Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP)   September 2005
Records of the Meetings of the Deputy Foreign Ministers   www.isn.ethz.ch/php
Edited by Csaba Békés, Anna Locher, and Christian Nuenlist

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Memorandum

**Subject: Conference of Deputy Ministers
Prior to the session of the Foreign
Ministers' Committee**

On 18 October 1980 the deputy ministers held a roundtable meeting to discuss the draft communiqué to be published on the session of the Foreign Ministers' Committee.

In his introductory speech, the head of the Polish delegation gave a brief rundown on the roundtable discussion of the specialist policy advisors, after which only one question was left open: the location of the next all-European conference.

In connection with the open question, the Czechoslovak deputy foreign minister expressed his doubts about the wisdom of addressing this question in the communiqué. In his opinion, it was not inconceivable that our goals would not all be achieved in Madrid or even that the outcome of the meeting would be adverse to us. For this reason, it would be unwise to commit ourselves, in a communiqué on the meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee, to the continuation of the all-European conference; at the same time however, we should not give the impression that we are reluctant to welcome both the system emerging in Helsinki and the continuation of the Helsinki process. He supported the Romanian proposal about naming Bucharest as the location of the next all-European conference on the condition that the Madrid conference had a favorable conclusion.

In his speech, the Soviet deputy foreign minister expressed his gratitude to the Romanian comrades for their contribution to the success of the meeting called to harmonize the content of the draft communiqué. He pointed out that it was still premature to talk about the continuation of the all-European conference, in light of the Belgrade experience.

The East German deputy foreign minister made the point that the Final Document contained nothing that would make the continuation of the all-European conferences obligatory. The Romanian proposal to continue the all-European conferences fails to take into account the logic of the already harmonized texts and the unfavorable Belgrade experience. In the present situation he could not support the Romanian proposal; at the appropriate time, under the right conditions, the GDR may change its position.

The Bulgarian deputy foreign minister revealed that, according to the information gathered by their delegation preparing the Madrid meeting and on the basis of his consultation with the British foreign minister, there is a fair chance that the Madrid conference would end with less than favorable results. In case the conditions were favorable, the Bulgarian side would support the Romanian proposal about choosing Bucharest as the location of the next all-European conference.

In my own speech, I emphasized that in our opinion the wording of the original draft was subtler. We also consider the new Soviet proposal, which contains no concrete reference to the continuation of the all-European conference, more acceptable. The Romanian comrades correctly appraised the situation, when they pointed out that the debate was not

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about Bucharest. In their view, holding all-European conferences makes sense only if these can contribute to bringing improvements in international politics and if they are in agreement with the spirit of the Final Act. It would be a great accomplishment, if the next all-European meeting was held in the capital of one of the Warsaw Treaty members. Under the present circumstances, however, it would not be prudent to commit us to the continuation of the conferences. This commitment would amount to something like a leap into the dark. It is also well known that there is an ongoing debate on the level of representation at the Madrid conference. In this particular problem, we have found the correct solution: we made the participation of our foreign minister pending on the success of the Madrid conference. The same approach should be used in connection with the continuation of the all-European conferences also.

The Romanian deputy foreign minister claimed that, by declaring our position about the future of the CSCE much more unequivocally, the communiqué resulting from the harmonization of the positions was more constructive than the original had been.

The communiqué of the Foreign Ministers' Committee must not, under any circumstance, evade the question of the future, of the way forward. The Romanian delegation of special advisors has already spelt out the relevant Romanian position. Since they made their proposal under instructions from the Romanian Communist Party, they can, under no circumstance, approve a document that fails to incorporate the above ideas.

The Polish deputy foreign minister underlined that all the members were for the continuation of the process started in Helsinki. According to the position taken by the Polish government, it would be a grave mistake to talk about the continuation of the Madrid under the present circumstances. Repeating the Belgrade mistake would not be in the interest of the socialist countries.

In principle, all the member states supported the Romanian proposal; however, everyone made the continuation of the all-European conferences on condition of the success of the Madrid conference. Therefore, the roundtable meeting of the deputy foreign ministers failed to yield a harmonized position.

Budapest, 23 October 1980

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