

Document No. 71: Hungarian Report of Warsaw Pact
Summit on Policy toward West Germany, January 7, 1970

This Hungarian report of a meeting of Warsaw Pact heads of state deals mainly with policy toward West Germany in the wake of Willy Brandt's election as chancellor and the initiation of Ostpolitik.⁷ The meeting provides another example of Moscow's changed approach toward alliance members. Rather than simply announcing its decision, the Kremlin found it advisable first to consult about the meaning of the new FRG policy and how to respond, in hopes of gaining maximum support for its preferred policies. The document, which is typical of the high quality of Hungarian diplomatic reporting, records a rather lively debate at the meeting. The general consensus is that any change on Bonn's part was mainly tactical but should nevertheless be pursued, in part for the economic and trade benefits for the socialist bloc. Standing in opposition to closer ties was the GDR's Walter Ulbricht who flatly declared that nothing had happened to ameliorate Bonn's revanchist instincts. Soviet leader Brezhnev then announced that Brandt would visit Moscow in a few days for negotiations, but declared that the time was not right to discuss the establishment of diplomatic relations. He acknowledged Ulbricht's charge that the new chancellor may only want to drive a wedge into the Warsaw Pact but he added that for the time being there was no better alternative to Brandt. Brezhnev's overall tone was somewhat skeptical about détente, even though it was Moscow's idea to pursue it, which indicates that the Soviets were not yet convinced they would get from it what they wanted.

[...]

Cde. Brezhnev opened the conference, which had been called to determine our joint policies towards the FRG. After this, Cde. Ulbricht presented the position of the German Socialist Unity Party's Central Committee; next to speak were Cdes. Kádár, Ceaușescu, Zhivkov, Husák, Gomułka and Brezhnev, in that order. At the end of the conference two documents were endorsed: a communiqué about the meeting and—at the request of the Vietnamese comrades—a statement in support of the struggle of Vietnam. No documents were produced for internal use.

The debate reflected an appropriate assessment of the position and politics of the FRG [...] The speakers primarily studied what actual possibilities the new elements in West German politics could offer to the socialist countries for improving current relations. Considering the complexity of the problem, the exchange of views failed to produce a complete agreement. The countries representing the extreme positions were the GDR on the one hand, and Poland and Romania on the other—while Hun-

⁷ Willy Brandt was West Germany's chancellor from 1969 to 1974. His *Ostpolitik*, or "Eastern Policy," aimed at normalizing relations between the two Germanys and generally improving ties with the rest of the Soviet bloc ("change through rapprochement"). While not abandoning the idea of German unification, his goal was to reduce tensions so long as Europe remained divided by the Cold War.

gary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union assessed the situation essentially identically and reached basically similar conclusions.

In his speech, Cde. Ulbricht underlined that the political line taken by [Konrad] Adenauer, [Ludwig] Erhard and [Kurt Georg] Kiesinger⁸—characterized by the objectives of salvaging the dominance of monopolies in West Germany, changing the European status quo and penetrating the socialist countries of Europe—was also W. Brandt's line; therefore the overall situation in West Germany remained essentially the same. For this reason, we must follow without fail the old, harmonized course of action set in 1967 in Warsaw. First and foremost among our demands is the full recognition of the GDR in international law, which all the fraternal countries must earnestly support. Generally speaking, the GDR is skeptical about bilateral talks between the socialist countries and the FRG, as the latter looks upon bilateral agreements as a temporary measure until the signing of a German peace treaty, which will settle these problems once and for all, according to the FRG. In this way, the FRG can at any time cast aside the bilateral agreements signed with the socialist countries. Cde. Ulbricht explained that Soviet–American talks about the renunciation of force could only be useful if the GDR could also sign a similar agreement with the FRG, fully based on international law. In addition, he pointed out that there was no need for separate talks between Poland and the FRG about the Oder–Neisse Line, because the Oder–Neisse Line constituted the eastern border of the GDR. If Poland wanted to negotiate with the FRG, it should make a treaty with the latter, in which the FRG would guarantee Poland's territorial integrity.

Cde. Ulbricht informed the participants that the GDR was resolved to present the FRG with a draft international treaty on mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations. This would form the basis of the settlement of the two German states' relations. Until then the GDR would negotiate with the FRG on matters of mail, transportation and travel, but these negotiations would only aim at the collection of old debts and the guaranteeing of conditions for future, regular payment. The socialist countries of Europe should wait to establish diplomatic relations with Bonn until the FRG recognizes the GDR. Addressing some criticism to the press of certain socialist countries without actually mentioning names, Cde. Ulbricht next made the point that right now it was not the unification of the two German states, but the affirmation of their parallel existence and the lending of support to the GDR that had to be their concern. The unification of the two German states was only possible on a socialist basis and in all likelihood would take place only during the lifetime of future generations.

In Cde. Ceaușescu's assessment, the statement made by the Brandt government expressed certain rational views and some shift towards a more flexible political line, regardless of its inconsistencies. This was an important, positive step forward, he said, calling attention to the point that Brandt's failure would imply the transfer of power to a reactionary government. He stressed the need for every socialist country to dev-

⁸ All three politicians, members of the right-of-center Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party, served as chancellor of the FRG prior to Willy Brandt: Adenauer from 1949 to 1963, Erhard from 1963 to 1966, and Kiesinger from 1966 to 1969. Kiesinger headed a coalition government that included Brandt and his left-of-center Social Democratic Party.

elop and normalize relations and establish diplomatic links with the FRG. This should not be conditioned on the existence of diplomatic relations between the GDR and the FRG. We should develop economic, technological, scientific, cultural and other relations with the FRG, because that would lend support to the progressive forces. We should support the GDR. He agreed with Cde. Kádár's proposal to encourage the admission of both German states to the U.N.

Cde. Gomułka stated that the conditions set in Warsaw in 1967 had been appropriate to the situation that had existed then. The recent changes in the FRG have opened up possibilities that we must try to exploit. The strategic objective is the full recognition of the GDR under international law. The FRG's *de facto* recognition of the GDR constitutes the step that immediately precedes its recognition *de jure*. Putting pressure on the FRG to recognize the GDR under international law would seriously set back the cause of the conference on security in Europe.

Cde. Gomułka also mentioned that the Polish side was going to start negotiations with the FRG in the near future about recognition of the Oder–Neisse border, in the course of which they intended to honor the harmonized socialist position and planned to conduct consultations with the other socialist countries. The Oder–Neisse border forms the starting point in Polish–German relations vis-à-vis both German states, which requires that the FRG, too, recognize the border, which is incidentally in the joint interests of all the socialist countries.

The Polish side supports negotiations between the Soviet Union and the FRG aimed at the renunciation of force; they also find it useful that the Soviet Union is conducting talks about the status of West Berlin. In Cde. Gomułka's opinion, Czechoslovakia, too, is entitled to conduct bilateral negotiations with the FRG about the abrogation of the Munich agreement⁹; he then went on to stress the importance of developing economic links with the FRG, which was in our joint interest. Therefore, Poland has already been conducting negotiations with the FRG about long-term trading of goods, as well as regarding economic, technological and scientific cooperation.

The socialist countries must follow a united political line towards the FRG based on principles, forcing it into acceptance of preconditions for security in Europe. At the same time, they should exploit every tactical opportunity.

- The full text of Cde. Kádár's speech, in which he put forward the Hungarian position, is enclosed.
- The speech made by Cde. Brezhnev, the last person to speak, was aimed at summing up and synthesizing the exchange of views, as well as toning down the extreme elements that were contained, to a lesser degree, in the East German position and, to a larger degree, in the Romanian and Polish views.

In assessing the situation, he started out by declaring that the elections in West Germany did not constitute a major turn, and that the FRG continued to be one of

⁹ The September 29, 1938, agreement between Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France, whereby Czechoslovakia was compelled to cede its predominantly German-inhabited borderlands to Germany. The abrogation of the agreement *ab initio*, i.e. ruling that it was never valid, meant that the "Sudeten" Germans who were summarily expelled from that area after World War II had never lost their Czechoslovak citizenship and were therefore not entitled to claim compensation under German law for their property confiscated by Czechoslovakia.

In assessing the situation, he started out by declaring that the elections in West Germany did not constitute a major turn, and that the FRG continued to be one of the bastions of imperialism. In that regard, Cde. Ulbricht's argument merited some consideration. At the same time, however, one must not forget what Lenin had said about the importance of exploiting the shades of difference between certain representatives of imperialism.

The ousting of CDU-CSU from power constituted an important event; this undermined the positions of the most aggressive wing in West German imperialism. Brandt expresses certain demands that have been in the air for some time now. Since at the moment we do not have a better alternative to the Brandt government, we must take advantage of the positive aspects in its policies in order to undermine the positions of the revanchist forces and to have those of our demands accepted, to which the West-German public is the most favorably disposed.

At the same time, we must not overlook the most important element: the changes in the FRG are of a tactical, rather than a strategic, nature, and it would be a mistake to overestimate their importance. Of all the social democratic parties, Brandt's party is among those that are farthest to the right. It is clear that Brandt's program is a mixed bag and that he has already backed off on a number of issues. In most of the decisions associated with his government, including the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty, he has acted under pressure from the socialist countries, rather than at his own discretion. Through his discriminating politics, he aims to divide the socialist countries and isolate the GDR.

Our only reaction to such politics is to stand united on a shared platform and to judge Brandt by his actions.

We should not, however, give a one-sided interpretation to these phenomena. Undoubtedly, the social democrats' rise to power could, in due time, bring substantial changes to West German politics. Therefore, we must be active, we must continue the political struggle relentlessly, and we must keep up the pressure on the FRG, because it is clear that they will only yield when they have no alternative left.

Cde. Brezhnev announced that the Soviet Union would start negotiations with the FRG on the renunciation of force on December 8 in Moscow. In connection with this topic, in line with the spirit of the Budapest and the Bucharest declarations, (see Documents Nos. 63 and 41) the Soviet Union was going to address all fundamental issues relevant to the cause of security in Europe:

- a) Recognition of European borders in the form of a treaty, rather than by declaration. This is likely to be the result of a long and arduous battle.
- b) The GDR's recognition by the FRG under international law. This should be accompanied by efforts to have the GDR recognized by some other states, too, such as Finland and India.
- c) Ratification of the nuclear test ban treaty, along with blocking all channels through which the FRG could acquire nuclear weapons.
- d) Recognition of the invalidation of the Munich agreement.

This negotiation will be the first test of the Brandt administration's true motives and designs. In all probability, the most important issues will be settled only gradually.

In principle, the Soviet Union supports the idea of establishing diplomatic connections, but putting it into effect immediately would amount to a unilateral concession. For this reason, we should return to the problem after the establishment of relations between the GDR and the FRG on the basis of equal status.

In discussing cooperation between socialist countries in general, and without mentioning specific names, Cde. Brezhnev criticized the Romanian and Polish approaches to the FRG. He underlined that in their politics towards the socialist countries, the Western powers harmonize not only their principles, but also their various concrete steps, both in NATO and in the Common Market. We must do the same. He warned certain socialist countries of the danger of their overestimating the significance of economic ties with the FRG. He recommended that we increase the frequency of political consultations and mutually improve the flow of information between ourselves.

Summary: The discussion of the political line towards the FRG was useful. Although the exchange of ideas has failed to produce complete agreement on either the assessment of the West German situation or the political line to be taken towards it, we can nevertheless be hopeful that participants will take into account the views put forward here in their future building of relations. Basically, the view that carried the day (and this was accepted by every side except the East German delegation) made room for negotiations with the FRG on any reasonable subject, naturally after mutual consultation and exchange of information with the other Warsaw Pact members.

[...]

János Kádár's Speech at the Moscow Meeting

[...] From an international viewpoint, the tactical changes introduced in the political line taken by West Germany have been made necessary above all by changes in the international balance of power in favor of the socialist countries, by the political and economic achievements made by the socialist countries in general and by the GDR in particular, and by the socialist countries' consequent politics towards the FRG. [...]

Demonstrating our patience, we should assess the Brandt government on the basis of its actions, criticizing its negative moves but responding positively to its positive steps. [...]

- a) We must keep constant pressure on the Brandt government to facilitate the following changes:
 - The FRG's new government should renounce the foreign political objective inherited from the previous governments, which aimed at annexation of the GDR; it should fully recognize the GDR under international law. They should accept the fact that, as a result of the developments of long years and the different social evolution of the GDR and the FRG, the reunification of Germany has become impossible. The FRG should abandon its ambition to represent the entire German people.
 - The FRG should recognize the present European status quo, most notably existing borders, including Poland's borders as well as the one between the GDR and the FRG. When the FRG renounces all territorial demands, it must make it clear that it means the FRG within its present borders and that it desists from demanding border changes, renouncing its program of revising the borders.

- It should declare the Munich Treaty to be invalid *ab initio*.¹⁰
 - The FRG should withdraw from all claims to West Berlin.
 - We must exclude the possibility of the FRG coming into possession of nuclear weapons in any roundabout way.
 - Ties between the FRG and the USA and NATO should weaken.
 - Propaganda from Radio Free Europe against our country should be suspended or limited (especially in view of the fact that the agreement between RFE¹¹ and the FRG will expire in 1970).
 - They should cease support to Hungarian fascist émigrés, whose activities should be terminated.
- b) [...] We must make further efforts to have the GDR recognized under international law primarily in third world countries (India, for example), but also in some developed capitalist countries (e.g. Finland).
Parallel with these efforts, we must aim to get the GDR accepted by as many inter-governmental organizations and specialized U.N. branches as possible; we must also work to get both the GDR and the FRG invited to the U.N. simultaneously and with equal status.
- c) We do not see the establishment of diplomatic ties with the FRG as a timely proposition. [...]
- d) After eliminating the negative elements, which serve to underline the continuity of the old political line, we must try to incorporate the positive elements of the Brandt government's program in interstate treaties. [...]
- e) In the area of Hungarian–West-German relations, [...] the following options are available:
- aa) Interstate agreements
- Signing long-term commercial agreements, of 5-year duration if possible. With regard to its applicability to West Berlin, we should work towards an agreement that is more favorable to us than the previous one.
 - *Treaty on economic–industrial–technological cooperation*: in accordance with our long-term economic plans.
 - *Treaty on proprietary rights*: in the interests of pending financial matters (the compensation of people persecuted under Nazism on the basis of the BRüG and BEG Laws of West Germany,¹² etc.).
 - *Commercial and shipping treaty* on principles, which could be used to obtain most-favored-nation status. [...]
- In view of the prominent role the FRG plays in subverting the socialist countries, it would be unwise to regulate our cultural relations with the FRG in the form of an agreement. Judgment on a case-by-case basis seems more appropriate.

¹⁰ i.e., invalid in the first place.

¹¹ Radio Free Europe, based in Munich.

¹² The Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz (Federal Restitution Law) of July 19, 1967, provided for material restitution of property to the victims of the Nazi regime. The Bundesentschädigungsgesetz (Federal Compensation Law) was a series of three laws, finalized on September 14, 1965, which provided for financial compensation to the victims of the Nazi regime.

- bb) The organization of ministerial meetings in areas (foreign trade, finance, transport), where the outcome could be advantageous for us.
- In this regard, we should focus on international ministerial conferences, which could be attended by both the GDR and the FRG, so as to give a boost to the GDR's international recognition.
One such event could be the conference of transport ministers for Eastern and Central European states, scheduled to take place within the next two years.
- cc) To foster a better understanding, and also to influence the West German government, it would be useful to have an exchange of views between the politicians of the two countries.
- The same consideration should lead us in providing extra support to the left-wing forces in the FRG. For this reason, we should develop relations with the two communist parties (DKP, KPD¹³), the trade unions, the youth organizations under left-wing control, progressive individuals and certain social-democratic leaders.
- dd) Our attacks should be concentrated on the extreme right wing and the neo-Nazi forces in the FRG, as well as on certain reactionary political leaders (for example, Strauss¹⁴).

[...]

[Source: MOL M-KS-288.f. 5/509. ó.e. Translated for the PHP by the Open Society Archive.]

¹³ Deutsche Kommunistische Partei, Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands.

¹⁴ Franz Josef Strauss was a member of the conservative Christian Social Union (CSU), the Bavarian sister party of the CDU. He held several ministerial portfolios under previous CDU governments and was a vocal critic of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.