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SUMMIT MEETING OF THE WARSAW PACT CONCLUDED

Summary: The Communique and Appeal from the Budapest summit meeting of the Warsaw Pact give little reason to believe that a major reorganization of Pact functions has been achieved. While the Communique is intentionally vague, the published text of the Appeal reveals that significant world problems were not treated, and that a calmer approach toward West Germany has replaced recent belligerency. This may well be the result of Soviet inability to achieve unanimity on several outstanding issues of world importance. With little information to indicate a new era of harmony in Pact relations, one may assume that past problems such as Rumania's objections to supranational integration, the effects of the Czechoslovak invasion, and the recent disputes with China still await solution. Unless new documents are forthcoming, there is little reason to conclude that this recent Pact meeting was of any monumental significance.

Despite some initial speculation that the March summit meeting of the Warsaw Pact would produce far-reaching changes in the Pact's organizational structure, the Communique issued from the Budapest conference (1) gives little indication that major decisions concerning reorganization of the Pact structure were made. The final Communique stated that "The Political Consultative Committee (PCC) heard a speech from the commander-in-chief of the united armed forces concerning measures which had been worked out by the Ministers of Defense and approved by the respective governments. The governmental representatives at the meeting discussed

(1) Ceteka (Budapest), 17 March. The Russian text was transmitted by Radio Moscow on 18 March 1969, at 0300 and 0700 hrs.

in detail and unanimously approved a resolution of the committee of Ministers of Defense..., a new resolution about the united armed forces and the united commands, (2) and other documents...intended to further perfect the structure and command bodies of the defensive organization of the Warsaw Pact."

In itself, this deliberately vague statement of activities fails to offer proof that past problems and dissent within the Pact organization have been substantially resolved. Rather, the fact that extensive negotiations preceded the short -- less than two hour -- Budapest session would indicate that continued disagreements concerning Pact operations still exist. Unfortunately, the world will have to await further details on this matter before a final judgement can be rendered.

In contrast to the incomplete Communiqué, the text of the second document produced at the meeting, the "Appeal of the Warsaw Pact," offers striking proof of the difficulty of gaining unanimous agreement on major policy issues. The restrained tone of the appeal indicates that the lowest common denominator upon which all countries could agree omitted several issues over which the USSR has recently shown great concern. The bulk of the Appeal consists of a reiteration of the call for a general European security meeting, a proposal that the Pact had already made in the past. Interestingly, the section dealing with the issue of West Germany is noticeably mild, noting only that recognition of the GDR and West Germany are sine quo non conditions for lasting European peace. Little time is devoted to castigating Bonn for its recent elections in Berlin despite the fact that Pact commander-in-chief Yakubovsky considered the situation so serious last month as to warrant a special meeting of Pact military commanders. Statements on Vietnam, the Yugoslav Party Congress and relations with China are also absent, indicating the inability of unanimous agreement on any of these important issues. In sum, with few exceptions, the Appeal is a document which few Western statesmen would object to, at least in principle.

The Problems Remain

The most consistent barrier to converting the Warsaw Pact into a pliable tool of the USSR had been the wholly negative stance of Rumania toward closer Pact integration. As early as 1966, informed sources suggested that Bucharest had called for rotation of command within the Pact's military leadership in addition to joint consultation prior to any use of nuclear weapons. (3) The following year, in contrast to the resolutely pro-Arab position of Moscow, Rumania concluded several trade agreements with Tel Aviv and refused to sign the condemnation of Israel which followed

(2) While Radio Moscow uses the term "united," CTK translated the word as "combined."

(3) See for instance, Strategic Survey 1966, p. 21.

the June conference in Moscow. The problem of West German recognition has also revealed differences between Bucharest and other members of the bloc. In January 1967, Rumania established diplomatic relations with Bonn, and refused to attend the meeting at Karlovy Vary (July, 1967) which affirmed support for the GDR.

It was, however, the Czechoslovak crisis that produced the most noticeable split between the allies. Refusing to participate in the invasion, Rumania denied the mantle of Pact unanimity, dealing a serious blow to the prestige of the Soviet Union in this highly controversial action. Since the invasion, persistent rumors have pointed to a Rumanian refusal to allow Warsaw Pact maneuvers upon its territory and strong Rumanian denunciation of the doctrine of "limited sovereignty" has again shown Bucharest's distaste for any Pact activities which would further limit its own national self-determination.

China -- the Need for a Two Front Defense

The recent bloody clashes at the Ussuri river combined with the possibility of new Chinese reinforcements along the extended border region will compel the USSR to bolster military defenses in these contested areas. (4) Rumors that Warsaw Pact troops might be required for garrison duty hardly seem creditable, yet the new strain upon existing Soviet capacities must affect planning in the European areas of Pact responsibility. Now, perhaps more than before, difficulties among members concerning methods of assuring the adequate defense of Eastern Europe must be resolved.

It is still possible that the USSR will attempt to pressure its allies into contributing ideological and moral strength in this latest dispute between Moscow and Peking. In 1961 a meeting of the PCC resolved that the Warsaw allies were "guided by the theoretical and political conclusions of the November 1960 conference of communist and workers parties as well as by the historic documents of that meeting." This announcement was clearly intended as support in the then current dispute with Peking and Tirana, and such a posture might well be sought by the USSR again. Since the essence of the Budapest meeting was to approve documents already prepared, future deliberations might be devoted to the rapidly escalating border conflict in the Far East.

(4) Note the complete avoidance of the issue in the published material issued after the Budapest meeting -- a possible consequence of Rumanian objections.

Conclusion

Possessing only the vague Communiqué, and supported by the mild tone of the general Appeal, one can speculate that this latest summit conference has failed to deal adequately with the many problems still facing the Warsaw Pact. Although the appearance of future documents may radically alter the picture, it appears that Rumania's objection to supra-national military planning remains operative, (5) and that the USSR will find it difficult to achieve any significant alterations of pact structure. At the same time, if this recent meeting failed to remove Rumania's veto right from Pact planning, it must be assumed that further integration is still high on the list of Russian priorities. (6)

With the Moscow meeting of world communist parties rapidly approaching, the USSR will find itself limited in the types of pressure available, since outright dissent among Pact countries would administer the coup de grace to hopes for world communist harmony. It is becoming increasingly clear that even the world superpowers, torn by conflicting goals and methods, are still limited in the results they can achieve in the sphere of international and military relations.

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- (5) Russian reaction to recent Rumanian objections to closer Pact coordination has been surprisingly mild and measured. The latest attack came in Krasnaya Zvezda and was directed against those countries who elevated national interests and peculiarities above the common ideals of the proletariat.
- (6) As early as 1965, L. Brezhnev noted that the Pact still required "a permanent and operative mechanism for considering urgent problems," an indication of the persistent Soviet interest in achieving full unanimity in Pact affairs. (Quoted in Strategic Survey 1966, p. 21).