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Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers' Meeting Ends in Failure

"A friendly exchange of views" took place during the conference of Warsaw Pact foreign ministers, according to an official communique released on the evening of February 10.

The communique failed to stress the usual "unanimity of views." Instead, it only stressed that the conference took place "in an atmosphere of friendly cooperation and full mutual understanding." As to the subject of the "exchange of views," the communique merely referred to "matters connected with the efforts of socialist countries aimed at easing international tension, and assuring peace, security, and cooperation in Europe, and [matters] connected with the development of the situation on the European continent since the adoption in Bucharest in July 1966 of the declaration on the strengthening of peace and security in Europe."

Neither West Germany nor any other state was mentioned in the communique.

The first official announcement about the conference was broadcast by Radio Warsaw on the evening of February 9, confirming (cf. SR February 9) that the meeting had started the day before. The participants in the meeting were received by First Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka on February 9.

According to the two official releases on the conference -- which lasted for three days, February 8 to 10 -- its participants were: foreign ministers Ivan Bashev of Bulgaria, Vaclav David of Czechoslovakia, Otto Winzer of the GDR, Janos Peter of Hungary, Andrei Gromyko of the USSR, and Vice-Minister Mircea Malita of Rumania.

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The ministers were accompanied by their deputies and by the respective ambassadors to Poland. The Polish participants were listed in the following order: Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz, CC Secretary Zenon Kliszko (no reference to his Politburo membership was made), Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki, CC member and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Marian Naszkowski, and Ambassador Maria Wierna, director general of the Foreign Ministry.

All Western correspondents stationed in Warsaw were unanimous about the failure of the conference to reach any decision which would "soothe the disquiet of East Germany and Poland over their allies' lively interest in drawing closer to West Germany."

Henry Kamm, the author of this formulation, reporting for The New York Times (February 11), was also not alone in his view that it was Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Peter who "expressed his reluctance to subscribe to any far-reaching decision on policy toward West Germany's new campaign to build bridges to the East."

Reuter's correspondent Vincent Buist reported on February 11 that, in view of the failure of the conference, East Germany may seek to enter into "additional bilateral security agreements -- first with Poland and then with other willing states," but this proposal was thought to be opposed by Hungary and other states lest such agreements "merely underline the weakness of the existing Warsaw Pact security arrangements."

Communist sources, notably Radio Zagreb (February 11), also confirmed that no agreement had been reached in Warsaw. The broadcast stressed three elements showing the extent of differences among the participants in the meeting: (1) the open polemics between East Germany and Rumania, (2) the change in the place of the meeting from East Berlin to Warsaw, (3) the failure to announce the beginning of the meeting. At the same time, Radio Zagreb continued, these elements show "the lack of orientation of some countries concerning the new factors of alliance based on principled agreements and the right of sovereign decisions in conformity with state interests which are not contrary to others."

L'Unita's correspondent Franco Fabiani was more restrained in his report (February 11) on the conference. Instead of analyzing the communique, he declared that "the socialist countries as a group and by common agreement make a clear distinction between a purely diplomatic and formal measure" and "the true way to conceive of a normalization of relations between the German Federal Republic and the European socialist countries."

This "clear distinction" was distinctly missing from the communique, but this did not prevent the Polish press and radio media from following a propaganda line assuming its existence.

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In a radio commentary on the Warsaw conference, editor Aleksander Kowalski concentrated almost exclusively on the decisions of the Bucharest meeting of July 1966, stressing the three "fundamental conditions" of what he called "real normalization of relations between West Germany and the socialist countries." These conditions: 1) recognition of the existing frontiers in Europe, 2) recognition of East Germany, 3) renunciation of nuclear armament.

In the whole Polish coverage of the Warsaw meeting there has been -- so far -- no reference to any differences of opinion at, not to say the failure of the conference.

Increased Criticism of West Germany

The apparent failure of the Warsaw conference of foreign ministers to agree on a common policy towards West Germany prompted increased Polish criticism of West Germany. The immensity of the usual anti-German propaganda suddenly increased, along at least three clearly discernible lines: (1) there has been no real change in Bonn's policy vis-a-vis East Europe, (2) there is a revival of Nazism in West Germany, (3) the Bonn government insists on nuclear armaments.

"If Chancellor Kiesinger stresses, on the occasion of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Rumania, that the so-called Bonn point of view did not change, translated into everyday language this means that the Bonn government does not renounce a revision of the existing frontiers in Europe, that it refuses to declare the Munich agreement as void, that it recognizes West Berlin as part of the Federal Republic, that it aims at liquidating the GDR, and that it has plans to annex our territories."

This statement, from an article by Kazimierz Rusinek, secretary-general of the veterans' association ZBOWID, was broadcast by Radio Warsaw on February 12, significantly prior to its announced publication in the next issue of ZBOWID's fortnightly, Za wolnosc i lud.

A day earlier, on February 11, Radio Warsaw concentrated on the emergence of the NPD in West Germany. It reported extensively on the views of the Bavarian Landtag deputy and NPD member Captain Wolfgang Ross and the "scandal" of his being appointed member of the council supervising the Bavarian radio and TV. Radio Warsaw also dwelled extensively on foreign comments on the NPD and on other signs of the revival of neo-Nazi forces in West Germany.

The third point, nuclear armaments, was dealt with on at least two consecutive days, February 11 and 12. "The campaign against the agreement on the ban of nuclear proliferation has reached its peak in the German Federal Republic," Radio Warsaw correspondent Henryk Kollat reported from Bonn on February 11. The next day, Radio Warsaw commented on Chancellor Kiesinger's statement in Oberhausen as follows: "The chief of the Bonn government stated that nobody can make the GFR sign the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear arms. If the GFR signs that agreement, it will do so under the condition that her vital interests would be safeguarded. Under the concept of vital interests is, in this case, understood in Bonn a vast program of development of nuclear research which is a basis of its own production of nuclear arms."

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More on Beitz's Trip to Poland

Krupp manager Berthold Beitz is to visit Poland "next week," Reuter reported from Warsaw on February 10. That would mean, if true, that the visit is imminent. Again, as was the case last week (cf. SR February 9), there was no confirmation from Krupp. However, there was also no denial. Asked by RFE to comment on the Reuter dispatch, Krupp's spokesman said (on February 11): "I cannot confirm the report. On the other hand, I cannot deny it."

A day earlier, on February 10, West German Foreign Minister Willy Brandt said in New York (cf. an RFE Special from New York of the same date) that more East European countries would establish diplomatic relations with Bonn before the end of this year. Regarding Poland, Brandt repeated recent official statements from Bonn on greater West German understanding for Poland in particular.

If Beitz goes to Poland, one may ask whether his talks with Polish leaders would have a purely economic nature or whether they might deal with political matters as well.

Bishops' Forthcoming Conference

Catholic bishops are to meet this week for a conference "to review relations between Church and state and possibly hear a first-hand account of the Vatican's present attitude to East European states," Reuter reported from Warsaw on February 12.

The "first-hand account" will be given by Archbishop Boleslaw Kominek of Wroclaw, who is at present in Rome but is expected to return to Warsaw in time for the conference.

The conference is also expected formally to appoint Bishop Bronislaw Dabrowski, at present attached to the Warsaw diocese, bishop of Lodz in place of the late Michal Klepacz, who died a few weeks ago (cf. SR January 30). Dabrowski acted for Klepacz in the talks with the government during the latter's illness.

Polish-Moroccan Trade Protocol

Poland and Morocco signed in Rabat a protocol on exchange of goods between the two countries in the current year and an additional protocol to the agreement on Polish deliveries of investment goods to Morocco, Radio Warsaw reported on February 10. Polish deliveries to Morocco this year will include, among other goods, machines and equipment, foundry products, chemicals, and pharmaceutical products, while Morocco will export to Poland phosphorites, non-ferrous metals, fish meal, citrus fruit, and other goods, said the broadcast.

Polish deliveries of investment goods to Morocco follow the 30-million dollar credit agreement signed in December 1965. This was the second credit granted by Poland to Morocco, the first having been accorded in 1959.

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Polish-UAR Protocol on Economic Cooperation

Polish-UAR economic talks ended on February 11 in Cairo with the signing of a final protocol which, apart from dealing with current problems, also opens the way to mutual cooperation between the two countries in new fields, Radio Warsaw reported on February 12.

The recent Polish-UAR talks, which opened in Cairo on February 5, were conducted on the Polish side by a delegation headed by Vice-Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz (cf. SR February 6).