

János Nagy

Strictly confidential!

570/N.J./1977

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Comrade Puja | 14) Comrade Mrs. Szücs |
| 2) Comrade Rác | 15) Stockholm |
| 3) Comrade Roska | 16) Oslo |
| 4) Comrade Garai | 17) Copenhagen |
| 5) Comrade Szarka | 18) Helsinki |
| 6) Comrade Házi | 19) Moscow |
| 7) Comrade Szöke | 20) Warsaw |
| 8) Comrade Bobvos | 21) Prague |
| 9) Comrade Kömives | 22) Berlin |
| 10) Comrade Petrán | 23) Sofia |
| 11) Comrade Elek Tóth | 24) Bucharest |
| 12) Comrade Kádár | 25) own copy |
| 13) Comrade Sebestyén | |

Report

On the consultation of deputy foreign ministers on the northern states held on 21-22 February 1977 in Berlin

The foreign ministers of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty held their second consultation on the northern region in Berlin on 21-22 February. The meeting was attended by B. Cvetkov representing the Bulgarian People's Republic, Ambassador F. Hamouz representing Czechoslovakia (substituting Comrade Spacil who had fallen ill), E. Moldt representing the GDR, J. Czyrek representing the People's Republic of Poland, V. Gliga representing Romania and I. N. Zemskov representing the Soviet Union. The participants were treated to a dinner by Comrade Oscar Fisher, foreign minister of the GDR.

The speakers – with the exception of the Romanian deputy foreign minister – characterized the internal situation and the foreign policy of the northern states as follows:

The Northern European states – for various reasons and to a different degree – are all interested in strengthening European security and cooperation. They have a very similar opinion to ours on a number of issues concerning the execution of the Final Act and the Belgrade meeting, while on some other issues we have to argue with their views. When preparing the Belgrade meeting, we have to make an effort to encourage the Northern states to be more active in a positive way.

The northern states attach great importance to the issue of disarmament. We can find some positive features even in the attitude of Norway, Denmark and Iceland that we can capitalize on, although these states generally follow NATO's line in the main issues. This is of primary importance with respect to keeping the proposal on the agenda, adopted at the Bucharest meeting of the PCC of the Warsaw Treaty and addressed to the 35 signers of the Helsinki Final Act, which includes relinquishing first time use nuclear weapons. At the same time it is also important to bear in mind that Sweden and the northern member states of

NATO might overemphasize confidence-building issues at the Belgrade meeting. There is growing political and economic tension between the northern states and the big capitalist countries, especially due the economic and financial explosion following the oil crisis. At the same time, the northern states make increased efforts to widen the scope of mutual cooperation and show some readiness to enhance economic relations with the socialist countries too.

The internal political development of the northern states is – to a different degree – heavy with contradictions. In the past few years the pace of economic and political changes has accelerated and the antagonism between the working class and the capitalists has widened. This is what some internal reactionary forces try to make use of when, encouraged and supported by NATO circles, they make an attempt to strengthen the northern wing of NATO, to revise the international agreement made in 1920 that regulates the status of Spitzbergen, to build closer ties between the northern states and Western Europe, and to increase the ideological campaign against the socialist countries.

The foreign ministers reported that bilateral relations with the northern states had improved considerably since the Warsaw consultation (1975), but there were still several opportunities for further development, and the socialist countries could conduct their political activities under relatively favorable conditions. As far as economic, political and cultural issues are concerned, Finland offers the best opportunity for deepening relations with the socialist countries. With respect to increasing the intensity of relations, the order for all the socialist countries is: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

With the exception of the Romanian contribution all the speakers suggested a connection between this consultation and the resolutions made at the Bucharest meeting of the PCC of the Warsaw Treaty. They all stressed the need for coordinated action and the importance of strengthening the cooperation of all the foreign embassies involved. All the foreign ministers of the socialist countries that work in close cooperation took a strong stand on having further consultations like this one on the northern states in the future too.

In addition to the above the following has also been said at the consultation:

The Soviet deputy foreign minister said that the Soviet Union informed Norway in a very calm tone that it was not going to agree to any violation of the Paris treaty concerning the status of Spitzbergen. He stressed that the socialist countries had coordinated their positions on this issue and worked together very successfully, but he also added that we should further strengthen our positions and widen the scope of coordinated action.

He made some critical remarks on some circles in Finland that tried to twist the Soviet-Finnish friendship treaty. They maintain that the clause about Finland's neutrality was only valid for the Soviet-Finnish relationship but not for Finland's relations with the other socialist countries.

Comrade Zemskov pointed out that the northern countries also seemed to have the intention to divide the socialist countries. It is important for all of us to make our concerted action more efficient, taking into consideration the local conditions and possibilities of each socialist country.

In his speech the representative of the GDR mentioned that the FRG had recently increased its efforts to make its influence more pronounced in the northern region. To counterbalance this influence, the socialist countries should coordinate their action in the region.

Comrade Moldt said that since the Warsaw conference the GDR had signed an important agreement with Finland. By signing the consular and cultural agreements Finland had recognized the GDR citizenship without reservation. This agreement could serve as a

model for future agreements of the GDR with other northern and Western European states. Speaking about the possible utilization of the Helsinki Final Act in bilateral relations, the deputy foreign minister of the GDR argued that in their view it was more practical to work out a concrete proposal on a given topic rather than submit a catalog of proposals to each of the countries. (This obviously was – implicitly – a reference to our initiative.)

The Romanian speaker evaluated the consultation to be useful but failed to go beyond that. He did not make any reference to the Warsaw Treaty or the Bucharest meeting of the PCC but confined himself to giving some facts concerning Romania's relations with the northern states.

The German comrades conducted a lengthy discussion with the Romanian deputy foreign minister about the communiqué to be published on the consultation. Comrade Gliga did not agree with the proposal to qualify the conference as a consultation of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty. Finally, as a compromise, the communiqué included the statement that the conference had taken place in the spirit of what was decided at the Bucharest meeting of the PCC of the WT.

In our contribution we deemed the consultation as very useful and confirmed the need for concerted action in the future too. We informed the participants of the status of our bilateral relations, our experience concerning the situation in the northern states and our negotiations with Finland and Sweden on the bilateral implementation of the Helsinki Final Act.

Similarly to the Soviet deputy foreign minister we also proposed that we should try to coordinate our important political and cultural actions more efficiently, partly in order to avoid concurrent actions.

After each of the representatives had delivered their speeches, the deputy foreign minister of the GDR chairing the meeting – in accordance with established practice – summarized what had been said. (Attached) This can be regarded as the final conclusion to the conference as far as the socialist countries that work in close collaboration are concerned. The significance of the Berlin consultation lies in the fact that this was the first time since the Bucharest meeting of the PCC of the WT that a conference of this nature took place at such a level. In terms of content it did not produce much novelty as compared to the Warsaw consultation, and the proposals were not – could not have been – more concrete either.

Note: All the departments and foreign embassies involved will be sent the detailed documentation of the consultation. Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen will receive special orders to implement the resolutions.

Budapest, 26 February 1977 [János Nagy]

[Translated by András Bocz, University of Pécs]

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