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From: Secretary General

REACTIONS OF NON-NATO EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS TO THE
ROME DOCUMENTS

Attached is a supplementary report to PO/70/316. It contains data on this subject received by the Political Division subsequent to the preparation of the first summary.

(Signed) Manlio BROSIO

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I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

These supplementary reactions of non-NATO European governments to the Rome documents were compiled after those listed in PO/70/316. In most instances, they parallel and complement attitudes previously expressed.

The Communist officials expressed some appreciation of the Rome Communiqué in that they found it more realistic than previous ones had been. However, their overall tones were negative. They particularly objected to Paragraph 15, which they said requires definition of the word "progress", a point also raised by the Yugoslav Minister. They found Paragraph 16(a) objectionable in its allusion to the Brezhnev doctrine, and 16(b), in the extended version of the second Prague item, unacceptable. They continued their objections to MBFR, on which subject the Rumanians also expressed doubts.

It is noteworthy that the Yugoslavs believed the Hungarians were, in fact, interested in MBFR and in a conference which would not degenerate into a propaganda exercise. However, there is no other available evidence to substantiate this view.

II. WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES

Soviet Union

Foreign Minister Gromyko made the following points during his visit to Paris on 2nd-3rd June:

The Soviet Government attaches great importance to a conference on European security and believes the time is right for convening one. It would be necessary to propose only those problems which stand a chance of being resolved, and that is the reason for the agenda proposed by the Warsaw Pact. He wondered how NATO envisaged a study of MBFR and would it involve foreign troops as well as national forces. Finally, he wondered whether NATO felt that this problem, which has plagued the world for 25 years, might be resolved in only a few days.

The Soviet Ambassador in Brussels posed several questions to clarify his thoughts. He enquired as to which countries adopted a reserved position on the Communiqué and Declaration, what are the criteria for and how does one evaluate the progress mentioned in Paragraph 15, and would not that paragraph really block procedural contacts. As regards MBFR, he wondered whether this subject ought really to be discussed at a conference since matters, he felt, could be pushed forward more easily if another forum were found to discuss MBFR.

PO/70/324Bulgaria

Foreign Minister Bashev made the following remarks to several Western diplomats during the course of a dinner in Sofia:

The Rome Communiqué did not constitute an answer to the Warsaw Pact call for a security conference. A reduction of forces is not the only measure which can reduce tension and it would not be useful to consider this issue at a first conference because of its complexity. It would be better, and the East prefers, to discuss subjects which lend themselves to easy settlement rather than to begin with more complicated issues. Once a conference is convened and principles agreed to, other issues could be taken up.

The Declaration on MBFR stresses Central Europe and thus complicates the matter further by creating the feeling that some European countries are to be excluded from exploratory contacts on this subject. The Declaration thus envisages a bloc-to-bloc approach, which is not acceptable.

Hungary

During his visit to Oslo 2nd-5th June, Foreign Minister Peter devoted much of his time to discussing CES and the Rome Communiqué and Declaration. In his view, the general political atmosphere has improved due to the initiation of on-going and other bilateral talks. He felt the convocation of a CES at this time might help to further improve the situation. He realised, however, that a conference could meet only when all interested countries were ready to participate. Peter felt a CES might agree on principles for establishing a European Security Council based on United Nations models.

As regards the Communiqué, he believed it was more realistic than previous ones, especially since it included the two Prague proposals as possible agenda items. He also did not object to the points of Paragraph 16(a) and (b), and assumed that his Warsaw Pact allies would accept them. He, himself, would like to see the human environment subject included in the agenda. The Communiqué, he thought, could have included more concrete proposals for the agenda.

He regretted that the Communiqué implied that the CES idea was a Warsaw Pact proposal and not a NATO one. Better results could be attained if it were considered as being of common interest. He felt that Paragraph 15 ought to have spelled out what is meant by "progress". As regards MBFR, he said the Eastern countries do not object to this idea, but they do feel it is too complex for a first meeting to consider. The Eastern countries believe that to start changing the existing system before other security problems had been solved would involve risks.

In a second meeting with the British Ambassador on 13th June, Mr. Puja, First Deputy Foreign Minister, said the procedures envisaged in the Communiqué were far too slow. He believed it possible to call a conference at once, based on the Warsaw Pact proposals of 1969. Such a conference could ascertain the attitude of all countries to a discussion of other matters than those of the Prague proposal. Puja repeated that it would be a mistake to begin with the most complicated issues since that could freeze all forms of discussion. On MBFR, he pointed out that the socialist countries have been proposing disarmament discussions since 1945. He viewed the present call for MBFR as being linked with American troop withdrawals and a United States attempt to secure concurrent Warsaw Pact withdrawals, demanding proportional reductions of 30% for the East and only 10% for the West. At the same time, the Americans, he said, were requiring that other NATO troops fill the gaps caused by their proposed withdrawals.

Puja said Paragraph 15 indicated that Americans were putting up barriers in the way of the Federal Republic of Germany reaching results in its bilateral talks, and that Paragraph 16(b) was objectionable because it listed subjects which the Pact countries found unacceptable.

A Yugoslav Foreign Ministry official informed the Italian Ambassador at Belgrade that he formed the impression during the Hungarian Prime Minister's recent visit to Yugoslavia that the Hungarians had reacted "quite favourably" to the Rome documents. The Hungarians were especially interested in the MBFR proposal, realising the many difficulties involved stemming from the known Soviet attitude. Knowing themselves to be tied to the Prague proposals, the Hungarians still hoped that a conference would have a concrete character and would not be a simple propaganda manifestation, as the Soviet intention seems to be.

Poland

The Belgian Ambassador at Warsaw had preliminary talks in mid-June with Vice Minister Willman and the Director of Service and Planning for the Foreign Ministry, Mr. Bisztyga. Although the two officials could not comment formally, since their Government had first to consult with its allies, they expressed the hope that exchanges of views with the Belgian representative might be continued.

Although not prepared to comment, the two spokesmen were able to post a host of probing questions. These related to the meaning of progress in exploratory bilateral talks and those of Germany and Berlin, the timing of a shift from the bilateral to the multilateral stage, and pertinent procedural questions. They wondered about NATO's views on principles governing security, renunciation of force and co-operation. In this connection, they said Poland viewed Paragraph 16(b) in its extended version as being unacceptable.

Most questions related to MBFR. Here they were interested in procedures for considering this subject, its geographic application, participation and measures to avoid a bloc-to-bloc attitude, its inclusion or not of American forces and weapons systems, and the nuclear potential of France and Great Britain.

The conversations concluded with the statement that the Poles are not ready to have a conference discuss the August 1968 events in Czechoslovakia nor consider measures that could endanger Poland's security.

Rumania

During talks in Bucharest on 29th May, First Deputy Minister Macovescu told Under Secretary de Lipkowski of the French Foreign Ministry that Rumania believes the moment is right for holding a conference to establish a method of balance which could take the place of simple force, as presently exists. To this end, all interested countries, including GDR, must participate and be permitted to express their views. East German participation would naturally not imply recognition. As for the "troika", Rumania rejects it outright since it will not condone the concept of a few speaking for many. Since Rumania sees European security as being a permanent creation, it believes there ought to be a series of conferences to follow the first, thereby establishing a permanent dialogue.

Rumania sees as positive the Federal Republic's efforts to reach accord with its Eastern neighbours, but it does not believe that European security should be limited to only those understandings. In Rumanian eyes, the Prague proposals were only suggestions and the West, therefore, ought to propose its own. Non-use of force must be a specific commitment in Europe, even if it is necessary to use the text of the UN Charter to gain this goal. The second Prague proposal on co-operation ought to be expanded.

Rumania does not reject the MBFR proposal in principle but believes that success can only come from having all states agree to discuss the subject. And this is not yet the case. After all, Macovescu concluded, would not a solemn declaration on non-recourse to force really freeze the present military forces as they stand?

On 7th June, Macovescu, in speaking with the Turkish Ambassador, gave the following personal views:

European security is important to Rumania and a conference can only be an instrument to ensure security. The Rome Communiqué reflects progress because it expanded the two agenda items proposed at Prague.

Given the recent history of European crises, it is necessary that European states, and not European blocs, agree to prevent such crises from reoccurring. Force renunciation would be a first step in this direction and, eventually, a reduction of forces and a limitation on weapons could create an atmosphere of security which could then abolish the existence of blocs.

The process of bilateral contacts has now been completed and the time has come for advancing to multilateral contacts and the preparation of a conference.

III. NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

Austria

An Austrian Foreign Ministry official visiting Budapest told the British Ambassador there on 18th June that Austria was working on an idea of its own. This idea is that there should be an agreement to hold two or three conferences and an understanding that disarmament would not be seriously discussed at the first. The thought behind this is that a failure at the first conference would be disastrous.

Cyprus

The Foreign Minister, Kyprianou, who accepted the documents on 4th June, gave a favourable preliminary response. He said Cyprus is ready to participate in exploratory talks on MBFR and agrees that a conference must be carefully prepared if it is to have any chance of success. On 9th June, the Director General of the Foreign Ministry told a member of the British High Commission in Nicosia that his Government favoured the initiatives described in the Rome Communiqué and Declaration.

Ireland

The Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry received the documents on 1st June and expressed warm thanks for their delivery and his Government's keen interest to read them. He promised to give his Government's views as soon as possible.

Malta

The Prime Minister received the documents on 3rd June and said he would withhold comment until after he had studied them.

PO/70/324Sweden

Foreign Minister Nilsson received the documents on 2nd June and assured the Italian Ambassador that his Government would study them carefully in order to give a formal response as soon as possible. As regards MBFR, Mr. Nilsson said he believes Sweden can play a useful rôle in relation with other countries. He also said he would brief his Prime Minister on this subject prior to the latter's visit to Moscow later in June, when he would discuss MBFR with his Soviet hosts.

Switzerland

The Director of Political Affairs informed the Italian Ambassador that his Government was paying particular attention to the MBFR proposal. The Swiss Confederation would have to consider the neutral status of its own armed forces before it could decide what rôle it might play in discussion of MBFR. It would also have to use the greatest prudence and consider the general European military situation when studying any solution regarding a reduction of American forces in Europe.

Vatican

Monseigneur Casaroli, Secretary of the Council on Public Affairs, on 3rd June emphasised that the Vatican is seriously interested in problems of European security and co-operation and had consequently followed the Rome Ministerial Meeting closely. He promised to give a formal response after evaluating the texts given him.

Yugoslavia

Deputy Foreign Minister Vratusa told the British Ambassador on 10th June that his Government found the outcome of the Rome Meeting useful, positive and encouraging. NATO had expressly rejected the bloc-to-bloc approach, had not restricted itself to destructive criticism of the Budapest and Prague proposals but had widened the basis of discussion. He showed a special interest in the parallel between the idea of a code of good conduct and Paragraph 16(a). He agreed that the UN Special Committee on Friendly Relations provided a basis for the formulation of principles which the Soviets, the Brezhnev doctrine notwithstanding, would find difficult to reject.

The Yugoslav Ambassador in Brussels expressed satisfaction with the documents and was particularly pleased with NATO's initiative and the moderate tone it adopted. He also commented favourably over mention of the neutral and non-aligned states in the documents and the maintenance of NATO's views on MBFR.

In Belgrade, the Italian Ambassador had conversations with three Foreign Ministry officials. The points noted by the Yugoslav representatives follow:

NATO member countries have adopted a flexible attitude which is a forward and encouraging step. For the first time in a public document, one bloc organization has mentioned clearly the neutral and non-aligned states. Yugoslavia appreciates it that no preconditions were set down for holding a conference by tying it to MBFR. Emphasis was given to Yugoslavia's view that regional disarmament represents a basic element of security in Europe.

The Communiqué contains new and interesting elements which may help to realise the goals of a conference. Its tenor is constructive and procedures suggested are reasonable, being flexible and permitting easy passage from one phase to another.

Foreign Minister Tepavac seemed to see a contradiction between Paragraphs 14 and 15 of the Communiqué and asked whether the latter set a precondition for beginning multilateral talks.

IV. OTHER STATES

Albania

Mr. Budo, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, received the Italian Ambassador on 3rd June. After listening carefully to the Ambassador's oral statement and expressing understanding for his call, Budo said he could not accept the documents since NATO policy was clearly contrary to his own Government's position.

Budo also told the Ambassador that the same reception would be given to the eventual delivery of the Warsaw Pact documents. He emphasised that Albania desires to see closer European co-operation, but not if it stems from the initiative of either bloc.

San Marino

Professor Federico Bigi, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, told the Italian Representative on 8th June that, mindful of its limitations, the Republic of San Marino was interested in any initiative which could facilitate international détente and co-operation.