

HONECKER ADDRESS MARKS BORDER TROOPS DAY

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[Text] Berlin, 28 Nov, (ADN) -- Erich Honecker made the following address to mark the 40th anniversary of the GDR Border Troops:

It is with great pleasure that I convey to you, on behalf of the SED Central Committee, the State Council, the Council of Ministers and of the National Defense Council, the most cordial greeting and congratulations to the members of the Border Troops of the GDR to mark your 40th anniversary. I would like to thank you all on the eve of your day of honor for your selfless service on our state borders.

In firm militant alliance with the members of the National People's Army and the GDR security organs, and in trusting cooperation with the border population, you make an important contribution to the preservation of peace. You stand shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet comrades-in-arms, with the border troops of the CSSR, the Polish People's Republic, and the other states of the Warsaw Pact for the peaceful development of the socialist community within securely protected borders.

The 11th SED Congress decided clear prospects for our further advance to a peaceful future for our people, and for the strengthening of socialism. The third session of the Central Committee demonstrates that we have advanced a good way along this path, and that our policy is deeply in accord with the interests of our people.

At the meeting of the leading representatives of the fraternal parties of socialist CEMA member-states in Moscow, we jointly discussed the possibilities for a broader unfolding of the creative potential of socialism and devoted particular attention to the deepening of economic, scientific, and technological cooperation. In this way, the GDR is resolutely pursuing the line of the 11th party congress to expand the fraternal tie with the USSR and the other socialist countries and to contribute toward increasing the international influence of socialism.

One can rightly say that throughout our country a creative atmosphere, a broad movement of all classes and strata to realize the decisions of the 11th party congress have come into being. The soldiers and sailors, noncommissioned officers and petty officers, warrant officers, officers, generals and admirals, the civilian employees, and the voluntary helpers of the Border Troops have also formed a worthy part of the movement. Through exemplary efforts, they are daily fulfilling their great commitment: a soldier's deed for the 11th party congress -- at all times combat ready for peace and socialism.

If one today looks back over the 4 decades of the existence of the GDR Border Troops, there is a strong confirmation of the fact that, for the first time in German history, forces created to secure the border take their authority from the people, and they do everything to thwart provocations along the border and thereby promote peaceful coexistence between the peoples. This attitude has determined the activity of our Border Troops from the start. It is in line with the class assignments set by our workers' and peasants' power.

The veterans of the early days, under the leadership of our Marxist-Leninist party, laid the cornerstone for the successful and reliable protection of our border. They came from the resistance against Hitler, from prisons and concentration camps, from exile, and, at one time, defended freedom and the honor of our people in the battles under the Spanish sky.

With their revolutionary experiences from decades of bitter class struggle, they formed generations of reliable fighters who proved themselves worthy sons of our socialist fatherland, the GDR.

The citizens of the GDR have great respect for the comrades of the Border Troops. They know the difficult service they perform day and night, in all weather, and more than occasionally in direct view of unscrupulous provocateurs. At this hour, we commemorate those soldiers, noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, and officers of the GDR Border Troops who gave their young lives in loyally doing their duty for peace and socialism, for the well-being of our people. We commemorate Comrades Siegfried Apportin, Rudi Arnstadt, Klaus-Peter Braun, Uwe Dittmann, Waldemar Estel, Peter Goering, Rolf Henniger, Gerhard Hofert, Reinhold Huhn, Heinz Janello, Helmut Just, Eberhard Knospe, Ulrich Krohn, Juergen Lange, Herbert Liebs, Lutz Meier, Fritz Otto, Manfred Portwich, Werner Schmidt, Juergen Schmidtchen, Egon Schultz, Klaus-Peter Seidel, Ulrich Steinhauer, Manfred Weiss, and Siegfried Widera.

Our people know that the GDR Border Troops at all times stand guard with great self-discipline and great political responsibility at the dividing line between socialism and imperialism. Under the complicated conditions of the close contact between the two world systems, they resolutely repulse attacks on the western border of socialism. With courage and prudence, they ensure the secure protection of the revolutionary achievements of our people.

It is also in part thanks to your efforts that our workers' and peasants' state can develop political stability, can develop a dynamic economy and a dynamic society on so secure a basis, and has for decades proved itself a cornerstone of socialism and peace in the heart of Europe. In this way, you are making a decisive contribution in line with our historic task to do everything to ensure that war never again emanates from German soil -- that only peace should do so. This deserves the highest recognition, and for this we also thank the members of your families.

Our workers' and peasants' state has always done everything required in good time to ensure that socialism can develop well on German soil. Decade after decade, smear campaigns and slander, attacks and provocations by all those to whom socialism on German soil has always been a thorn in the side, have rebounded from the political stability and the secure defense of our socialist state. As in the past, so too in the future, the illusionary plans of those circles which do not want to accept our border will fail at those borders. Our border is also a border between the Warsaw Pact states and the NATO states. We guard them like the apple of our eye, because we know that in doing so we are preserving the well-being and happiness of our people and giving secure prospects for future generations.

A secure border is also a secure peace. We firmly believe that the GDR Border Troops will continue under all conditions to honorably fulfill their obligations toward their socialist fatherland, the GDR, toward our people and our allies. It is a fundamental experience of European history that the inviolability of the border and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states in Europe, within the current borders, are fundamental conditions for peace. The system of European treaties, which came into being not the least thanks to the constructive work of the GDR, is a solid foundation for a fruitful coexistence between the European peoples.

We would be pleased if the Federal Republic of Germany were to approach with equal responsibility; the fulfilling of this system of treaties.

We are in favor of consolidating and expanding the peaceful coexistence between the European peoples. Good coexistence between the states of Europe can, without doubt, be a signal of peace extending far beyond our continent.

In view of the accumulated arsenals of weapons, there is nothing more important today than for responsible politicians to maintain contacts and, with care and realism, to search for solutions so that the current confrontation can be removed and an improvement in international relations brought about. In this spirit, the GDR is ready to work together with all forces that are prepared to look beyond divisive factors and face the historical responsibility of preventing a nuclear inferno and saving human civilization.

With Mikhail Gorbachev's proposals, and thanks to the Soviet disarmament initiatives, offers of negotiation are on the table which open up for Europe and the world historic chance of entering the year 2000 free of nuclear weapons. We support fully and completely these Soviet proposals represented by Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik with great responsibility, steadfastness, and flexibility. We could make no better ones.

The GDR Border Troops are always on guard for peace and the protection of their socialist homeland. In honor of your outstanding services, I take the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Border Troops to award you, at the proposal of the SED Central Committee Politburo and the Presidium of the GDR Council of Ministers, the Karl Marx Order and an honor banner of the Central Committee of our party. I warmly congratulate you, dear comrades.