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MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman of the Political Committee at Senior Level

From: Chairman of the Political Committee

CULTURAL RELATIONS AND FREER MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE,  
IDEAS AND INFORMATION

At meetings held on 4th and 6th November, the Political Committee discussed questions of Cultural Relations and Freer Movement of People, Ideas and Information and asked its Chairman to forward the attached report on these subjects which was drawn up in the light of its discussions.

2. The report consists of three sections and an Annex:

- I. Background
- II. Analysis of Warsaw Pact Attitudes
- III. Policy considerations for the Allies.

The Annex, which describes Eastern restrictions on freer movement of people, ideas and information, has been contributed by the United States Delegation in order to provide more detailed background information on some of these issues. It has not been reviewed by the Committee.

3. The report is forwarded as a further contribution by the Political Committee to the Senior Political Committee's ongoing work in the preparation of the report to the Council on East-West negotiations.

(Signed) F.E. MAESTRONE

NATO,  
1110 Brussels.

This document includes: 1 Annex

CULTURAL RELATIONS AND FREER MOVEMENT OF  
PEOPLE, IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Report by the Political Committee

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers, meeting in Prague in October 1969, proposed that the Agenda item on co-operation in an "All-European Conference" include "expansion of trade, economic, scientific and technical relations". In their Budapest meeting on 21st and 22nd June, 1970, these Ministers added "cultural ties" to their proposed Conference Agenda.

2. This new reference to "cultural ties" appears to be a limited response to the Alliance's December 1969 and May 1970 Ministerial Communiqués calling for "freer movement of people, ideas and information" and for increased co-operation in the cultural field.

II. ANALYSIS OF WARSAW PACT ATTITUDES

3. It is not difficult to discern the reasons behind the Warsaw Pact Ministers' decision to refer to "cultural relations" but not to "freer movement of people, ideas and information". The practice of the Eastern Communist states has been to define "cultural relations" in terms of rigidly controlled, government-to-government exchanges.

4. "Freer movement", on the other hand, obviously suggests to certain of these governments an unwholesome influx of "corrupting influences" from the West. Substantially freer East-West movement of people, ideas and information would tend to increase pressure for liberalisation on Warsaw Pact régimes, thereby diluting present ideological rigidities.

5. Warsaw Pact States, nonetheless, find it difficult to reconcile their determination to maintain closed societies at home with the imperative of obtaining Western know-how needed to accelerate economic growth. Although they are all interested in catching up with the rapid technological advance of Western economies and therefore receptive to information and exchanges in this field, most of these governments appear determined to filter out as many unwanted cultural and political side effects as possible.

### III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ALLIES

#### General Considerations

6. Among the subjects which the Allies have decided to explore in the context of preparations for and at an eventual CES is the issue of cultural relations and the freer movement of people, ideas and information. This topic would:

- (i) contribute to assuring that any Conference "should not serve to ratify the present division of Europe";
- (ii) be of relative advantage to the more open societies of the West, and thus could serve as a potentially useful bargaining lever;
- (iii) contribute to any future progress toward liberalisation of Eastern régimes;
- (iv) be responsive to those elements in the East who desire more pragmatic ties and more open communications with the West.

Moreover, public and private discussion of this matter during the process of preparing for a CES - as well as at an eventual Conference itself - would tend to put the Soviets on the defensive and focus public attention on the closed nature of Communist régimes. The issue would also be somewhat divisive within the Warsaw Pact, because many of the smaller member states are considerably less restrictive than the Soviets in this regard. Finally, by keeping up pressure, the Allies may eventually obtain some meaningful concessions from the Soviets.

7. It would be unrealistic, however, to expect the Soviets to agree easily to any important changes in this area. They would be reluctant to accept even the kind of general and hortatory language in a Conference declaration on this topic which the Allies might insist upon - much less specific agreement committing them to liberalise existing practices.

8. By adding the cultural field to those areas in which they propose enhanced East-West co-operation, Pact members probably envisaged merely an increase in exchanges within the present pattern. This is not a significant concession to the Allied position. The Alliance's proposal for freer movement of people, ideas and information between East and West involves something much more far-reaching than simply the expansion of existing cultural exchange programmes.

#### Specific Considerations

9. The subject of cultural relations and freer movement is a broad one, involving many specialised areas, a complex of bilateral arrangements and differing practices among the Eastern states. Before entering into exploratory negotiations with the East on this topic, the Allies will probably find it necessary to analyse this matter in detail.

10. Since this present study is simply a preliminary examination of the substantive issues, it is necessarily limited to a general examination of some of the measures the Allies might want to see accepted by Warsaw Pact states. Subsequent study can refine the initial results and establish priorities - perhaps singling out three or four principal measures that the Alliance could agree to stress during any bilateral or multilateral discussions with Warsaw Pact states preparatory to a CES.

11. With respect to the movement of people, the Allies should seek to encourage the removal of the principal obstacle existing in Warsaw Pact countries, namely the restrictions imposed on the right of individuals to travel abroad. Any proposal to abolish visas would cause problems for some Allies without holding out promise of substantially changing the existing situation.

12. In the information field, a major effort could be made to induce the Soviets to agree to stop jamming Western radio broadcasts.

13. It would also be useful, for example, to obtain agreement to freer circulation and sale of Western newspapers and periodicals (Rumania, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are less restrictive in this regard than the Soviet Union); exchange of mass media programmes; fewer restrictions on and better treatment of foreign correspondents; and agreement of Warsaw Pact members to allow their citizens free access to Western diplomatic missions and reading rooms maintained by these missions in Pact capitals.

14. In the cultural field, the Allies might propose freer circulation of books; Soviet Authorities, of course, take elaborate precautions to restrict the access of their citizens to many books published in the West, even though Soviet

libraries often hold substantial collections of them. The Allies could also press for increased exchanges of University lecturers, in addition to research scholars, and a greater emphasis in exchange programmes on the humanities and social sciences.

15. The Allies should bear in mind that cultural exchanges are carefully controlled on the Warsaw Pact side, and tend to emphasise performing arts groups. The latter are substantial hard currency earners for Pact members - particularly the USSR - while comparable Western groups must be subsidised by the sending state.

16. The Allies will also want to consider carefully the form in which these various items are treated prior to and during a CES. Should the Allies aim at, for example:

- (i) A broad, hortatory declaration on improving cultural relations and enhancing day-to-day contacts?
- (ii) A more definitive declaration calling for improved co-operation in several specific areas of human contact?
- (iii) A convention binding signatories to specific measures to lower barriers to freer movement throughout Europe?

17. The Allies might also consider the advantages and disadvantages of pressing for clear Eastern concessions on specific aspects of freer movement, such as those described above, during preparations for an eventual Conference and in the context of work going on in existing international organizations. The Allies might also consider the value of ad hoc conferences (before, during or after a CES) on specialised subjects such as travel facilitation, communications, and educational accreditation.

EASTERN RESTRICTIONS ON FREER MOVEMENT OF PERSONS,  
I DEAS AND INFORMATION

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

1. Warsaw Pact countries impose two sets of standards upon travel: one for the intra-bloc travel, which is not especially difficult; the other for travel to the West.
2. Travel Outside Communist Bloc. In principle - from the bloc standpoint - travel abroad is not a right, but a privilege which is granted sparingly. Individual travel, especially outside the bloc, is restricted by a variety of formalities and controls - investigation and approval by the security authorities and other organs of the central government, as well as approval, in many instances, by local authorities, trade union and professional groups. High passport fees are imposed (400 rubles in the USSR for travel to non-communist countries), along with severe limitations on currency to be carried out of the country. Persons wishing to travel to the West are frequently required to present a written invitation.
3. The great majority of travellers from Warsaw Pact states to the West are on official business or official exchange visits or in officially-sponsored groups, and the number of individual private tourists is negligible.
4. Regulations governing group trips are more relaxed than those concerning individual trips, but still involve much the same advance scrutiny and official approval. Group tourist travel abroad is organized by state travel agencies only, e.g. Bulgaria - "Rodina", Czechoslovakia - "Cedok".
5. In all Warsaw Pact countries, permits to emigrate are issued only in exceptional cases. Mostly they are granted to permit reunion of families and to aged persons and others judged to be unable to contribute to the economy. A high percentage of recipients are women. The waiting period for those who finally

receive an emigration permit is long - from six months up to a decade. Prospective emigrants are thoroughly investigated and are allowed to exit with a minimum of convertible currency and other valuables. In many instances, the destination of the prospective emigrant influences the decision to grant or refuse the emigration permit.

6. Travel Within Communist Bloc. Much the greater proportion of travel from Warsaw Pact countries is to other Pact member countries. During 1969, an estimated 827,000 Hungarian nationals travelled to other Socialist countries, while 169,000 were permitted to travel to non-Socialist countries. In the same year, 706,100 Polish nationals travelled to Socialist countries (including 37,000 to Yugoslavia), while 107,300 went to non-Socialist countries. Figures for the USSR are not available but it is believed that an even smaller proportion of travellers than in the Polish case went to non-Socialist countries.

JAMMING OF WESTERN BROADCASTS

7. Jamming of Western broadcasts was reduced markedly in the latter 1960s. But, the USSR resumed jamming of Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts in Soviet languages in August 1968, in the wake of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia. Although this jamming is not as complete or as effective as that prior to 1963, it seriously limits VOA reception in major cities in the European USSR. Radio Liberty (broadcasting exclusively in Soviet languages) has always been heavily jammed. However, there is no interference with VOA English language broadcasts to the Soviet Union.

8. Among the Eastern European countries, only Bulgaria jams VOA vernacular (but not English language) broadcasts. Both Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia continue to jam Radio Free Europe, and Eastern Germany jams USIA's West Berlin-based RIAS (neither VOA nor RFE beams programmes specifically to East Germany).



CIRCULATION OF WESTERN NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

9. The only foreign newspapers generally available in the Soviet Union and East European Communist countries are papers from other Communist countries, plus selected Communist and Socialist newspapers published in Western countries. In recent years, small numbers of non-Communist Western newspapers have been imported. These are available only in a few hotels catering largely to foreigners and to selected reading rooms in major cities. Major public libraries usually have subscriptions to Western newspapers but make them available only to persons holding special permits.

ACCESS TO WESTERN EMBASSIES AND READING ROOMS

10. Access to these varies from country to country and from year to year, depending on political climate. At present there is virtually free access to Western libraries and embassies in Warsaw and Budapest. Czechoslovakia limited access to Western libraries severely after the August 1968 invasion. USSR and Bulgaria restrict severely the access of their citizens to Western libraries and embassies. Persons attempting to enter them are generally harrassed by guards; those disregarding "advice" not to use Western facilities are frequently subject to intimidation.