

July 16, 1980

Memorandum of conversation between Vadim Zagladin of the CPSU CC and Gyula Horn, deputy head of the HSWP CC Foreign Department on debates inside the Soviet leadership on issues of international politics

Citation:

"Memorandum of conversation between Vadim Zagladin of the CPSU CC and Gyula Horn, deputy head of the HSWP CC Foreign Department on debates inside the Soviet leadership on issues of international politics", July 16, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives of Hungary (MOL), M-KS 288 f. 47/764.o.e. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontari and Zsofia Zelnik.

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Summary:

This document reveals substantial internal debate among Soviet policy makers regarding the USSR'S foreign policy. Issues of counter-balancing US influence by increasing alliances in Western Europe, and the disagreement regarding political turmoil in Afghanistan, illustrate two prominent disagreements in Soviet politics.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY
COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT

TOP SECRET!CENTRAL
Written in one copyFOREIGN
Budapest, 16 July 1980

RECORD On 16 July, Wednesday, a private interview took place with Comrade Vadim Zagladin, the first deputy of the head of the International Department of the CPSU CC. Comrade Zagladin said that for several months in the CPSU Political Committee, there had been heated arguments about the Soviet Union's specific foreign political steps, the general evaluation of the international situation and the situation of the communist movement. He emphasized that in this argument Comrade János Kádár's message to the Soviet leadership played an important role, which created a stir and met with different reactions among the individual members of the Political Committee. Those competent in the Central Committee, including Comrades B. N. Ponomarev and K. V. Rusakov were of the position that the HSWP's opinion contained many elements deserving attention and consideration, which should be implemented in the individual international questions. Mainly this was expressed in the evaluation of the situation and suggestions presented by Comrade B. N. Ponomarev at the February conference of the central committee secretaries of the sister-parties of the closely cooperating socialist countries. Among these the most important could be considered the fact that the socialist countries should make the maximum use of the possibilities contained in existing relations with the Western-European countries to counter-balance the United States' foreign political policy. During the February conference and afterwards the divergence of opinions and arguments increased between the Central Committee and the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Comrade Korniyenko, the first deputy foreign minister accused the CC apparatus of opportunism, the lack of principle because of the concessions made to Western-European countries. In the practical sphere this was also expressed by the fact that, following the instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Soviet cultural organs, pushing aside all agreements in effect, cancelled the Soviet cultural events scheduled in France, the FRG and other capitalist countries. The determined manner of the Central Committee was needed to revoke this provision. After Comrade Brezhnev's recovery and return to work, the power relations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central Committee changed significantly. Comrade Gromiko, against his own and his counselors' opinion, was forced to accept the proposal to meet Foreign Minister Muskies in Vienna. They also managed to do away with the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to which Chancellor Schmidt's visit to Moscow would have been organized so that it could become obvious to the West-German government that the Soviet Union would be willing to strengthen partnership relations with the FRG only if certain conditions were fulfilled. There is a remarkable divergence of opinions between the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central Committee in military questions too. The MFA leadership categorically objected to making any gesture, having talks with the NATO concerning medium-range missiles. Comrade Brezhnev's personal influence and his direct action were needed for the CPSU Political Committee to make them approve of the new suggestions about talks. There are arguments concerning the solution of the Afghan problem too. The Central Committee thinks that the efforts should be concentrated on the normalization of the Afghan internal situation, they must strive to achieve that the so-called Afghan question would not be a world political question. Several members of the leadership, first of all, Comrade Gromiko and others, still think that this question should be treated as one that shows the Soviet Union's resolution to defend the interests of strategy. Within the Soviet leadership there are arguments going on also about what steps are necessary to solve the new problems arising in the international communist movement. Some think the reduction of financial aid, the narrowing down of bilateral relations and strict criticism are needed to suppress opportunist trends. Such opinions are sometimes expressed in different statements, publications. Comrade Zagladin thinks that there is a need for stating what one thinks in principle, but it would be a mistake to take steps that would harm relations seriously and so would minimize the possibility of influencing. Gyula Horn