

International Security Department
István Varga
004465/55/1983

Top Secret!
Prepared in 12 copies
Recipients: see distribution list

Report
On the Meeting Held by the Warsaw Treaty's
Deputy Foreign Ministers in Preparation for the Stockholm Conference
(Warsaw, 20-21 December 1983)

The Warsaw meeting of the Warsaw Treaty's deputy foreign ministers took place in the Polish capital on 20-21 December 1983, in accordance with the agreement reached by the Foreign Ministers' Committee at their Sophia meeting in October 1983.

Representatives of the seven member states held a consultative discussion in preparation for the conference dedicated to disarmament and the building of confidence and security in Europe, which is scheduled to take place in Stockholm on 17 January 1984.

The representatives of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, the GDR, Romania and the Soviet Union were received by Comrade Stefan Olszowsky, Politburo member and Foreign Minister.

Hungary was represented by deputy foreign minister István Roska. He was accompanied by Ambassador István Varga, as well as senior executive officers István Csejtei and Sándor Szabó.

A brief factual communiqué was published in the daily papers on 22 December about the Warsaw meeting.

All the representatives made a speech during the two-day session. The essential points of the speeches were as follows:

a) In what he described as a preliminary working hypothesis, the Soviet deputy foreign minister A.G. Kovaliev started out by saying that the Stockholm conference would convene at complex and tense moment in European and world politics.

On the basis of Comrade J.V. Andropov's statement of 24 November, he described the countermeasures, which the Soviet Union had made in reaction to the US move to deploy intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Western Europe. Since the Soviet countermeasures were proportional to the danger caused by the deployment of these missiles, they could not give grounds to the western powers' offsetting the military balance. It became pointless to go on with the Geneva conference: its continuation would only help concealing the continuation of US arms program. The deployment of rocket systems was contrary to the peace and security movement in Europe and was not in accord with the final document of the Madrid conference and the aims of the Stockholm conference: to reduce the risks, to build trust and to create the right atmosphere for negotiations. Although the wall separating Stockholm from the events taking place in the world is not insurmountable, the socialist countries nevertheless have a vested interest in making the conference a success; they want it to be the platform of objective and constructive talks instead of the scene of a confrontation.

Drawing boldly on the conference's mandate, and also on the possibilities it conceals, the member states of the Warsaw Treaty can accomplish a great deal to ease the tension in Europe. The Political Consultative Committee's Prague declaration issued in January 1983, along with the Moscow statement of our party and government leaders and the communiqué of the Sophia session of the Foreign Ministers' Committee published in October contain the fundamental elements of our joint position. The necessity of putting in place measures to build trust and to increase security is now "knocking on our door".

The mandate allows us the opportunity to push through our proposal about the renouncement of the use of force. However, when proposing our draft treaty, we shall have to take into account the actual developments at the conference itself, just as Comrade Gromyko said it at the Sophia meeting. It would also make sense to keep alive our other proposals, including the initiatives about freezing the current level of military expenditure and banning chemical weapons in Europe.

In the current situation, the future development of the trust and security building measures required by the Helsinki Final Act (giving advance notice of any planned military exercises and troops movements, the prior registration of military operations by air and naval forces, the exchange of military observers, etc) poses two fundamental requirements. On the one hand, such measures should be effective in building trust and security, and on the other hand they should protect the military potential of the Warsaw Treaty. The latter requirement is viewed by the Soviet Union as the “most sacred principle” and any attempts contrary to this principle will be firmly rejected by it. At the moment, the parameters of the military/technical measures are under discussion in the Soviet Union. Decision on the matter can be expected before the start of the conference.

The harmonized measures to build up trust and security will have to be implemented without delay, as the process unfolds. These cannot be made conditional on any other European forum or follow-up event, including the Viennese conference. This will require a high degree of political realism and determination from the participants.

As Comrade Gromyko emphasized in front of the Finnish foreign minister, “the political thaw has not declared the last word yet”. Vigorous efforts are needed in order to keep the conference on the right track from the start and make it a success.

According to Soviet sources, the neutral countries are worried about the growing tensions, looking forward to the conference with high expectations. Although their concrete proposals have not yet been finalized, they firmly believe that a second generation of trust and security building measures should be put in place.

There are plans for the Soviet side to hold consultations with the Yugoslav partner in January, following similar consultations with the Austrian and the Swedish partners.

The Western European governments are currently developing their proposals. In December, there will be Franco-Soviet talks on the Stockholm conference.

According to Comrade Kovaliev’s announcement, Comrade Gromyko, who would like to use the occasion for holding bilateral meetings, will attend the opening session of the conference. Hopefully, the rest of the socialist countries will also be represented by their respective foreign ministers. That would allow us to present our views on the various issues related to the European situation and other actual international problems in accordance with our harmonized foreign politics.

b) The Bulgarian speaker pointed out that several of our proposals bore a resemblance with similar proposals by the neutral and non-aligned countries, which created favorable conditions for their eventual approval. Of the proposals related to the political treaty, they mentioned the draft treaty about the mutual renouncement of the use of force and the banning of the expansion of military alliances in terms of both members and geographical regions. The renouncement of the first use of nuclear weapons, along with the freezing of the stockpile of nuclear weapons at their current level, the ban on testing nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear free zones and the demand to free Europe of chemical weapons were those proposals, for which we should be campaigning in Stockholm. Bulgaria attaches great importance to the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans. In order to gain support for the socialist countries’ ideas, we shall have to use the methods of political propaganda.

c) The Czechoslovak speaker pointed out that the draft of the non-aggression treaty, the renouncement of the first use of nuclear weapons and the question of nuclear free zones are all within the mandate of the conference and have the capacity to restore trust after the Americans' decision to deploy rocket bases. In our work, we must try to create joint platform with the neutral countries. We must also find ways to increase the conflicts between the USA and its western allies. To gain support for the socialist positions, and also to strengthen the peace movement in Western Europe, political rallies must be organized. We must make preparations for the possibility of anti-socialist demonstrations in Stockholm during the conference.

d) In the list of the possible initiatives, the Polish delegate assigned the highest priority to the draft treaty on the renouncement of the use of force. According to the Polish position, the notion of "confidence and security building measures" was not identical with that of "confidence building measures", since the amendment with the "security building measures" gave the Stockholm conference broader powers and a certain political significance. We must hold a comprehensive debate at the conference on all the aspects of confidence and security building in Europe. All three country groups are of the opinion that the parameters of some of the measures specified in the Helsinki Final Act must be changed, especially with regard to giving advance notification about large military exercises. It is important that we limit the number and the magnitude of the military exercises. Our earlier proposals concerning the prior announcement of large aerial and naval exercises will also be open to debate.

Although the conference's mandate makes no specific reference to nuclear weapons, the Polish side thinks that the conference would be an appropriate occasion to submit a joint proposal, which would require every European nuclear power to renounce the first use of atomic weapons. Further issues that may be added to the agenda are the need to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war either by mistake or by an accident and the idea of either limiting or "cutting back" nuclear weapons on a zone-by-zone basis. The Polish speaker also brought up the timeliness of their earlier proposal submitted in Madrid in 1980, in which they recommended the phased introduction of confidence building measures.

The Polish speaker also pointed to the dangers of questioning the treaties of Yalta and Potsdam, along with the legitimacy of the existing territorial and political order. On the other hand, Chancellor Kohl's recent letter to Comrade Jaruzelsky has revealed that the FRG wished to play a greater role in the East-West dialogue and that the FRG was concerned by the consequences of recent developments, which were unfavorable from the viewpoint of West Germany's "Ostpolitik".

e) According to the GDR's position, the socialist countries should bombard the Stockholm conference with a multitude of concrete proposals from the first moment onward. Some of these proposals should be targeted against the deployment of American rockets in Western Europe. In addition to the renouncement of the use of force, such proposals could include the renouncement of nuclear first strikes, the creation of nuclear free zones, the freezing of nuclear stockpiles and the provision of guarantees for the security of non-nuclear states. Since the NATO countries' position on these issues makes it unlikely that an agreement could be reached in Stockholm in these matters, the submission of these proposals in an official form is presently inadvisable. However, by outlining and defending such plans, we could seize the offensive at the conference, dividing the western countries and preparing the ground for the future realization of these proposals.

Our proposals of military nature are aimed at the mutual limitation of the military activities of both the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO on the one hand, and the reduction of the risks of a surprise attack on the other. The most important tasks are to limit the size of the military exercises and to place the military exercises under control. We must emphasize from the start that

we want to come to an agreement within a short period of time. We are opposed to the efforts that the NATO countries have been making to drag out the negotiations until the follow-up meeting in Vienna or even further.

It would make sense to lend support to those western ideas about security policy, which some western forces of greater political realism have suggested as an alternative to NATO's current strategy. We must also emphasize the moral aspects of our proposals, along with the necessity of political and military reliability. We must make sure that our proposals are in agreement with the mandate approved in Madrid, because this is the most effective way to prevent the NATO countries from abusing the mandate.

f) The Romanian speaker started out from the proposition that it was the nuclear arms race and the redefinition of the zones of influence that together had caused the deterioration of the international situation. The deployment of US missile bases led to the Soviet Union's withdrawal from the Geneva talks and its decision to introduce countermeasures. Quoting Comrade Ceausescu, he underlined the need to suspend both the deployment of missile bases and the countermeasures and to resume the negotiations.

The important issues of the conference could be as follows:

- the renouncement of the use of force;
- the cutback of military activities in the border zones;
- the mutual intensification of information and consultation in military matters;
- a nuclear free corridor between the NATO and the Warsaw Treaty;
- the abandonment of the practice of multinational military exercises;
- nuclear free zones, including one in the Balkans;
- the prevention and management of crisis situations;
- a ban on increasing the number of troops stationed abroad and on modernizing the military bases;
- the freezing of military expenditure.

The rules and protocols must be observed at the conference at all times. The Romanian party and government leadership welcomes the idea of foreign ministerial representation at the opening session. The Romanian delegation wishes to cooperate with the delegations of the other socialist countries, as indeed with all the delegations.

g) The Hungarian speaker discussed the external circumstances of the conference in the spirit of the statement issued by our government, based on Comrade Andropov's earlier speech. In evaluating the prospects of the Stockholm conference, he was of the opinion that the proper utilization of its results could help restoring the internal balance of the European process. It could also provide a platform for the realization of the Warsaw Treaty countries' earlier proposals. We evaluated the Western European and American views published in connection with the conference, assigning high priority to the need to cooperate with the neutral countries of Europe. As first and foremost among the Warsaw Treaty countries' proposals, we underlined the importance of the draft non-aggression treaty and the renouncement of a nuclear first strike. We mentioned Hungary's interests in the creation of nuclear free zones. Among the confidence building measures, we assigned great importance to the modernization of the existing techniques. We explained that the Soviet Union's unique position in the world qualified it to be the best judge of those aspects of our joint security, which would play a central role in determining our joint position at the negotiations. We called attention to the need to reject the unacceptable elements of the anticipated western approach and proposals. We pointed out that the resulting measures would have to be proportionate and balanced, because that served the socialist interests best.

As a fundamental principle, we pointed out that our shared interest in the maintenance of our joint defense capabilities and in the success of the conference together required close

cooperation from the socialist countries at the Stockholm conference.

We gave our preliminary agreement to the idea of foreign ministerial representation at the opening session of the conference. We welcomed and supported the associated Soviet decision, which had by then been made public.

III.

In summary, we can conclude that although the Soviet position was presented still in a rather undeveloped form, the discussion nevertheless proved extremely useful, since it marked out the general course of our tactics and positions at the conference. As regards the assessment of the current situation and the conference, the speeches of the other delegations essentially echoed the Soviet views, which they – with the exception of the Romanian delegation – all embraced. On the whole, the discussion was characterized by a harmony of goals. In this atmosphere even the Romanian delegation emphasized – without abandoning its specific reservations – the significance of the initiatives the Warsaw Treaty had so far proposed.

Comrade Olszowski described the conference as an important factor with great potentials in the process of the political thaw, adding his hope that it would become a crucial instrument in East-West dialogue, an instrument that has military significance in view of the deployment of American missiles.

Several delegates proposed that after the first stage of the conference the deputy foreign ministers should convene in order to evaluate the developments.

On the basis of the views and opinions put forward at the meeting, the concrete proposals likely to emerge can be divided into two categories:

- a) Treaty-type proposals of a political character, which would be submitted later, pending on the actual progress made at the conference;
- b) Confidence building measures of a military/technical character, among which the modernization of the already existing ones would be discussed first.

On the other hand, all western proposals concerning information exchange, inspection and “transparency” will be firmly opposed by us at the conference. Nevertheless, the concrete content of these proposals will form the basis of our decision.

Some speakers rightly pointed out the importance of a carefully designed propaganda campaign in preparation for the conference.

There was all round agreement about the foreign ministerial representation at the opening session.

Budapest, 23 December 1983

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

Copyright 1999-2005 Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact. All rights reserved. If cited, quoted, translated, or reproduced, acknowledgement of any document's origin must be made as follows: “Records of the Meetings of the Warsaw Pact Deputy Foreign Ministers, ed. by Csaba Békés, Anna Locher, Christian Nuenlist. Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), www.isn.ethz.ch/php, by permission of the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich and the National Security Archive at the George Washington University on behalf of the PHP network.”