
Report on Session of the Working Group for the Reform of the Political Cooperation Mechanisms within the WP in Sofia

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Top Secret!

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Copy

of the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Socialist World System Department

Report

on the session of the work group dealing with the improvement of the working mechanism of political cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty
(Sofia, 30 March- 3 June 1983)

At the first session of the working group created at the April session of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty in Prague, the member states were represented by heads or deputy heads of departments of the ministries of foreign affairs. The leaders of the groups of experts were received by Mariy Ivanov, the first deputy of the Bulgarian foreign minister, deputy foreign minister Ivan Ganev gave a dinner in honour of the participants. The session of the working group was a secret one according to previous agreement, no factual communiqué was published on it.

I.

At the session of the working group, there was a free exchange of opinions concerning the work mechanism of political cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty. After the general expression of opinions, the revision of specific questions took place according to the following thematic grouping:

1. Mutual information and consultation activity
 - a./ meetings of deputy ministers
 - b./ permanent organ.
2. Political preparatory work:
 - a./ arbitration conferences of experts for preparing PCC and documents
 - b./ working groups of experts.
3. Organizational- technical- service activity:
 - United Secretariat, general secretary.
4. Informational propaganda, publishing and scientific research activity.

II.

Within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, the group of subjects was discussed separately and completely, in detail for the first time practically. The earlier endeavors to institutionalize, improve the working mechanism were thwarted by the Romanian opposition. Concerning these questions, in the past two decades often sharp political disputes have evolved between the closely cooperating and the Romanian parties. During the long time relatively many problems have accumulated, it has also become evident that certain internal institutionalizing, organizational decisions are not interpreted in the same way by the member states.

At the session of the working group the key question, the main topic of the discussion was the role and character of the United Secretariat. The Bucharest PCC resolution of 1976 was interpreted by the Soviet, Hungarian and Romanian party as giving an organizational-technical-servicing role to the United Secretariat. The Secretariat must be strengthened in this role, there is no need to give it a political role and for its functioning as a permanent organ.

The Polish and Czechoslovak delegations urged basic changes in the character of the Secretariat from nearly the same platform, enjoying the direct and at other times silent support of the Bulgarian and GDR delegations. Interpreting the resolution of 1976 as deciding about the creation of an organ functioning continuously, having a political role and permanent large apparatus, they urged the execution of the resolution interpreted by them this way.

The main endeavor of the Soviet delegation was directed at the codification, unambiguous clarification, specification of the evolved political cooperation practice - as a minimal program. Their written suggestion referred mainly to the description of the order and notions of the political preparatory work preceding the sessions of the political organs. The Soviet party emphasized that they did not consider necessary to execute radical changes, but at the same time, they did not exclude the introduction of new cooperation forms. In case of new forms they decide on the basis of a double criteria: the suggested new form should strengthen the relations of allies and it should satisfy real needs wanting a solution. They can see a possibility for progress by making the meetings of deputy ministers more frequent, maybe regular, the wider application of work groups of experts, the introduction of the principle of rotation in connection with the function of the general secretary.

The head of the Soviet delegation stated that they considered the activity of the working group very important from a political point of view. He said that the group of subjects was revised not only by the leadership of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign affairs, but the highest party and state forums as well. During the exchange of opinions the Soviet party did not criticize directly the Czechoslovak and Polish suggestions. Besides expressing their position unambiguously, they asked questions, by which they made their doubts felt on the one hand, and indirectly pointed to the inconsistencies, the lack of thinking over concerning the suggestions.

The Romanian group of experts arrived in Sofia with a limited authorization. Their mandate was limited to listening to what was being said during the free exchange of opinions. That is why they did not participate in the actual discussion. But the general expression of their position made it clear that they were satisfied with the execution of the Bucharest resolution of 1976 of the PCC, the evolved forms of cooperation used at present. They urged that we should use the existing possibilities more effectively. They oppose the idea of setting up a Secretariat functioning continuously, and given a political role, they consider it as contradictory to the resolution of 1976. They made one single written work suggestion: they repeated the idea referred to

in the Prague speech of the Romanian foreign minister saying that a decision should be taken about setting up a work group at the Sofia session of the PCC, which would deal with the complex of questions of disarmament at its regular sessions.

The head of the Soviet delegation said during a private conversation that the Romanians might submit the above suggestion at the session of the Bucharest work group dealing with the reduction of military expenses. Previously he told his Romanian partner that they did not agree with their idea.

The Hungarian delegation proceeded according to the received instruction. It was not initiating in the discussion, it expressed its views mainly in connection with others' suggestions. During reasoning it used the achievements of the Hungarian-Soviet foreign consultation. From Hungarian side, written suggestions were submitted concerning seven specific questions. These were the following: meetings of deputy ministers; the frequency of the sessions of the Committee of Foreign Ministers; rotation at the head of the Secretariat; work groups; elaboration of basic rules, procedural regulations; preliminary information about suggestions of great importance at the sessions of political organs; the review of the group of subjects of the Warsaw Treaty mechanism. The majority of delegations supported these suggestions.

III.

The Prague resolution of the CFM obliges the working group to submit its suggestions defined by general agreement to the coming Sofia session of the CFM in October this year in the form of a report. The text of the report must be harmonized at the second session of the work group - between 16 and 26 August. Analyzing and evaluating what was said during the free exchange of opinions at the first session, the suggestions submitted non-officially, every member-state forms its position for the second session. As a result of Romanian opposition, no protocol was prepared at the first session of the work group. They also opposed the Bulgarian president making a non-official draft report for the second session as the basis for harmonizing.

Already at the first session there was general agreement that the work forms and methods evolved during cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty and proved successful should be laid down. The position of the Romanian party still does not make possible to take relevant new steps. The approaching of Soviet and Czechoslovak-Polish positions through compromise seems possible. From the Soviet side, it was confidentially signaled that they could imagine creating a forum of permanent character, meeting every two or three months to give mutual information on up-to-date international questions and Warsaw Treaty matters. The other concession is that they are likely to give up their previous idea according to which instead of a general secretary, an executive secretary should stand at the head of the United Secretariat. The head of the Soviet delegation of experts - despite the obvious divergences of opinion concerning the question of the United Secretariat - is optimistic about forming a common position. In the Czechoslovak and Polish positions he sees the survival of earlier concepts. It could also be felt that before the Sofia session there were no consultations between the Czechoslovak, Polish and GDR sides and the Soviet Union. The Soviet party hopes that the Czechoslovak and Polish positions will change as a result of the reasons sounding at the session of the work group on the one hand, and the possible later consultations on the other hand.

IV.

The Hungarian suggestion that in the leadership of the United Secretariat the principle of rotation should be used was generally approved of. During the discussion a solution was outlined according to which the PCC session should appoint the representative of the host country general secretary with a mandate lasting up to the next session. According to this, the next Sofia session of the PCC would appoint a Bulgarian general secretary. The Soviet side suggested that to the post of general secretary becoming vacant as a result of the comrade Firubin's death, the general secretary commissioned at the CFM October session could be appointed temporarily until the PCC session.

During the exchange of opinions, the Soviet and Romanian sides announced the beginning of the activity of two other working groups. The working group dealing with chemical weapons will start its first session in Moscow on 20 June. The working group dealing with military expenses will hold its first session in Bucharest in the second half of June.

During the Sofia exchange of opinions, there was general agreement that we should strive to end the activity of work groups successfully by the given time. Some contributors did not exclude the possibility of the chemical weapons and military expenses groups making only "medial" reports to the Sofia session of the CFM and asking for the prolongation of its mandate if justified by the work.

The Romanian side signaled that they would initiate the creation of a disarmament work group. The Bulgarian side made several suggestions about the development of propaganda, information, publishing and scientific research activity within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty. As it is a new sphere of activity practically, at the session of the work group the majority thought that it would be reasonable to examine these new questions within the framework of work groups to be set up for this task.

V.

The free exchange of opinions proved successful at the first session of the working group. The questions of the working mechanism of political cooperation were put on the agenda for the first time after a long period. As a result of the deep, patient exchange of opinions aimed at progress, general agreement was approached, it seems a realistic task to make a report at the second session of the working group to be submitted to the Sofia session of the CFM. The discussion and exchange of opinions were useful also because they meant progress in the unified interpretation too.

11 written suggestions were submitted to the delegation. The Socialist World System Department will arrange the translation of the about 20-page material. On the basis of what was said during the exchange of opinions, it will comment on the suggestions and will make suggestions about the Hungarian position in some specific questions.

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Written: in 4 copies; For: comrade Horn /2/; Department /2/

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