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REACTIONS FROM THE COMMUNIST BLOC COUNTRIES
AS EXPRESSED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS
FOLLOWING THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING AND
THE PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIQUE

Report by the Chairman of the Political Committee

Diplomats of several member countries have had talks with high-ranking local officials. There is a marked difference between the attitude of the countries which favour a tough line and which deplore the bellicose tone of the Communiqué and the attitude of the Rumania-Yugoslavia group which has commented in positive terms on the Ministerial Meeting.

A. RUMANIA

2. The relatively harsh note struck in the public statements of the Rumanian authorities is at variance with the more moderate comments on the NATO Communiqué they have made in private conversations. They realise, first and foremost, that the recent events will force them to shelve their plans for disengagement. As they see it, the determination shown by the NATO Ministers - the reasons for which are inextricably rooted in the Czech crisis and which they fully understand - will probably cause the Soviet Union to step up the pressure which has already been exerted on their country. This pressure will force them to tow the line and to curb very sharply their inclination to pursue an independent foreign policy.

3. The Rumanian authorities consider that the NATO Communiqué constitutes a good basis for the resumption of a two-way current between East and West but are openly pessimistic about the reactions of the other Eastern countries.

4. They regard the statements attributed to Mr. Rusk as unfortunate. To them what matters is to preserve the network of contacts between East and West and above all to work towards a general agreement between the "Big Two". Rumanian policy is directed towards this end.

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B. YUGOSLAVIA

5. Leading Yugoslav figures have unreservedly welcomed the NATO Communiqué, the major effect of which is to strengthen their diplomatic position. Far from increasing tension the Communiqué, which can in no way be considered provocative, has served an extremely useful purpose by making the position perfectly clear. The Soviet Union now knows exactly what risks it would face were it to embark on a rash course of action.

6. It is felt in Belgrade that the positive attitude adopted by NATO will ward off the threat of Soviet armed intervention for the present. The same spokesmen also welcomed the fact that their country has been included in the "grey zone" although they have found it difficult to evaluate the nature of NATO intervention should their country be invaded. They seem inclined to believe that they could rely on our political and material support.

C. HUNGARY

7. Hungarian spokesmen rule out the likelihood of an invasion of Rumania, Albania and Yugoslavia. This being so, they feel that the NATO warning on this subject was inopportune.

8. As for the presence of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean, this is justified, from the point of view of Moscow, by the need to establish a more satisfactory balance of forces. The Hungarian leaders criticise the bellicose tone of the NATO Communiqué which shows that NATO is seeking to extend its sphere of influence.

9. They have expressed the hope that, despite this tone, the progressive elements in NATO will press successfully for a settlement of the problem of European security which is still subordinated to a number of prerequisites (guaranteed status quo in Europe, recognition of present-day frontiers, agreement that the Munich agreements are null and void, recognition of the "German Democratic Republic" and renunciation by the Federal Republic of Germany of atomic weapons). On the subject of the "grey zone", the Hungarian leaders contend that since the countries in question have not asked for NATO protection the latter is thereby seeking to extend its frontiers eastwards and to revive the cold war.

D. BULGARIA

10. In Sofia, the authorities have striven to justify the intervention in Czechoslovakia, offering as arguments the internal logic of the Warsaw Pact, the doctrine of the "Socialist commonwealth" and the subversive activities of the Federal Republic in Czechoslovakia. On the Mediterranean, their statements have followed the Budapest pattern. They have, however, added that it is unacceptable to the Communist bloc that the Mediterranean should be a Western lake and that, moreover, the rearmament of Israel by the West is an added justification for the Soviet presence.

E. POLAND

11. For the Warsaw Government, the NATO Ministerial Meeting demonstrates the Alliance's desire to jeopardise the status quo in Europe starting up the cold war again. The criticisms of the "Socialist commonwealth" doctrine are merely a pretext used by NATO to prevent the Communist bloc from restoring its unity, which is all the more necessary in view of the emphasis laid on the leading rôle of Germany in the military and economic spheres.

F. USSR

12. The Moscow Government has made enquiries about the intentions of the member countries of NATO with regard to the resumption of conversations about détente. Other Eastern countries have also asked similar questions. The Kremlin considers, however, that the Communiqué contains no concrete proposals on this subject and that, on the contrary, it is such as to maintain a climate of distrust. Without wishing to display excessive haste, the USSR is nevertheless desirous of resuming talks on disarmament, especially with the United States. The Soviet Union considers that NATO has no cause to take military measures since the sole aim of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was to restore socialist order and the balance of forces was not affected.

13. Comments made following the publication of the Tass Communiqué refer to the surprise felt by the Soviet authorities at the united front displayed by the NATO countries at the Ministerial Meeting, considering that a fairly long period had elapsed since the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

(Signed) Joachim JAENICKE
Chairman

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