

Top Secret!

Report

On the Bucharest Meeting of the Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty Countries

On Romanian initiative, the deputy foreign ministers of the Warsaw Treaty countries held a consultation on 27-28 January 1983 in Bucharest in connection with the imminent revival of the Madrid conference. On Hungary's part, deputy foreign minister István Roska, Ambassador István Varga and chief administrator Sándor Mózes took part.

At the meeting, the Soviet deputy foreign minister Comrade A. G. Kovaliov explained that the statement published in January this year after the Prague session of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty set the general course for the socialist countries. This will be the basis on which the Soviet delegation will work during the February-March period in Madrid.

During the consultations with Sweden, Austria and Switzerland, as well as the meetings with the FRG and France, the Soviet Union represented the following positions in connection with the Madrid conference:

- Since all the countries have equal interest in the success of the conference, those who speculate on winning unilateral concessions from the Soviet Union in view of its alleged "greater interest" are deluding themselves. The western European countries have just as much interest in the success of the meeting as the socialist countries do. For this reason, the Soviet Union will continue to stand by its previously held position of equal status and equal security in connection with the conference called to strengthen trust and security in Europe.

- The final document drafted by the neutral and non-aligned countries forms the basis of further work. The Soviet Union rejects the so-called brief version, in connection with which its authors still have not abandoned all hopes. Although the neutral countries stand by their own draft, certain wavering can be felt among them. It is important that we continue to emphasize: our position on this version has not changed.

- As to the western modifications: we reject the attempts to interfere in our domestic affairs; our position is that the socialist countries' conduct in implementing the Helsinki Final Act is determined by internal laws and rules. During their meeting with the Danes, the Soviet side declared that these modifications would not be accepted.

- In relation the fact that certain western partners at the negotiations pressed for the speedy conclusion of the meeting, the Soviet side was also of the opinion that prolongation of the meeting would hinder the general European process. However, before getting to the stage of convening the European military conference, a successful conclusion must be reached in Madrid.

- Changing our general position and tactics is not warranted, since these have been proven right in practice. In future, we must continue insisting that serious work, rather than confrontation, take place at the meeting.

At the meetings held in connection with the Madrid conference so far, the Soviet Union has gained the impression that despite the fact that the FRG had expressed a general interest in the success of the conference, it failed to back this up with concrete measures. Although France has now been showing greater interest in the European military conference, it has not come out in favor of it openly and firmly.

The main obstacle to a successful conclusion to the Madrid conference continues to be the negative attitude the United States has been showing towards the European processes, although it tries to conceal this by deceitful tactics. Changes in the US attitude may only ensue, if the socialist and neutral countries apply strong pressure.

The western attitude towards the proposals issued by the Prague session of the Political Consultative Committee is far from being uniform. The favorable effects of the proposals should be put to good use in Madrid. Our proposal about the treaty between the two military alliances is for the long

term. We must find the best way to utilize it. Pressing for an urgent western reply in Madrid would serve no purpose. The emphasis should be laid on bilateral consultations; the future steps in connection with the proposal must be decided on the balance of further experiences.

The Polish deputy foreign minister was of the opinion that although the US government had been able to press its allies into a united front, it still could not turn the meeting into a platform of confrontation and criticism leveled at the socialist countries. In this the revival of the dialogue between east and west played a part, along with the growing hostility between the USA and its allies, our well-chosen tactics and the consolidation of the Polish situation. The USA is likely to go ahead with its policy of confrontation, with the support of some of its allies, which means that the prospects of the meeting are still unclear. Since the public's reaction to the postponement was one of disillusionment, the importance of a swift conclusion is growing. The

neutral countries also urge this. Since we do not know how much influence the US can bear upon its allies, we must be prepared for all eventualities. It is important that our tactics be continuous; we must avoid being drawn into unnecessary debates and preserve the objective atmosphere of the meeting.

The Czechoslovak deputy foreign minister emphasized the need to bring the meeting to a successful conclusion as soon as possible on the basis of the plan drafted by the neutral countries so that the military conference can start working still in this year. It is vitally important to link up the follow-up meetings with the main items of the agenda of the Madrid conference. He reminded the delegates of the Warsaw Treaty position to hold the next meeting in Bucharest. Talking about the prospects of the meeting, he was of the opinion that the next phase of the meeting will be crucial, when the possibility of failure was also on the cards.

In his assessment, the deputy foreign minister of the GDR thought that the tense international situation rendered the work of the conference more difficult. Efforts should be made to protect the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and to prevent all attempts to distort them. Although we strive to achieve an agreement, we can neither make unilateral concessions nor yield to the pressure by western proposals to modify these principles. Following some negative experiences, the GDR has been troubled by problems relating to human contacts, information and foreign correspondents. In the following much will depend on the future development of the relations between the USA and its western allies. No change can be expected in the

West-German position before 6 March, the day of general elections in the FRG, and the western modifications, too, will retain validity until then. We must make even greater efforts to bring the conference to a successful conclusion on the basis of the Prague Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee. We must also make sure that continuous cooperation with the representatives of the neutral countries stays good.

The Bulgarian deputy foreign minister talked about both the dangers of the so called "abbreviated final document" and the need to reject any unilateral concessions. He was of the opinion that the proposal made by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty countries about signing an agreement between the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO should be added to the agenda at the European military conference. He agreed with those who demanded a speedy but successful conclusion at the Madrid conference. In his speech, he mentioned the American deputy foreign minister Eagleburger's visit to Bucharest and Belgrade, noting that they have already been briefed by the Yugoslav comrades about the Belgrade meeting. To our inquiry, Comrade A. Andrei supplied a rather evasive answer not at the meeting, but during our subsequent visit to him, when he indicated that the subjects he had discussed with the American government official included the responses to the Prague Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee.

The Romanian deputy foreign minister assessed the international situation on the basis of the speeches Comrade Ceausescu made in Prague and at the party conference in Romania. He emphasized that

in the next 3 to 4 months the member states of the Warsaw Treaty would have to get ready for the negotiations with the NATO about the freezing or reduction of the military expenditure and the reduction of foreign troops stationed in Europe alike. In criticizing the proposed western modifications, Comrade Oancea described them as the main sources of difficulties. He took exception to the fact that through these proposals the western powers wished to eliminate from the neutral countries' draft the chapters concerning disarmament, the process of political thaw and the renouncement of the use of force. Romania was firmly against the proposals favoring the pluralism of trade unions, the protection of political dissidents and the privileged position of journalists; it also rejected all forms of intervention in other countries' internal affairs. He suggested that we take the offensive in the area of human rights. (In this regard he considered the round-table talks that Romania and the USA had held recently on human rights as a positive development.)

He attached fundamental importance to the need to bring the Madrid conference to a swift conclusion. The draft proposal of the neutral countries offered a good basis for this. It would be useful to hold follow-up meetings at the level of deputy foreign ministers in Bucharest, and at the level of special advisors in the areas of economy, humanitarian issues and other topics, perhaps even including the mandate of the military conference. A permanent consultative body should be set up for the conference on security and cooperation in Europe. He informed the participants that Romania would not exclude the possibility of concluding the Madrid conference with a short statement, provided it contained the date and the location of the next meeting.

On receiving the members of the conference, Foreign Minister Comrade Stefan Andrei emphasized that Comrade Ceausescu attached great significance to the Prague declaration. He returned to Comrade Oancea's speech, underlining that, far from being a new development, the institutionalization of the European forum was among the first proposals. The possibility of concluding the Madrid conference with a short statement, which he had discussed with Comrade A. Gromiko a year earlier, was suggested merely as a working hypothesis, rather than a concrete proposal. However, as a final option, such an eventuality should not be discarded.

Speaking about the short statement, in his reply Comrade Kovalyov emphasized that too much talk about it would undermine the chances of the conference's approval of a neutral draft for a closing statement.

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The participants followed the Hungarian speech with great attention and interest. (Its text has been included.)

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The meeting of the deputy foreign ministers was both objective and useful. Convened on the basis of Comrade Ceausescu's initiative, it served the purposes of the realization of particular Romanian interests.

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On Romanian initiative, the participants approved the publication of a press release. The decision was preceded by a slight debate, as a result of which the press release was limited to the publication of the facts.

Budapest, 31 January
Supplement: 1 item

István Varga

[Translated by Ervin Dunay, Central European University, Budapest]

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