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POLADS(76)13

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Political Committee

From: Acting Chairman

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING WITH CSCE EXPERTS ON  
18TH-19TH MARCH, 1976

For the information of members of the Political Committee, I attach a report on the meeting, written on my own responsibility.

(Signed) Miss T.A.H. SOLESBY

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POLADS(76)13

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POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING WITH CSCE EXPERTS  
ON 18TH-19TH MARCH, 1976

Report by the Acting Chairman

On 18th/19th March, 1976, the Political Committee reinforced with Experts from capitals, met to discuss the implementation of the Final Act of the CSCE.

2. The following informal Agenda was approved by the Political Committee in advance of the meeting.

- I. GENERAL APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINAL ACT
- II. BASKET I: GENERAL PRINCIPLES  
CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES
- III. BASKET III: HUMANITARIAN ETC.
- IV. BASKET IV: FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE
- V. TECHNIQUES FOR MONITORING EASTERN IMPLEMENTATION  
AND EXCHANGES OF VIEWS ON WESTERN IMPLEMENTATION
- VI. SUGGESTED FORMAT OF NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR  
POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S SECOND BI-ANNUAL REPORT

3. Within the framework of the informal Agenda delegations held a useful exchange of views on a number of topics of interest. In addition to examining implementation of Baskets I and III, most representatives present participated in an initial discussion on matters connected with the CSCE follow-up meeting in Belgrade scheduled for 1977. Outside the Agenda framework, some attention was given to the Soviet proposals for separate multilateral conferences on energy, transportation and the environment, on which a number of Western Governments had very recently been approached.

N A T O   C O N F I D E N T I A L

POLADS(76)13

C-M(76)

-2-

GENERAL APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINAL ACT

4. The meeting began with opening statements from a number of delegations. Some general aspects of the CSCE implementation were mentioned but most speakers made their remarks in the context of looking forward to Belgrade 1977.

5. With respect to implementation of the Final Act, most speakers pointed out that not much in the way of Eastern implementation in areas of interest to the West had taken place since 1st August, 1975, and that there was still some distance to go before a definitive judgement could be made about Eastern performance. As well, there was considerable work still to be done by the West in encouraging Eastern implementation through bilateral and multilateral means.

6. The Committee examined the question of implementation more fully in the context of Belgrade 1977, recognising that the review of implementation was one of two major tasks in the follow-up process. Some delegations felt that without more time to let implementation develop, it was impossible to tell exactly how the West should approach Belgrade. It was, therefore, too early to prepare in detail for the meeting. Others, while recognising the difficulties posed by the low level of implementation to date, argued forcefully for a beginning to the preparatory process as soon as possible and welcomed the opportunity provided by the meeting to hold an initial exchange of views on the subject. Most delegations supported the concept of strong intra-Alliance consultation, as was followed during the CSCE negotiations. Some referred to the need for close co-operation between the Nine and the Fifteen. One delegation reiterated its position that with the Final Act signed, the emphasis at this stage should be on implementation through bilateral approaches.

7. Under the general exchange of views on implementation and Belgrade 1977, various representatives raised a number of different points for consideration. For instance, it was pointed out that in preparing for Belgrade, the West must decide what constitutes "meaningful implementation" as regards both quantity and quality. It was noted that, while the main burden of implementation lay on the East, the West needed to go to Belgrade with a commendable record of implementation which would, in turn, highlight the limited implementation on the part of the East. It was suggested that Belgrade must not become the scene of a "slanging match" over implementation, but should be seen as an opportunity to take what we could get and urge for more. The West should maintain the advantage of a "demandeur" through bilateral and multilateral contacts, to make it harder for the East to claim lack of Western interest as an excuse for non-implementation. The need to consult with the neutrals on all aspects of the implementation process was mentioned.

8. A number of delegations referred to the second aspect of the follow-up process as defined by paragraph 2(a) in the Fourth Basket of the Final Act, namely, "the deepening of ... mutual relations, the improvement of security and the development of co-operation in Europe, and the development of the process of détente in the future". In this context, the question was raised of making and/or responding to possible new proposals to implement the existing provisions of the Final Act or even to extend their scope, as was the desirability of holding meetings beyond Belgrade 1977. One delegation viewed Belgrade as part of a continuing effort in the CSCE style to maintain multilateral "negotiating pressure" on the East in East-West relations. It was important that the West should keep the initiative and not merely respond to moves by the East. It was suggested that "looking forward" was an essential part of the Conference and that this fact should be reflected in consultations within NATO.

9. One related outcome of discussion on this particular point was the recognition that some uncertainty in preparing for Belgrade arose from the inability to gauge what the exact climate of East-West relations would be in mid-1977.

10. On more specific questions relating to Belgrade, all speakers agreed that it was still too early to say with any accuracy what the East would do at Belgrade and what its approach would be. Only Romania and Yugoslavia had indicated any precise ideas on the subject.

11. This understood, some delegations speculated that the East would not approach Belgrade with much enthusiasm largely because of Belgrade's value to the West in highlighting Basket III implementation and because the East had already achieved as much as they could from the CSCE process. Other representatives were less certain of this. One delegation suggested that the East still had numerous objectives to achieve in the CSCE context which it had not achieved during the Conference: the East might conceivably return to the charge at Belgrade, for example by pressing for a European Declaration in terms more favourable to it than the Final Act. Another delegation thought that the USSR was anxious to regain the initiative in CSCE after losing it during the Fall of 1975 over implementation, and so would be after a propaganda victory with little substance at Belgrade. Another delegation thought that these two differing views of possible Eastern approaches might be complementary: Eastern objectives, especially that of frustrating the development of the Nine and undermining NATO through "pan-Europeanism", still existed; but since it had been frustrated by the West at the CSCE, the USSR would be trying other means outside Belgrade, as for example through the new Brezhnev proposals.

POLADS(76)13

C-M(76)

-4-

12. Whatever the position eventually taken by the East it was suggested during discussion that the position of the USSR would be the determining factor and, with the exception of Romania, the other Warsaw Pact countries would follow suit with slight possible variance. One delegation singled out the GDR, with Czechoslovakia not far behind, as one country almost totally opposed to an active Belgrade meeting; they were followed by the USSR and Bulgaria in displaying lack of enthusiasm, while Poland and Hungary were ambivalent. Romania had very definite aims for Belgrade and was an enthusiast.

13. On the subject of possible Western aims and approaches, all speakers again agreed that it was too early to have any firm objectives in mind. Nonetheless, a number of delegations stressed that thought and study should be given to Western approaches without undue delay. As an indication of the activity now going on into Eastern planning, the Committee was reminded of enquiries already received from the Bulgarians and Poles by US officials on this subject. During the course of the discussion, delegations catalogued the complicated range of questions with which Western planning would have to deal - on the organization and operation of the Conference, on the substance of Western policies and position, on the follow-up to Belgrade. Some delegations stressed that whatever the Eastern approach might be, it would be well prepared and Western positions must be also. These representatives pointed again to the need for consultation within the Alliance in this preparatory process.

14. Regarding relative strengths and weaknesses of both sides of Belgrade, it was pointed out that, while the East could largely be kept on the defensive, the West would be handicapped by a comparatively shorter list of implementation measures taken since Helsinki than that of the East. There was also a brief exchange of views on the extent to which the West might wish to criticise the East's implementation of the "ideological struggle" at the Belgrade meeting. There were also several references to the activities and positions of the neutral and non-aligned participants. In the latter respect, it was evident to the Committee that this group of countries was approaching the Belgrade meeting seriously, intending to consult together closely, and to some extent should have concrete proposals to make at that meeting for adding to the Final Act provisions and ensuring future follow-up activities.

BASKET I

(a) Declaration of Principles

15. During the discussion on this item, it was confirmed that this was not only the section of the Final Act of primary interest to the East, but also the section subject to the

greatest efforts on the part of the East to distort the balance of the document and to promote misinterpretation in the West of its relative importance to other provisions. In this regard, care was needed to ensure that any references to the Declaration of Principles in bilateral documents were framed in terms favourable to the West. The Declaration was also an area where, despite the difficulties of defining implementation, the East was accusing the West of deliberate neglect.

16. There was some discussion pointing to those principles in Basket I which were singled out for emphasis by the East, such as "non-intervention in the internal affairs of States". The Committee noted Romania's preoccupations with ensuring the applicability of all principles in its relations with the USSR, especially the principle on "sovereign equality". In this latter respect, one delegation suggested that the West should manoeuvre the East as often as possible into confirming publicly the applicability of the principles to relations between the Warsaw Pact countries.

(b) CBMs

17. The Committee recognised that since implementation of these provisions of the Final Act would be important at Belgrade, it was essential for the West to continue to put together a full and consistent record of implementation up until that time. The FRG expert nevertheless raised the question whether the West should continue to notify voluntarily manoeuvres of less than 25,000 to the same extent as up to now, given the Soviet failure so far to notify any such manoeuvres and their propaganda attacks mounted last year on the number and size of Western manoeuvres. There was an exchange of views on this point. The Political Committee was dealing regularly with this whole subject including the preparation of lists of national, multinational and NATO manoeuvres for 1976 and the question of possible notifications. It was also monitoring the implementation of Warsaw Pact and non-aligned countries.

18. The FRG expert also stressed his Government's interest in being consulted with respect to arrangements for invitations to non-Allied observers to manoeuvres held on German territory.

19. Some views were also expressed on Eastern attitudes to date on CBMs, the general opinion being that there was no readily discernible approach as yet. One delegation thought that the USSR had not yet made up its mind on how to deal with them. Other delegations cautioned about drawing conclusions about Eastern approaches to CBMs from the recent Caucasus notification because of the special character of this manoeuvre.

POLADS(76)13

C-M(76)

-6-

(c) Other Matters

20. During the course of the discussion on Basket I, two other subjects were considered briefly: the Swiss proposal on peaceful settlement of disputes and the Romanian proposal on the non-use of force.

Brezhnev Proposals

21. Because of their current interest and political content, the Political Committee held an exchange of views on the new Brezhnev proposals for separate conferences on energy, transport and the environment. This was in part a follow-up to the initial discussion held in the Economic Committee with CSCE experts on 16th March, 1976.

22. The Committee was informed of the initial views of Romanian Authorities on the proposals as communicated by Ambassador Lipatti to Belgian Authorities on 18th March. The Romanians found the proposals interesting in substance but were hesitant as regards Conference procedures, which they felt must be based on CSCE practice. The Committee was also briefed by the UK expert on the views of the Secretary General of the Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Stanovnik.

23. One delegate reported his authorities' opposition to the three proposed conferences. Several other delegates said that the initial reactions of their capitals was also cautious and sceptical. The proposals appeared designed to sidetrack attention from Basket III provisions and possibly from the Belgrade meeting. The ECE was already active in the areas covered by the proposed conferences and should continue to be the main forum for them. Even if the conferences could be made acceptable to the West they should not be held before Belgrade.

24. In view of the major political considerations involved in the Brezhnev proposals a number of delegations expressed an interest in keeping the subject before the Political Committee on a regular basis, and in remaining in close liaison with the Economic Committee as regards its consideration of the economic aspects of the proposals.

BASKET III

(a) Human Contacts

25. As a result of the thorough exchange of views and information on this subject, it was evident to the Committee that, while there had been a few minor improvements in

procedure, there was no evidence that these had led to actual improvements in human contacts. It was pointed out that whatever improvements had taken place would be exploited for their full propaganda value by the East.

26. With respect to family reunification in particular, delegations noted that while there had been some small improvements in the Soviet immigration procedures, there was no evidence of a CSCE-related increase in the number of successful cases either in the USSR or in other Warsaw Pact countries. In fact, with respect to Romania, and to a lesser extent the GDR, the number of successful cases were down and the situation seemed generally worse for aspiring emigrants. The records of Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria were also still bad. Of the Eastern Communist countries, Hungary and Yugoslavia were generally viewed as having the most positive attitude. The Committee noted that there were some exceptions to these general impressions arising from activity related to special bilateral arrangements between certain countries which were unrelated to the Final Act.

27. The Committee also discussed the question of travel, giving particular attention to the issue of visas. Most delegations reported that the USSR and some others had approached their authorities in the recent past seeking either various improvements in the Western visa procedures, especially in the time required to acquire visas, or the termination of certain visa requirements altogether. Such approaches had been accompanied by references to the Final Act.

28. During the course of the discussion on the subject of visas a number of points were raised for consideration. It was noted that the Final Act did not specifically include a provision for abolition of visa requirements and that the USSR and its allies had, therefore, no direct basis for their approaches or cause to criticise the West. Moreover, the facilitation of travel, which was specifically mentioned in the Final Act, was not just confined to visas but referred to the entire exercise of preparing for travel; the West should be aware of the length and difficulty of procedures faced by Eastern travellers in their own countries (e.g. in obtaining a passport) and should remind the East of this when approached on improving visa procedures. It was recognised that the visa question appeared to be one on which the East was concentrating; the implementation record on visas alone could seem favourable to the East at Belgrade, and the more comprehensive security controls in Eastern countries permitted them more leniency in dealing with visa applications.



POLADS(76)13

C-M(76)

-8-

29. One point raised during the discussion on human contacts, but which applied more to other Basket III provisions, was the campaign on the part of the East to insist that implementation of these provisions was subject to reciprocity; for example, that agreement to permit the import of certain numbers of titles and copies of Western books be matched by an undertaking from the West to import similar numbers of titles and copies of Eastern books. Those delegations who stressed the question believed that these arguments must be firmly rejected and that the West should maintain their fundamental opposition to barriers to the free flow of peoples and information.

30. The Committee was reminded that in this and other respects the West must contest Eastern efforts to distort the Basket III provisions of the Final Act. It was also recognised that much effort was still required to secure implementation of human contacts provisions especially since they were of major importance domestically in the West. Some delegations also mentioned the necessity of and problems involved in monitoring Eastern implementation, such as in collecting statistical and procedural information.

(b) Information

31. The exchange of views and information in the Committee on this section of Basket III revealed that there had been certain small improvements in Soviet performance with regard to working conditions for journalists, but that in other areas very little progress was evident, and that, in general, performance showed differing trends.

32. Delegations discussed their experiences with regard to the Soviet decision to extend multi-entry and exit visas to resident Western journalists and to ease travel restrictions. Despite these improvements, there were still cases in which journalists had been refused visas by the USSR. The FRG Delegation also noted that Czechoslovakia remained restrictive in granting any journalist visas, while the GDR had recently made their first refusal of journalist visa applications. Some slight improvement in the USSR in other matters affecting journalists were noted.

33. Some delegations remarked on the recent Soviet decision to increase the availability of Western newspapers and periodicals in the Soviet Union. Other than some increase in titles and copies of these publications in major tourist hotels, no wider availability had been noted to date.

34. The Canadian Delegation reported on a successful attempt recently to secure Soviet agreement to exchanges of lecturers. This was achieved, despite initial Soviet

opposition, when the Canadian negotiators informed the Soviet side that they would publicise the Canadian offer at Belgrade. This was thought to show that it could be useful to refer to Belgrade when seeking implementation of Final Act provisions from the Eastern side.

35. The Committee's attention was directed to efforts on the part of the East, such as at UNESCO, to claim that Western governments were responsible for the content of Western media. The West should resist such claims and should uphold the principle of the independence of news media.

36. It was noted that the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries were mounting an attack on Western radio broadcasts, in particular those of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The Committee was reminded that there was no basis in the Final Act for these attacks.

(c) Culture and Education

37. A brief exchange of views indicated that there had been some Western success in inserting references to the CSCE Final Act in cultural agreements with the East. The West should be prepared to defend its record as regards teaching of languages and translation of books, both points on which they were vulnerable to criticism by the East. There was also a brief discussion of the need to ensure that the US and Canada were invited to any meetings held as part of the follow-up to the Final Act. Difficulties in this respect had arisen with a Congress of European University Directors to be held shortly in Trieste, Italy.

FOLLOW-UP

38. In view of the thorough discussion already held earlier in the meeting on the subject of Belgrade 1977, there was little further comment. The Committee nonetheless welcomed the detailed briefing given by the Belgian Expert on the views of the Romanian official, Ambassador Lipatti, who had visited Brussels on 18th March. It was noted that in reply to Ambassador Lipatti the Belgians had reserved their position as regards the organization and outcome of the Belgrade meeting.

39. The Chairman commented that while it might prove advisable in the immediate future to continue to reserve the Western position as regards the Belgrade meeting, it might also sometimes be helpful to draw on some of the general points which had been made by earlier speakers with regard to that meeting. Speakers had recognised that the Western attitude to Belgrade would depend both on the degree of implementation of the Final Act and on the state of East/West relations between

POLADS(76)13

C-M(76)

-10-

Helsinki and Belgrade. They had attached importance to both aspects of the meeting mentioned in the Final Act, namely review of implementation and provisions for further progress in the future. They had also stressed the need for the meeting to consider all parts of the Final Act, and for it to be organised in such a way that issues of importance to the West could be considered in a thorough and businesslike manner, thus offering a reasonable chance of achieving real further progress.

40. The Chairman also noted that there had been widespread agreement amongst those who had spoken on the importance of consultation in NATO in preparation for Belgrade. A good deal of thinking would now have to be done in capitals before the next major discussion within the Political Committee. Meanwhile, any delegation could raise the subject in the Committee whenever they wished, and the Committee would continue to exchange views on implementation, and to gather information regarding Eastern representations about Belgrade and regarding the attitude of neutrals and non-aligned to that meeting, as well as to list Eastern criticisms of the Western implementation performance.

41. With respect to the Mediterranean Declaration, it was the view of the FRG expert that this entire matter be kept under review in appropriate NATO Committees and that Western States re-examine the material on the subject and possibly quietly contact the States in question to find out if they wanted to attend Belgrade 1977.

TECHNIQUES FOR MONITORING EASTERN IMPLEMENTATION AND EXCHANGES OF VIEWS ON WESTERN IMPLEMENTATION

42. The Committee considered the draft questionnaire on implementation of the Final Act prepared by the International Secretariat and circulated in advance of the meeting as POLADS(76)10 dated 10th March, 1976. Subject to some minor changes, there was general agreement that it be circulated to Delegations for completion on a voluntary basis by national authorities. It was suggested that a similar questionnaire on Western implementation of the Basket III provisions on human contacts and information would be useful, and that the Economic Committee might prepare a questionnaire on Basket II implementation. Consideration of the possible preparation of a questionnaire covering culture and education aspects of Basket III could await the results of the meeting in Washington of the East-West Cultural Contacts Group now taking place.

SUGGESTED FORMAT OF NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR POLITICAL  
COMMITTEE'S SECOND BI-ANNUAL REPORT

43. The Political Committee noted that national contributions might be drawn up on the basis of the suggested format for the Committee's second bi-annual report on CSCE implementation circulated as Annex A to document POLADS(76)3(Revised) dated 13th February, 1976. Delegations were requested to provide any national contribution by 31st March, 1976.