

East German Summary of the PCC Meeting, July 11, 1989 (Excerpts)¹

In its assessment of the general tendencies of international development, the conference agreed that the turn from confrontation to detente can be reinforced; the situation, however, remains complicated and contradictory. One cannot talk of a decisive breakthrough.

Comrade Gorbachev gave a positive assessment of the changes that have taken place. He stated that in Europe the East—West relationship has achieved a new quality, providing enormous possibilities for the politics of peace.

However, the shift in thinking in ruling circles in the West has not yet led to stability in their policy or actions. This period will take longer.

Comrade [Rezső] Nyers stated that the Vienna final document has led to a new stage in the CSCE process and has raised all-European cooperation to a qualitatively higher level.

The USSR, GDR and the SRR had a different view of the situation and drew attention to the increasing activities of forces hostile to detente. They [the three countries], as well as the PRP, spoke in favor of pointing out in the conference document the danger of increased neo-Nazi activities in Western Europe. The HPR indicated that such a statement was incompatible with the "new thinking."

Only after a persistent discussion on the foreign ministers' level, were the reservations regarding the appropriate formulation of the declaration dropped.

The PRP, HPR and CSSR predominantly assessed the decision of the NATO Council meeting positively.

[...]

Regarding the Vienna negotiations on conventional disarmament, there was agreement that the detailed negotiation methods of the Warsaw Pact were a good basis for achieving an aggressive negotiating stance. The Bush Initiative was judged as approaching the Warsaw Pact position.

[...]

The conference participants underlined the importance of being more aggressive in exerting influence over all areas of the structure of the CSCE process and developing appropriate conceptual ideas and effective initiatives.

— The participants were in favor of a policy of constructive dialogue and cooperation in the area of human rights and humanitarian cooperation. However, there were considerable differences over concrete approaches. The USSR as well as the GDR and SRR emphasized the importance of representing several value systems and demanding from the Western states recognition of the obligations they had undertaken.

— On the other hand, the Soviet Union was assuming that "international standards" in the humanitarian area must be accepted in the socialist states regardless of the difficulties. The position was supported by the HPR in particular.

¹ From Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), pp. 651-652.

— The GDR, CSSR, SRR and BPR spoke in favor of a cohesive stance against every Western attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the socialist states.

[...]

During an exchange of opinions on the internal developments of the member-states the majority of participants spoke of the necessity of bringing about substantial socio-political changes. There were considerable differences in the approach. The USSR, USSR and BPR emphasized that these must be based on socialist principles. The HPR presented its concept of "democratic socialism." This is based on a market economy, different forms of property while maintaining the dominant role of the collective farms as well as pluralism and self-government. Linking political and economic reforms in the HPR could supposedly prevent extremist tendencies. Comrade Nyers was obviously trying to gain support of the Soviet Union and other member-states for this course.

— Comrade [Wojciech] Jaruzelski gave an assessment of the actual situation in the PRP. The Polish United Workers' Party sees the dangers of changes to the political system, but hopes that by integrating those opposed to maintaining the decisive influence of the party in the solution of internal issues, confrontation can be prevented.

— The PRP was anxious to avoid emphasizing in the conference document the socialist character of social developments in member-states.

— The participants were unanimous in favoring deepened interaction among the fraternal states. Despite diversification in the socialist countries, the majority was in support of strengthening efforts to bolster their unity and resisting imperialist attempts at differentiation among them. The HPR supported moving away from the "monolithic" notion of the unity of socialist countries and basing their relations on the norms of international law and the CSCE process.

[...]

The importance of effectively creating mechanisms for political and military cooperation in the framework of the Warsaw Pact was unanimously stressed. All member-states (except the SRR) spoke in particular for the creation of a standing political working body. The SRR did not repeat its ideas contained in the letter from the RCP to the fellow parties on reorganizing the Warsaw Pact. Due to the SRR's stance, it was not possible to come to a concrete agreement at the joint conference of the committees of foreign and defense ministers the eve of the PCC meeting. The committees were instructed to submit concrete steps for improving the decision-making mechanism. A corresponding mandate was given to the expert group.

[...]

[Translation from the German by Catherine Nielsen.]