of Operations, carrying out attacks on the command and control elements of our strategic nuclear forces and key Army, Air Defense and Naval assets, second echelon forces, reserves and lines of communication. This can be clearly seen in the concepts of 'the air-land war' and 'engagement of second-echelon forces'. NATO combined forces, by virtue of their composition, location and operational deployment (including numerous forward bases and naval forces), their high level of readiness, have clearly crossed the line of what is necessary for their own defense and are in reality offensive forces. In the Central European theater of operations alone we can count in peacetime 42 divisions and 2,500 military aircraft. During major maneuvers these forces are increased 1½ to 2 times. The danger increases of the enemy launching a surprise attack, which by the way is NATO commanders' principal objective.

The outcome of the NATO Council's meetings in Brussels earlier this year (March 2-3) proves that the Western countries not only do not intend to reduce preparations for war, but are intending to expand them. The agreement on medium and short-range missiles has yet to be ratified, and already there is talk of compensating for them in Europe. This position on the part of the leadership of NATO combined forces was also confirmed at a meeting between the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Army General Dimitri YAZOV, and the US Secretary of Defense, Frank CARLUCCI.

If the implementation of all these military programs and the imperialist countries' preparations are not countered, they could lead to a heightened military threat to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. This is objective reality which cannot be discounted.

Therefore, at this stage it is particularly important to raise the effectiveness of the armed forces'

development and their equipment levels, while taking very much into account the military-economic viewpoint, a general increase in vigilance, organization and discipline, the combat readiness of command and control assets and of the armed forces, and raising qualitative indices in the area of operational and combat training. It is precisely on solving these issues that the leadership and entire personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces are currently working.

The task of the military-technical side of military doctrine is not only to identify the nature of the military threat but also to provide a precise answer to the question: for responding to what attack should the armed forces be prepared?

In the current situation we accept as an initial premise the possibility of both conventional and nuclear world war. Thus the armed forces need to be equally prepared for both kinds of war.

The need to prepare for nuclear war derives from the fact that there is a continual threat of nuclear war and in the event that the imperialist countries unleash it, our armed forces should carry out retaliatory-interception and retaliatory strikes, in other words execute their responsibility to defend the socialist homeland, depending on which kind of means are used to unleash war and what are its consequences.

It is essential to prepare the land forces and navy for conventional warfare since, given the catastrophic effects of nuclear war, the possibility of conducting a conventional war becomes greater. In recent years our enemy has ever more frequently emphasized starting war using conventional means. Therefore, if the aggressor starts such a war, we shall have to respond using similar means, without having recourse to using nuclear weapons first.

In the military-political sphere our military doctrine has always been defensive in nature. Today this feature is being expanded and deepened.

In the current existing conditions, our forces' vigorous retaliatory measures aimed at repelling aggression represent realistic variants of military countermeasures against an aggressor. Just such operational methods allow us to fight effectively to prevent war and assure an effective national defense.

II. The armed forces' development and preparations taking into account our military doctrine's defensive nature.

In the area of the armed forces' development our military doctrine is based on the need to achieve the lowest possible level of military rivalry between nations. However, since the level of armaments depends in the first instance on the imperialist countries' military preparations, then the defensive might of the USSR and the other socialist countries should be such as to assure an effective defense of our country and of our allies.

The principle of adequate force, if examined in general terms, is based on the fact that, within certain parameters of force deployment on the part of the countries (the coalition) and the quantity and type of armaments as well as operational readiness, has reflected closely the level of military threat, has ensured military parity between the opposing sides and has assured the effective defense of the countries (the coalition).

A reasonable level of adequate defensive force can be defined as that level which guarantees that an aggressor, whatever the circumstances in which he initiates war, will be repelled and crushingly defeated. [underlined by hand] We agree that neither

side be able to conduct long-term offensive operations with clear objectives, unless the other side also agrees to establishing talks about them.

In realistic terms, an adequate level of defense means that it is essential that we have armed forces which would allow us effectively to prevent imperialism from starting a war and, in the event of an attack on the USSR and the Warsaw Pact countries, to repel aggression. Our armed forces in Europe should be capable of repelling aggression in the course of defensive operations (which will require time), but if the aggression does not cease, of moving over to the counter-offensive and inflicting a defeat on the aggressor.

In recent times, in the countries of Western Europe intensive work has been conducted (especially in opposition circles) on the theory of the so-called 'unprovocative defense' or the 'inoffensive defense'. The essence of this idea is that the armed forces' structure, training, material-technical support and strategy should be such that they would be unable to conduct large-scale offensive operations, but would be adequate to conduct simultaneously a 'credible defense'. It coincides, on the face of it, with our views. However, in comparison to our conception of the adequate defense the essential difference is that the whole system of the 'unprovocative defense' is based on the premise that nuclear weapons should be the principal element of a retaliatory strike. We are against that.

Summing up, the defensive nature of our military doctrine creates more favorable conditions to prevent war in the context of an economical solution to the problems of developing the armed forces and national defense, accepting military parity and adequate defense as a given.

Our military doctrine's defensive nature sets higher standards for the army's (armed forces') battle preparedness and readiness to mobilize. The organization and directions of the armed forces' strategic development and their achievement of higher states of military readiness should be formulated taking into account the aggressor's growing ability to launch a surprise attack. It could be carried out in new, more diverse and dangerous forms, including sudden attacks using large formations and means, under the guise of large-scale maneuvers and without an initial build-up of forces in the vicinity of the border.

In this situation the role of the army's (armed forces') intelligence and constant readiness to deter aggression is even more important.

The defensive nature of our military doctrine also has a significant influence on the manner of deploying all types of armed forces in the initial phase of an operation and throughout the operational system.

The following elements belong in the modern operational system: strategic operations directed at repelling an enemy's strike from space, strategic nuclear forces' operations, strategic operations in the continental theater of operations, operations in the oceanic theatre of operations .

In the event of war being launched against the USSR and the other socialist countries, the principal task will be to repel the enemy's attack, break up the assault of his forces in the land theaters of operations and in the oceanic (sea) theaters of operation, and defeat them.

A decisive factor in our modern military doctrine is that an essential feature of our forces' operations in the initial phase of a war will be all-arms retaliatory operations involved in repelling the attack.

Given the defensive nature of our military doctrine, in the period preceding hostilities and in their initial phase the concept of flexible strategic deployment gains added significance (above all moving the economy and the armed forces onto a war footing). It is also anticipated that earlier, in proportion to the threat level, the armed forces' state of readiness would be raised, as well as their immediate ability to be tasked at short notice in the event of a surprise enemy attack. Given the defensive nature of our military doctrine, both in the conventional and the nuclear context, the role of strategic operations involved in repelling an enemy strike from space assumes greater importance. It fully conforms to the defensive nature of our military doctrine and it plays an important role in our overall system of warfare devoted to repelling enemy aggression. This operation is planned and implemented at the desired level still during peacetime (intelligence, communication of a missile attack, space assets, duty air defense units). In the event of war, the forces and assets involved in this operation will be the first to see action.

In a nuclear war the strategic use of nuclear forces is decisive, since, in the event of initial aggression, they should be ready to carry out retaliatory-interception or retaliatory strikes. The assured effectiveness of the system of communications concerning a missile strike is of exceptional importance, as is improving the durability of strategic nuclear assets.

In a conventional war, in order to paralyze the enemy's offensive forces' key strategic assets, air force, air defense forces, command and control infrastructure and economy we might have to conduct strategic air operations.

The naval forces' key efforts in a war's initial phase will be focused on: 1) ensuring the development and combat readiness of their ballistic missile submarines; 2) carrying out strikes on the enemy's naval forces; 3) conducting combat operations along the enemy's oceanic and sea lines of communication; 4) co-operating with forces operating in coastal theaters, conducting amphibious and anti-amphibious operations.

One of the most important forms of warfare are strategic operations in the continental theater of operations. Given the defensive nature of our military doctrine, in the initial phases of a war this will usually be a strategic defensive operation.

Within the context of the above-mentioned strategic operations, operational elements from all the armed forces will conduct all-arms, combined and independent operations.

Contrary to previous dispositions, our current military doctrine presents the problem of defense and attack in a new light. We see both these forms of military operations as basic.

The role of the defense for the formations of our armed forces in the theatre of operations expands during a war's initial phase. It ceases to be exclusively a secondary element of our operations and it will be conducted deliberately in the theater of operations. The relationship between defensive and offensive operations in the overall battle plan is changing.

On the one hand, we are aware that our armed forces have always been trained in a spirit of vigorous and decisive offense. This was developed as a result of our experience in the Second World War. Nor do we intend to devote less attention to problems of the offense in present conditions.

At the same time, we must remember Lenin's assertion that: '...Marxism must take into account true life and real facts and not just cling to yesterday's ideas...' He

emphasized that in military matters taking into account the true correlation of forces has enormous significance.

During a conventional war both sides will be forced constantly to adjust their strategic goals and actions to prevent them turning it into a nuclear war. There will be a need to define precisely the critical moments in the development of an operation, to assess in a responsible manner the eventual consequences of specific decisions, in other words, if war is unleashed, the political leadership will still retain numerous levers to affect its scale and character.

This analysis leads us to the statement that in a war using conventional weapons, in the initial stage of the war an essential element in the operations of the Soviet armed forces and their allied armies will be to repel aggression in all theatres, leading to strategic defensive action. At the same time, defense alone cannot lead to the complete destruction of the enemy. That is why our military doctrine takes into account the need to transition (after having repelled the enemy's aggression or even during it) to vigorous, decisive, offensive operations. In this connection, in the war's initial phase the counter-attack becomes a basic element in conducting offensive operations. It should be prepared during stubborn defensive fighting.

In connection with the foregoing, let us assume that a basic objective of the counter-attack in current conditions will be to destroy the enemy's assault formations, as well as to seize the frontiers, thus permitting further operations appropriate to the given situation. The counter-attack will probably end when the situation is stabilized and the frontier is seized.

Sometimes two completely different concepts are confused: the first one - concerning the defensive nature of our doctrine consists in the fact that we shall not be the first to start any war; the second one - concerning the nature of our operations at the start of and during a war. At the start of a war we shall indeed be forced to defend ourselves, but in the course of it [underlined by hand] our armed forces will act vigorously and decisively, both during the defensive fighting and particularly during the offensive phase, the counter-attack and especially during the transition to the counter-attack. There is no contradiction here.

In the current conditions we also have to count on the possibility of the enemy making a surprise attack. Based on our experience of 1941, the Israeli attack on Syria in 1982, the USA on Libya in 1986, it emerges that the enemy, through disinformation and diverting attention, and through the use of unexpected means can achieve surprise, even when war and hostilities are apparently inevitable. Hence the armed forces should always be prepared to repel an enemy attack.

In connection with the foregoing, during their 1988 training cycle the armed forces of the USSR will devote 50% of their time to the subject of defense. The defensive nature of our military doctrine does not imply passivity while conducting the defense. Naturally, earlier preparations and the choice of the moment to attack give the enemy specific advantages and, at the outset of hostilities, he will have the strategic initiative. However, our retaliatory operations should be vigorous and so calculated that from the very outset we shall be fighting for the strategic initiative and to thwart the enemy's plans with decisive action, and to impose our will on him. While during the Second World War the first stage of the real breakthrough in the war was achieved only after half a year (before Moscow), in current conditions we shall need to achieve this breakthrough within a few weeks. A deliberate transition to the defense can in this regard afford considerable advantages, as it did at Kursk in 1943, during Polish First Army's defense on the Magnuszew bridgehead in 1944, and in Pomerania in 1945.

It is our contention that in current circumstances the defense must be organized, and

defensive operations carried out, so as to inflict a defeat on the enemy at the very outset of an attack and prevent him from making a deep penetration, leading to a considerable loss of territory on our part.

Given the present balance of forces in Europe, the task of repelling an attack can in general be left to first-echelon forces, without involving larger forces further back. In order to transition to the counter-attack we shall need to involve additional forces. Taking into account the Polish Army's strategic dispositions, it would probably be appropriate to prepare both for defensive as well as offensive operations.

Taking into account all these factors, we in fact plan and implement preparations for the initial defensive operations in peacetime. Preparations for defensive operations involve: taking the decision; planning the operation; giving the forces their objectives; preparing a fire plan; making arrangements for co-operation; preparing the command and control elements as well as the forces to achieve their military objectives; using engineers to prepare the terrain; organizing political work; organizing all-round protection for military operations; organizing command; deploying forces to their defensive positions; checking the forces' readiness for combat operations.

In the event of a sudden enemy attack, we shall not have the necessary time to complete preparations for defensive operations. Therefore, everything possible should be done beforehand. Most of the tasks outlined here can be carried out in peacetime. This is in fact currently taking place in all branches and operational formations of the armed forces. Yet, as was demonstrated in army front staff exercises carried out in March earlier this year involving the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, the preparations for such operations require an in-depth approach. In particular, in addition to planning and studying objectives on maps and on the ground, one can carry out a number of practical tasks (training with commanders and staff using maps and on the ground; reconnaissance and establishing the topographical lines of defensive positions; preparing command posts and the like).

It is also essential to organize the defense and carry out defensive operations so as to defeat the enemy at the very start of his assault, to prevent his forces making a deep penetration and us losing a great deal of territory.

For this reason, a defensive belt (an advanced [forward position) should be created to a depth of no greater than 10-15 kilometers.

From experience gained during exercises, it clearly emerges that our deployment of defensive lines, belts and positions is similar to that of the last war, while the army's organization, as well as its operational deployment, its line of battle, have changed radically. In this connection, it is not always understood the same way by everyone: who should occupy which positions, which belts, which defensive lines; who, and using which forces, should prepare them. The weakest area is the tactical defensive zone, because it does not provide forces or resources to defend the secondary belt. It is anticipated that a main belt, at a distance of 70-80 and 100-120 km., will be established for army defensive lines, and then, at a depth of 150-200 to 300 km., for front defensive lines.

The experience of war teaches us that if the tactical zone is breached, it is difficult, and at times even impossible, to re-stabilize the whole defensive situation. The obverse of this is that, if the stability of the principal belt and of the whole tactical zone is maintained, then even specific enemy breaches are not dangerous.

In this connection, it would seem appropriate to have a principal defensive belt to a depth of 20-25 km.. The depth of positions - 2-2.5 km; the distance between positions should be 2-4 km.. A second defensive belt must be established at all costs, so that

the tactical defensive zone's depth should be about 40-60 km..

Accordingly, army lines should be established to a depth of about 70-80 km., depending on the terrain, and front lines - 150-200 km and 250 km..

Defensive lines should not be established theoretically, but for specific formations and arms. The decisions should identify who is to prepare the lines, to occupy them and what he will do there, what are his objectives.

The second echelons should be located in one of the suitable areas in preparation for a counter-attack or to occupy the defensive lines. Other variants are permissible. These problems should be solved taking into account the specific situation, the assigned tasks, the defensive front's breadth, available forces and assets, the nature of the terrain.

As far as Europe and other areas are concerned, it is important, when setting up the defense, to integrate small, and especially large towns into it. They should be prepared for all-round defense, as key strongpoints.

An important element in the resilience of a tactical defense zone is the all-arms fire plan, air strikes and engineered obstacles. It is well-known that in war commanders of fronts and armies personally worked on their fire plan, and tactical commanders at all levels selected positions for all types of anti-tank weapons or machine guns. We should not now forget this.

Once the enemy has launched his attack, an immediate response is of enormous importance. In the event of his sudden attack, one must be ready to carry out an assault, using those units on duty, against those targets to be hit first. However, as a rule, we should aim at an earlier secret deployment of firepower assets and at the moment when the enemy launches his strike, we should be able immediately to lay down powerful retaliatory fire using all possible force and means.

In the event of a breach or a breakthrough, we should carry out counter-attacks and counter-strikes.

Several problems involved in conducting defensive operations. In order to conduct an effective defensive operation well-organized intelligence, able to detect in good time enemy preparations for an attack, plays a decisive role.

Once permission has been granted, one should secretly stop operational preparations, deploy forces to their designated lines, sectors and areas; move to defensive positions; develop a fire plan and use engineers to prepare the ground. There will not always be enough time to accomplish this.

Experience gained from exercises shows that 2 days are needed to prepare a defense in a divisional belt, together with immediate engineering works, while full preparations require 5-6 days.

Experience suggests that counter-attacks and counter-strikes can be successful only when they are well prepared, launched unexpectedly and at the most favorable moment, with good air-cover, as well as strong air and artillery support.

Given the current nature of armed conflict the effectiveness of all kinds of operation, of strategic and operational activities will depend even more on army command elements' stamina and on force protection. An issue of prime importance is raising

the combat readiness of command elements, the effectiveness of their work, the durability of command posts and communications systems, the widespread use of automated command and communications systems.

Exercises involving the Group of Soviet Forces in German demonstrate yet again the cardinal importance of raising the armed forces' levels of combat readiness and discipline, of competent troop-handling and of maintaining a consistent ability to combat every effort to infringe the sovereignty of the socialist countries. At present we are conducting a stubborn effort to eliminate from the process of command an academic and formalist approach and giving a realistic and practical character to the work of commanders and staff. We feel it appropriate to reduce the amount and scope of planning documents and to devote more time to mastering practical subjects dealing with preparing for combat operations, effectively taking advantage of communications and automated command systems.

In the area of party-political work we anticipate devoting particular attention to developing among the soldiers a new way of thinking, taking into account the defensive nature of our military doctrine. In our work with the soldiers of our armed forces we need to explain in a clear and well-prepared manner that the defensive nature of our military doctrine requires not passivity, but vigorous and decisive action, a high level of alertness and combat readiness.

There are more problems relating to the defensive nature of our military doctrine which we shall need to analyze and develop practically in a detailed manner. In particular, we intend to update the combat manual, the training programs, both in military schools and throughout the armed forces, commission academic studies on solutions to the large number of emerging problems.

We are also, in line with a joint decision taken at a meeting held within the walls of your academy under the direction of General F. SIWICKI, now finishing a work on the socialist science of war. Conclusions from academic research work focusing on operational-strategic issues are being ever more widely introduced into the theoretical side of things. With the aim of a more detailed analysis of these issues and in order to co-ordinate research we have created in the General Staff a center for the study of operational-strategic issues, and in the different branches of the armed forces operational-tactical research centers. Work continues on a second edition of the Soviet Military Encyclopedia and a ten-volume history of the Second World War.

One of the most important lessons of the war is that only with the effort of the whole nation, under the leadership of the Party, can one assure a successful defense of the socialist Motherland. The reconstruction in our country, outlined at the 27th Congress of the CPSU and now being implemented, and the profound socio-economic, spiritual and cultural changes taking place within Soviet society have a great significance for the further strengthening of the country's defenses.

This is being followed appropriately by a restructuring of the development and preparations of the Soviet Armed Forces. We are solving the task of raising further the Army and Navy's combat readiness in close co-operation with the leadership of the Polish Army and of the other fraternal countries of the Warsaw Pact.

We are conscious that the Polish Army, together with the Soviet Armed Forces, accumulated its greatest experience during the Second World War and, in terms of combat, these are battle-hardened armies. The essence of this experience has not lost its meaning today.

Our good co-operation in the post-war years means much to us and we shall continue not to spare any effort to deepen and develop further our friendship and co-operation

between the Soviet Armed Forces and the Polish Army, with a view to ensuring the peace and security of the countries of the socialist commonwealth.

Allow me to wish you every success in strengthening the defense of the Polish People's Republic.

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