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N A T O U N C L A S S I F I E D

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MEMORANDUM

To: The Political Committee
From: The Chairman

SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN MEDIA COMMENTARIES ON
THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING DECEMBER, 1970

There is attached a report prepared by the Political Affairs Division of the International Secretariat on this subject.

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SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN MEDIA COMMENTARIES ON
THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING DECEMBER, 1970

SUMMARY

The trend of relatively brief and calm comment on NATO Ministerial Meetings by East European media which began in December 1968 has continued for the December 1970 meeting. The TASS statement of 4th December seemed to provide the guidelines for subsequent Eastern comment, although some of its views were anticipated by earlier Czechoslovak and East German observations. Bulgarian and Czechoslovak commentaries expressed solidarity with the GDR. Czechoslovak, GDR, Polish and Soviet views cast the United States as the villain who opposes a security conference and calls for increased military expenditures in Western Europe in order to maintain its control over that region. Rumania's principal statement described the NATO Communiqué as a mass of contradictions and singled out France as the NATO member "who stood in favour of a conference". Hungarian comment was remarkably calm and objective while the Albanian continued its view that the two superpowers were really conspiring to obtain world hegemony for themselves.

SOVIET REACTION

In a commentary issued on December 4, the Soviet official news Agency TASS charged the NATO Council with creating "artificial obstacles" to an improved atmosphere in Europe by insisting on a Berlin settlement before steps can be taken for convening a European security conference.

TASS said that the Brussels Ministerial Meeting was dominated by "hawks" led by the United States. It said that the United States had made active efforts in Brussels "to strengthen the NATO military machinery and to revive the dangerous 'Cold War' methods resolutely denounced by the people".

TASS said that the NATO Council had ruled out participation in the Communist-backed European conference "without first solving controversial problems connected with West Berlin".

"At the same time, the NATO 'hawks' themselves are going out of the way to prevent a mutually acceptable agreement on West Berlin that would meet the interests of détente in Central Europe as well as the demands of the West Berlin population and the lawful interests and sovereign rights of the German Democratic Republic," TASS added.

Referring to the agreement by several NATO countries to step-up their share of NATO's military spending, TASS said "under the Pentagon's pressure, ten defence ministers of the West European NATO member-states were forced to agree to an additional military spending of \$1 billion in the coming five years."

"This means that from now on the burden of the upkeep of troops from overseas deployed in Western Europe will be largely borne by West European tax-payers," TASS said, seeking to underscore the "foreign" presence of American forces in Europe.

TASS said that "the NATO strategists who arrived in the Belgian capital from overseas did not dare to come out openly against the policy of relaxation of tensions, to reject out of hand the idea of convening an all-European conference on security, realizing that this idea is widely supported by the peoples."

"The position taken by the session of the NATO Council on the West Berlin problem results in the establishment of artificial obstacles to softening the political atmosphere in Europe," it said.

ALBANIA

Radio Tirana on the 3rd and again the 7th December attacked both the Warsaw Pact and NATO, asserting that the "coincidence" /of the meetings/ confirms that the plans and activities of the two aggressive blocs are co-ordinated in advance by their principal manipulators and that they have a common purpose - the consolidation of the Soviet-US alliance against the people and the two powers' struggle to preserve world hegemony".

BULGARIA

The Bulgarian press agency on the 4th said the East Berlin documents had given the lie to Western speculation about alleged differences within the Warsaw Pact alliance. Those documents, the report said, emphasized "the solidarity of the Warsaw Treaty member countries with the peaceful policy of the German Democratic Republic and once again put the accent on the unity of action of all Warsaw Treaty states".

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Ceteka on the 3rd December, declared that NATO defence ministers "have taken a step back as regards relaxing tensions and a step forward as regards strengthening militarist trends". Anticipating the Soviet reaction, the Czechoslovak commentary said NATO Ministers were "inventing obstacles to virtually postpone indefinitely any security conference" because of their "worries" over the Berlin problem, for which they blame the German Democratic Republic. As regards NATO defence, "the big power supremacy of the United States and its European satellites - Belgium and The Netherlands - silenced smaller European countries which had taken a reserved attitude to intensification of militarist efforts of NATO in the past".

Miroslav Moc, editor-in-chief of the CP Rude Pravo, on 5th December gave full marks to the Pact's East Berlin Summit Meeting, emphasizing the Pact's "unequivocal" solidarity with the German Democratic Republic, "without whose participation it is impossible to establish a lasting peace."

Moc criticized NATO's statement on the importance of a satisfactory arrangement on Berlin, stating that the Alliance's requirement "is in accordance with one-sided, out-of-date notions based on an unequal solution." and added "Making an ultimatum for one single question is unrealistic and dangerous". As for a CBS, the hardliner Moc said "Postponing bilateral and multilateral talks on European security shows the aggressiveness of Atlantic militaristic and revanchist circles and is an attempt to put a brake on positive processes on the continent of Europe from overseas."

The Slovak Pravda on the 7th continued the anti-NATO, anti-US tone by stating that the Warsaw Pact's East Berlin documents "laid bare the obstructionist, retarding and reactionary policy of NATO and the United States." The article

supported the GDR, saying international recognition of that regime "would eliminate one of the chief procedural obstacles to the convening of a security conference". Pravda called upon the Federal Republic of Germany to recognize "the just demand of Czechoslovakia that the Munich Agreement was invalid from its beginning."

EAST GERMANY

On 2nd December, Deutschlandsender broadcast its statement that the "United States intends to station nuclear weapons along the Federal Republic's border with the socialist countries in an attempt to maintain its hegemony and to bind its Allies to American policy." (This reference to a nuclear mine belt had also been made by Radio Moscow on the same day.)

East Berlin television on the 3rd stressed what it termed were the aggressive statements made by Secretary Rogers, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Minister Scheel. The commentary contrasted what it said were the different approaches to the question of reaching peace taken by the two alliances.

Neues Deutschland on the 4th criticized the United States and continued the theme of the US "chaining its European partners even more strongly to its imperialist global strategy." The US, it said, "has tried to sweep from the table the normalization of relations among European states and the convening of a European security conference and to replace them with the rattle of arms."

HUNGARY

Hungary seemed to have devoted the least energy and space to comment on the NATO Ministerial Meeting. The radio and press reports of 2nd December were given in calm tones suggesting the unbiased observations of a neutral reporter. The radio report, for example, noted that "since the Budapest Appeal of March 1969, some elements of dialogue have emerged between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty states."

POLAND

Warsaw's Zycie Warszawy on 6th December claimed that the Ministers' work had been agreed upon in advance of

the December meeting and that the Communiqué stated in essence: "We /NATO/ shall continue armaments because we do not believe your /Warsaw Pact/ peaceful declarations. There will be no consent to a security conference so long as you do not agree to our demands concerning West Berlin."

The press agency PAP on the 7th said: "nothing has happened in Europe this year to justify the tougher NATO line. But the US believes that the easing of the confrontation in Europe is proceeding at too rapid a pace and is getting out of American control. The US hopes that the brakes it has applied will delay an All-European dialogue and the security conference until a time when America will get a more convenient bargaining position in relation to the Soviet Union."

RUMANIA

The Rumanian press agency on the 6th treated the NATO Communiqué as a mass of contradictions. Thus, while calling for a reduction of tensions, the Communiqué also called for NATO's own increased military might. While Ministers favoured the principle of a security conference, they at the same time hedged it with restrictive conditions, particularly as regards a satisfactory settlement of the Berlin problem and a favourable course of negotiations underway. The comment on attitudes towards a conference noted what it said were the US and Dutch positions against a conference until preconditions were met, whereas France, with some concern over a settlement of the Berlin matter, "stood in favour of a conference." "Denmark, Norway and other countries advocated the starting of a many-sided dialogue among the states concerned, stressing that the effort should be continued for improving East-West relations."

The Foreign Ministers' meeting, the commentary claimed, confirmed the existence of profound disagreement and reserve on the part of some European countries vis-a-vis the American demands for intensified arming. In this regard, it said "Secretary Rogers and other devotees of continued arming sought to portray a gloomy political situation in order to justify their anachronical, stiff and harsh positions."

The commentary balanced its statement by noting that Ministers welcomed the SALT talks, the Federal Republic's exchange of views with the GDR and the FRG treaties with Moscow and Warsaw as "contributions to lessening tension in Europe".

YUGOSLAVIA

Borba, the party paper, on 3rd December commented, with regard to the Defence Ministers Meeting, that "the clear line of strengthening the military machine of the NATO pact has been taken in Brussels." It said "...the plans to set up belts of nuclear zones between the two German states and other similar systems of defence can considerably hamper the processes of relaxation in Europe."

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