
**Minutes of the Meeting of a Warsaw Pact Working Group on the Exchange of Information in
Prague, 18-19 February 1987**

(20 February 1987)

Department of Socialist Cooperation

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Top Secret!

Memorandum

Subject: The establishment of a multilateral group for the exchange of current information within the Warsaw Treaty

The team of experts dedicated to the task of setting up an information work group for Warsaw Treaty members held its third meeting in Prague on 18-19 February 1987.

Two difficult problems remained to be solved at this meeting:

- 1) Should the work group be permanently located in Moscow, or should its location be rotated among the capitals of the member states?
- 2) The deletion, at the specific request of Hungary, of the topic of "the exchange of information regarding the lessons of socialist and communist construction", provisionally included by earlier sessions among the work group's internal tasks.

At the plenary session, the Polish, Bulgarian, East German and Czechoslovakian delegations supported the Moscow location. The Romanian envoy was adamant in defending the principle of rotation. Therefore, in the interest of a consensus, a compromise was reached in favor of the rotational principle without the Hungarian delegation actually having to campaign for it.

In the debate on the necessity of information exchange about the socialist construction, which formed part of the section recording the subjects and thematic content of the information exchange, the Romanian delegate reiterated the insistence of the First Secretary of the RCP to include the topic, while the other delegates voiced serious doubts about its inclusion; the Hungarian side diplomatically yet firmly rejected the idea. In the interest of consensus politics, we suggested that a generalized text be drawn up, rather than an itemized list, thus omitting the unresolved issue altogether; this general text was further simplified during the bilateral consultations and finally was submitted to the plenary session as the chairman's proposal.

The representatives of the other members states, who were working in close cooperation, made it clear that the draft texts on the exchange of information regarding the lessons of socialist construction and on other Romanian proposals were included in the previous draft documents in the hope that in return the Romanian side would withdraw its request regarding the rotation of locations. In consequence of this approach, and also

due to the chairman's proposal - based on the Hungarian draft text - a complete agreement was forged, which was confirmed by the capitals of the member states still before the plenary session closing the experts' conference.

In possession of the central approvals, the Prague work team of experts finalized the proposal regarding the multilateral Warsaw Treaty group dealing with the exchange of current information; this proposal was then forwarded to the Warsaw Treaty's foreign ministerial committee holding its meeting in Moscow (see appendix).

In the course of the work group's official and informal meetings, representatives of several member states emphasized the urgent need to set up the information work group. Presuming that the proposal is favorably received at the Moscow meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Committee of Foreign Ministers, a number of representatives saw a good chance of realizing the plan; the Romanian delegation was of the opinion, however, that the practical execution of the plan would have to wait until the approval of the Political Consultative Committee's meeting. Several representatives indicated that, at the level of expert opinion, they would argue for the immediate start of the work at the debate of the Committee of Foreign Ministers' resolution; therefore, it is expected that they will emphasize the importance of an early start.

At the informal talks attended by the heads of delegations I brought up that after the formal establishment of the work group a number of difficult questions would have to be clarified, such as the relationship and harmonious cooperation between the information work group and the other Warsaw Treaty organizations (consultations between deputy ministers and teams of experts, work groups); the role of the Political Consultative Committee's chairman in the organization of the work; the questions regarding proposals and internal work schedule; the harmonization of the levels of representation, etc. With everyone admitting the timeliness of the problem, all delegation heads agreed to call the attention of the central organizations to these issues and to start preparations for a discussion by the teams of experts.

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At the Prague meeting of the expert teams - attended by the head of DSC and András Béres - the Hungarian delegation of experts carried out its mandate.

In order to make preparations for the Moscow meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers, the DSC, in cooperation with the Information Department, will draft a separate proposal in connection with the information work group.

Budapest, 20 February 1987.

[Translation by Ervin Dunay]