
Information regarding the Romanian Proposal, 8 July 1988

As agreed with the Soviet leadership, we are forwarding to you the following strictly confidential information.

On July 4 [1988] the Romanian leadership addressed to us a request for bilateral consultations to discuss the proposal " On the democratization and improvement of the organization and functioning of the Warsaw Treaty organs". The content of this proposal was not made public.

Although we consider all questions regarding the functioning of the Warsaw Treaty organs an issue of concern of all member countries, the CC of the CPSU approved the holding of consultations, bearing in mind their strictly preliminary status. The consultations took place in Moscow on July 7-8 [1988]. On the Soviet side, comrades E.A. Shevardnadze and V.A. Medvedev took part, and on the Romanian side, member of the Political Executive Committee, secretary of the CC of the RCP I. Koman, who acted as a special representative of the Secretary General of the RCP.

I. Koman forwarded [to the Soviet representatives] letters from comrade N. Ceaușescu to comrade M. Gorbachev and the CC of the CPSU, which contained the Romanian proposals for improvement of the functioning of the Warsaw Treaty. I. Koman announced, that, on N. Ceaușescu's initiative, these proposals were considered and approved by the Political Executive Committee of the CC of the RCP. (According to mass media reports regarding the Political Executive Committee of the CC of the RCP session on the July 1 [1988], it was intended to present these proposals at the forthcoming session of the Political Consultative Committee in Warsaw.)

Romanian proposals suggest to:

1. Take the PCC out of the Warsaw Treaty [structure] and transform it into a Political Consultative Committee of the European Socialist States, which should be open for any European socialist state. This new body would deal primarily with questions of mutual cooperation of the parties and the member countries in the political and economic fields. It should not be connected to the Warsaw Treaty.
2. Create a military committee on defense, which would become the military organ of the Warsaw Treaty. It should unite ministers of defense of the allied countries, who would report about this organ's activities to the governments and the Commanders-in-Chief of their respective countries.
3. Introduce the yearly rotation principle for the chair of the "Political Consultative Committee of the European Socialist States", as well as for the military committee on defense.
4. Introduce the principle of rotation every 1-2 years for the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces instead of the current practice of appointing him for the duration of 4-6 years. The Supreme Commander should be a high-ranking officer in one of the member countries.

5. Once the governments of the member states agree, the Chief of Staff of the Unified Armed Forces should be, as until now, a Soviet officer appointed for the duration of 4-6 years.

In the course of the consultations I. Koman said that the essence of the Romanian proposals is the intention to bolster the substantive agenda of the PCC, considering the crucial changes in the international situation. In the circumstances of the incipient process of arms reduction, the Warsaw Treaty is still a predominantly military alliance, whereas the RCP promotes PCC activities focused on the economic, political and social issues of the future while not denying [the importance] of the military issues. According to the Romanian opinion, the PCC should not be directly connected to the Warsaw Treaty, which should nevertheless be preserved as well.

In the reorganized PCC, according to the view of the Romanian comrades, there will be no defense ministers of the member countries participating. Nevertheless, I. Koman could not explain what would actually be changed in the way [the work of] the PCC is organized, since there still will be discussions of military issues there.

He said that while working on the proposals regarding the military structure of the Warsaw Treaty, they [the Romanians] were considering the efficacy of the work of military organs with the view toward ensuring substantive discussion of matters of the highest priority.

The Soviet side stated that the Romanian proposals would be studied. At the same time, it was reiterated that the USSR seeks to improve of the work of the PCC, broaden the range of issues discussed, and improve the organizational structure of the alliance by creating a permanent working organ connected with the PCC.

Attention was paid to the fact that the activities of the Warsaw Treaty and its highest organ, the PCC, has never been limited to discussion of military problems. Lately, the range of non-military issues discussed by the PHP has considerably increased. For example, at the Berlin PCC session, on the initiative of the Romanian comrades, a document on overcoming under-development was accepted. During the forthcoming session in Warsaw, we plan to discuss problems of ecology. As for military issues, we mostly discuss arms reduction. Consequently, nothing prevents the PCC from being instrumental in developing cooperation among the fraternal parties and states in the political, economic and social fields.

It was said that since the Romanian proposals need to be considered carefully and on a collective basis, it would hardly be possible to discuss them and make respective decisions at the forthcoming PCC session.

We reiterated that we see the improvement of the efficacy of the Warsaw Treaty activities as a common objective for the allied countries. We also reiterated that the style of the meetings within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty has significantly changed within the past years; global questions of the European and world security have been raised, initiatives have been presented by the allied countries to the UN, and presentation to other international forums are being considered.

There are various options available in regard to improving the efficacy of the Warsaw Treaty. Nevertheless, we should avoid radical decisions. We should consider any structural changes very carefully, so as not to undermine our position at the negotiations [with the West].

We have once again drawn the attention [of the Romanians] to the fact that creation of a permanent working organ connected with the PCC can be quite useful. This new working organ would, along with other functions, control the functioning of the WTO mechanism, as well as the initiative of the Romanian comrades and other possible proposals of other allied socialist states.

The now existing institutions of the Warsaw Treaty are starting to work more actively; the mechanism of making common decisions of the allied countries on important international issues is working as well.

We paid special attention to the fact that improvement of both the military and the political mechanisms of the Warsaw Treaty is a strictly confidential internal matter of our alliance. It is important that the discussion on these questions stay within the framework of the alliance. We expressed our hope that the Romanian proposals will not become a subject of public discussion. I. Koman said to that that the Romanian side understands that the questions of the functioning of the Warsaw Treaty are internal and that they do not have to transgress the [alliance's] framework.

Analysis of the Romanian proposals, as well as of I. Koman's remarks during the consultation, allows us to make the following preliminary conclusions about the nature of N. Ceaușescu's proposals.

It is obvious that there is the intention to reorganize the WTO by separating the political functions from the military ones, taking the PCC out of the WTO framework and converting it into a consultative body of the European socialist states on matters of political and economic cooperation. As a result, the Warsaw Treaty would acquire a solely military character, which means that the result that the Romanian side is now formally opposing would be accomplished.

The proposed reorganization of the WTO Committee of the Ministers of Defense to a military defense committee aims at changing the existing order by providing for collective decisions on military development and the common use of the armed forces in wartime.

Proposals concerning the rotation of the chairmanship of the military defense committee and the post of the Supreme Commander aim at weakening the now existing system of the alliance's military organization.

We do not exclude the possibility that N. Ceaușescu will want to present his proposals during the forthcoming PCC summit in Warsaw. In this case we are considering the possibility of suggesting that the Committees of the Ministers of Defense and of the Ministers of Foreign affairs consider the Romanian proposals at a joint session and report to the PCC about the results.

In his letter to M.S. Gorbachev, N. Ceaușescu expressed a wish to present his proposals together with the Soviet side. However, I. Koman did not raise this question during the consultation. On our part, we did not mention it either.

[Translation by Anya Jouravel]