

DISCUSSION NOTE

During the pause in the meeting of the Conference of the ministers of foreign affairs of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty, which took place on January 16 in the morning, comrade minister George Macovescu had a discussion with A.A. Gromyko, the ministers of foreign affairs of the USSR, at the latter's initiative.

The official translator was Teofil Ionescu, secretary I of the Embassy of SR Romania at Moscow.

I. The Soviet minister said that he wanted to let comrade George Macovescu know some considerations in connection with the intervention he had made about the second point on the agenda of the Conference.

In this sense, Gromyko said that – as comrade George Macovescu had remarked – in his speech he had made a number of proposals regarding the agenda of the future General European Conference, which go further than the position known until now and in relation to this he would like to put forward some considerations.

1/ As regards the first point on the agenda of the future General European Conference, its supplementation was proposed with the analysis “of a number of measures regarding the consolidation of stability and trust” instead of measures intended for the reduction of military tension. The reason why this proposal was made was that, from the talks held with Western countries (within the framework of both the multilateral consultations at Helsinki and the bilateral ones), it was apparent that such a flexible formulation would meet halfway the position of the above-mentioned countries, and reduce the differences of positions existing until that moment, without any prejudice whatsoever to the stance of principle of the socialist countries. On the one side, this formulation would at once prevent that the issues to be discussed – in this respect – at the General European Conference be mistaken for the issues that are to be discussed within the framework of the talks regarding the scaling down of armed forces and armaments in Europe. On the other side, the discussion of measures regarding the strengthening of stability and trust would correspond to a larger extent to the goals put forward to the General European Conference: to increase stability and trust on the continent under the conditions of reducing tension.

The Soviet minister went on to say that by “deciphering the meaning of the Soviet proposal” the mutual warning about the great military maneuvers in certain determined zones and an exchange of observers, on the basis of mutual invitations, to military maneuvers of this kind, was meant. “If a ‘side’ extends an invitation for observers to attend the military applications organized by it on its own territory”, Gromyko said, “then – in similar cases – the other ‘side’ will do the

same since no other reaction is to be expected.” He added that it would not be necessary to include, among the mentioned measures, the announcement of the big troop deployments as this is apparent from the proposed formulation.

The detailed explanation of the meaning of the Soviet proposal and the implied actions mentioned by him now only confidentially, will take place later – depending upon priorities (?) – within the framework of either the multilateral consultations at Helsinki or the bilateral consultations with the other countries. The Soviet minister asked that until [the above-mentioned explanation is made] no references to these actions be made since they constituted a tactical reserve.

2/ Continuing his speech, A.A. Gromyko referred to the proposal made in his intervention to break down the second point on the agenda in its main components: economic collaboration, cultural collaboration, inclusion of contacts between organizations and persons, and proposing that the exchange of information become a new point – the third – on the agenda of the future General European Conference.

In this respect, the Soviet minister referred to the existence of necessary possibilities – as it was also apparent from L.I. Brezhnev’s speech at the festive meeting on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the USSR – of our taking an offensive stand as regards the debate – at the General European Conference – of the issues relating to the cultural relationships, the contacts between persons, and the development of the exchange of information. Concurrently, he pointed out that from the consultations the Soviet side had had with various countries, including France (within the framework of the talks between L.I. Brezhnev – George Pompidou), it was apparent that the Western countries would not renounce their position of principle regarding this issue.

In his talks held with L.I. Brezhnev, Georges Pompidou pointed out that – for various reasons – the French side could not renounce its position, but said he was willing – if his position is not accepted – to take into consideration the opinion expressed by the Soviet side that the development of the cultural relationships and of contacts between organizations and persons, as well as the exchange of information, should take place strictly observing the sovereignty, the laws, and the custom of each country, and promised to influence the other Western countries in connection with this issue accordingly.

“We take the view”, the Soviet minister said, “that we can agree to making a concession to France and include the issue of cultural relationships as a separate point on the agenda in the proposed draft document”.

3/ Continuing his speech, the Soviet minister referred to the permanent organ of the General European Conference and the proposal of the Soviet side that it should be specified that this conference would have purely consultative functions. In this context, he referred to the fact that at Helsinki, until now, the Western countries have not presented their position on this issue, and mentioned their reserve regarding the respective organ, the fear that this could become a forum of adopting decisions. “Taking all of these aspects into consideration”, cde.

Gromyko said, “we deem it necessary to specify – what we, the socialist countries, have had in mind since the very beginning – that the permanent organ of the Conference, regardless of its being named committee or secretariat, will be an organ with consultative functions, a linking element with the future European conferences.

II. Comrade George Macovescu thanked the Soviet minister for the explanations given, saying that – except for one point – the positions of our two countries on the issues on the agenda were identical. He added that the Romanian side would very carefully consider the intervention of the Soviet minister and the explanations given by him, and would do its best for the positions agreed upon to be supported and fostered.

Continuing his speech, comrade George Macovescu pointed out that the positions of our two countries differed on the first point on the agenda. He added that it was difficult [for us] to understand – and many people would not understand, either – why the inclusion is now so easily given up of the discussion, within the framework of the first point [on the agenda], of the principle of renouncing the use of force and the threat with force, after so many years during which this has been the constant and firm position of the socialist countries. The Romanian minister reminded the documents jointly adopted by the socialist countries regarding this issue, the insistence and the efforts of the Soviet Union for the purpose of the large-scale fostering of the relevant principle; he also referred to a previous proposal of the Soviet side in the sense that a special declaration should be adopted on that score during the period, where negotiations with the FRG were being conducted. He also said that it would be better if the Soviet side proceeded to a reconsideration, maintaining the previous positions jointly supported and promoted for several years running. The modification of the known position of the socialist countries will have these countries ask themselves questions about the motivations that determined this [modification].

The Soviet minister replied that, by launching the known proposals – which are more flexible – the Soviet side felt they would have a larger audience, and enjoy more support from the European countries.

The Romanian minister said that, in the opinion of the Romanian side, the previous position enjoyed a large audience and wide support, which insured its acceptance by all of the other countries. He specified that this was the position of the Romanian side, which would be reflected in the intervention to come.

A.A. Gromyko said that the impression had been created to the Soviet side that the Romanian comrades believed that the USSR was currently neglecting the principle of renouncing the use of force and the threat with force, a fact that is not true. To the contrary, the Soviet side wishes this principle to find sanctioning and a wide approach in the final document – “Declaration of the General European Conference.” Simultaneously, the Soviet side does not want

the issue of renouncing force and the threat with force to be separated from the observance of the frontiers, a stance that was also reflected in the documents concluded by the USSR with the FRG, the joint declarations concluded with France and the USA, in the documents concluded by the other socialist countries, Poland and the GDR, with the FRG, France and other states. The Soviet minister asked that this position of the Soviet Union be explained by the Romanian minister after his return to Bucharest.

Comrade George Macovescu, after he assured [the Soviet minister] that he will inform [Romania's leadership] about the considerations set forth by him, expressed the view that it would be better for the mentioned formulation of the first point of the agenda to be supplemented by the inclusion of the issue of respecting the existing frontiers. This formulation would have, in his opinion, all the chances of being accepted for the very considerations put forward by the Soviet minister.

A.A. Gromyko objected, saying that this way the whole activity in connection with the adoption of the agenda would become much more complicated since all kinds of interventions and commentaries would be made. The question will be raised, why one of the main principles of the relationships between states be made more prominent than the other and why we should include all of them or only the most important ones. In this manner, the drawing up of the first point of the agenda could endanger the whole activity linked with the establishment of the agenda.

At this moment the discussion was discontinued because of the end of...

[Translated by Viorel Buta]