

October 30, 1956
**Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC
Presidium on 30 October 1956**

Citation:

"Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 30 October 1956",
October 30, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 6-14,
compiled by V. N. Malin. Published in CWIHP Bulletin 8-9, pp. 392-393.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113647>

Summary:

The Presidium decides to promulgate a declaration on Hungary in which Soviet withdrawal and relations with the new government will be addressed. Members discuss the language of the new declaration and the advice of the CPC CC regarding the status of Soviet troops. The declaration is also intended to address the broader crisis in Soviet relations with people's democracies.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on 30 October 1956(1)

(Re: Point 1 of Protocol No. 49)(2)

Those Taking Part: Bulganin, Voroshilov, Molotov, Kaganovich, Saburov, Brezhnev, Zhukov, Shepilov, Shvernik, Furtseva, Pospelov

On the Situation in Hungary

Information from Cdes. Mikoyan and Serov is read aloud.(3)

Cde. Zhukov provides information about the concentration of mil.-transport aircraft in the Vienna region.(4) Nagy is playing a double game (in Malinin's opinion). Cde. Konev is to be sent to Budapest.(5)

On Discussions with the Chinese comrades. (6)

(Khrushchev)

We should adopt a declaration today on the withdrawal of troops from the countries of people's democracy (and consider these matters at a session of the Warsaw Pact), taking account of the views of the countries in which our troops are based. The entire CPC CC Politburo supports this position. One document for the Hungarians, and another for the participants of the Warsaw Pact. On Rokossowski-I said to Gomulka that this matter is for you (the Poles) to decide.(7)

Cde. Bulganin-The Chinese cdes. have an incorrect impression of our relations with the countries of people's democracy. On our appeal to the Hungarians-we should prepare it. A declaration should be prepared.

Cde. Molotov-Today an appeal must be written to the Hungarian people so that they promptly enter into negotiations about the withdrawal of troops. There is the Warsaw Pact. This must be considered with other countries. On the view of the Chinese comrades-they suggest that relations with the countries of the socialist camp be built on the principles of Pancha Shila.(8) Relations along interstate lines are on one basis and interparty relations on another.

Cde. Voroshilov: We must look ahead. Declarations must be composed so that we aren't placed into an onerous position. We must criticize ourselves-but justly.

Cde. Kaganovich-Pancha Shila, but I don't think they should propose that we build our relations on the principles of Pancha Shila. Two documents-an appeal to the Hungarians and a Declaration. In this document we don't need to provide self-criticism. There's a difference between party and state relations.

Cde. Shepilov-The course of events reveals the crisis in our relations with the countries of people's democracy. Anti-Soviet sentiments are widespread. The underlying reasons must be revealed. The foundations remain unshakable. Eliminate the elements of diktat, not giving play in this situation to a number of measures to be considered in our relations. The declaration is the first step. There is no need for an appeal to the Hungarians. On the armed forces: We support the principles of non-interference. With the agreement of the government of Hungary, we are ready to withdraw troops. We'll have to keep up a struggle with national- Communism for a long time.

Cde. Zhukov-Agrees with what Cde. Shepilov has said. The main thing is to decide in Hungary. Anti-Soviet sentiments are widespread. We should withdraw troops from Budapest, and if necessary withdraw from Hungary as a whole. This is a lesson for us

in the military-political sphere.

Cde. Zhukov-With regard to troops in the GDR and in Poland, the question is more serious. It must be considered at the Consultative Council.(9) The Consultative Council is to be convened. To persist further-it is unclear what will come of this. A quick decision, the main thing is to declare it today.

Cde. Furtseva-We should adopt a general declaration, not an appeal to the Hungarians. Not a cumbersome declaration. The second thing is important for the internal situation. We must search for other modes of relations with the countries of people's democracy.

About meetings with leaders of the people's democracies (concerning relations). We should convene a CC plenum (for informational purposes).(10)

Cde. Saburov: Agrees about the need for a Declaration and withdrawal of troops. At the XX Congress we did the correct thing, but then did not keep control of the unleashed initiative of the masses. It's impossible to lead against the will of the people. We failed to stand for genuine Leninist principles of leadership. We might end up lagging behind events. Agrees with Cde. Furtseva. The ministers are asking; so are members of the CC.(11) With regard to Romania-they owe us 5 billion rubles for property created by the people.(12) We must reexamine our relations. Relations must be built on an equal basis.

Cde. Khrushchev: We are unanimous. As a first step we will issue a Declaration.

Cde. Khrushchev-informs the others about his conversation with Cde. Mikoyan. Kadar is behaving well. 5 of the 6 are firmly hanging in there.(13) A struggle is going on inside the [HWP- trans.] Presidium about the withdrawal of troops. The minister of defense will issue a directive about the suppression of insurgents in the cinema, using the armed forces. (Malinin, apparently, became nervous and left the session.) Officers from the state security (Hungarian) are with our troops.(14)

Consideration of the Draft Declaration
(Shepilov, Molotov, Bulganin)

Cde. Bulganin-we should say in what connection the question of a Declaration arose. Page 2, Par. 2, don't soften the self-criticism. Mistakes were committed. Much use should be made of "Leninist principles."

Cde. Khrushchev-expresses agreement. We should say we are guided by Leninist principles. Page 2, Par. 5-we should say we are making a statement, not an explanation.

Page 3-we should speak about economic equity, make it the main thing. We should say that no troops are stationed in the majority of countries. We should say that on the territory of the Polish, Hungarian, and Romanian states the stationing of troops is done with the consent of their governments and in the interests of these gov'ts and peoples.(15) We should express our view of the government of Hungary. Measures to support them. About support for the party and HWP CC and for the gov't. We should refer specifically to Nagy and Kadar.

Cde. Kaganovich, Cde. Molotov, Cde.

Zhukov: We should mention the Potsdam agreement and the treaties with every country. (16)

Cde. Zhukov-We should express sympathy with the people. We should call for an end to the bloodshed. Page 2, Par. 2: We should say the XX Congress condemned the disregard for principles of equality.

Cde. Zhukov-we should speak about economics. Restructuring was thwarted after the XX Congress.

(Cde. Khrushchev)

We are turning to the member-states of the Warsaw Pact to consider the question of our advisers.(17) We are ready to withdraw them. Further editing.(18) Transmitted via high frequency to Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov.

Information from Cde. Yudin on Negotiations with the Chinese Comrades.

What's the situation: Will Hungary leave our camp? Who is Nagy? Can he be trusted? About the advisers.Those taking part: Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Molotov, Saburov, Khrushchev, Zhukov, Brezhnev, Shepilov, Shvernik, Furtseva, Pospelov, Yudin. Chinese comrades.

On the Situation in Hungary

(Cde. Khrushchev, Cde. Liu Shaoqi)

Cde. Liu Shaoqi indicates on behalf of the CPC CC that troops must remain in Hungary and in Budapest.(19)

Cde. Khrushchev-there are two paths. A military path-one of occupation. A peaceful path-the withdrawal of troops, negotiations.

Cde. Molotov-the political situation has taken clearer shape. An anti-revol. gov't has been formed, a transitional gov't.(20) We should issue the Declaration and explain our position. We should clarify our relationship with the new gov't. We are entering into negotiations about the withdrawal of troops.

Nagy-the prime minister.

Kadar-a state minister.

Tildy Zoltan- "

Kovacs Bela-

Losonczy-a Communist and a supporter of Nagy(21)

Translator's Notes

1 As with the previous session, the pages in the original file were slightly out of sequence. The order has been corrected in the translation.

2 Protocol No. 49 encompasses both this session and the session on the following day (see Document No. 8) under the rubric "On the Situation in Hungary" (O polozhenii v Vengrii). Point 1 (from 30 October) covers the Soviet declaration on ties with socialist countries, whereas Point 6 (from 31 October) covers the decision to invade. The relevant extracts from Protocol No. 49 are now stored in APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, Ll. 25-30 and APRF, F. 3, Op. 64, D. 484, L. 41, respectively.

3 Presumably, the reference here is to three documents: one that arrived on the morning of 30 October, and two that arrived late at night on 29 October. The item that arrived on the morning of 30 October was a secure, high-frequency telephone message from Mikoyan and Suslov, which gave a bleak portrayal of the latest events.

See "TsK KPSS," 30 October 1956 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F.89, Op.45, D.12, Ll.1-3. Of the two documents that arrived late at night on the 29th, one was a ciphered telegram from Mikoyan and Suslov reporting that they had attended a session of the HWP Presidium earlier that evening. They also commented on the takeover of the Szabad Nep building by a group of unarmed students and writers. Mikoyan and Suslov asserted that the Hungarian "comrades have failed to win over the masses," and that "the anti-Communist elements are behaving impudently." In addition, they expressed concern about what would happen to former agents of the Hungarian State Security (AVH) forces in the wake of Nagy's decision to disband the AVH. See "Shifrtelogramma: TsK KPSS," 29 October 1956 (Strictly Secret- Urgent), from A. Mikoyan and M. Suslov, in AVPRF, F.059a, Op.4, P.6, D.5, Ll.13-14. The other document that arrived late on the 29th was a situation report from Ivan Serov, dated 29 October, which Mikoyan and Suslov ordered to be transmitted to Moscow via secure telephone. Serov's report gave an updated overview of the insurgency and expressed deep concern about the likely repercussions from the dissolution of the AVH. See "Telefonogramma," 29 October 1956, from A. Mikoyan and M. Suslov, relaying I. Serov's memorandum, in APRF, F.3, Op.64, D.484, Ll.158-161.

4 British military transport aircraft were flying into the Vienna airport with supplies of humanitarian aid, which were then being conveyed to Budapest. It is unclear whether Zhukov knew why these planes were concentrated there. It is possible that he believed the aircraft were ferrying in military supplies or were preparing for a military operation.

5 As commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact, Marshal Ivan Konev assumed direct command of Soviet military operations in Hungary in November 1956. In a telephone message on the morning of 30 October (see Note 78 supra), Mikoyan and Suslov had urged that Konev be dispatched to Hungary "immediately" as a precautionary step. One of Konev's top aides during the invasion was General Mikhail Malinin, a first deputy chief of the Soviet General Staff, who commanded Soviet troops during the initial intervention on 23 October. As indicated in the previous line, Soviet leaders frequently consulted Malinin in the leadup to the invasion.

6 The "Chinese comrades" with whom Khrushchev had discussions were the members of the delegation headed by Liu Shaoqi (see Note 25 supra). Liu Shaoqi was in direct touch with Mao Zedong several times during the delegation's stay in Moscow, and thus he was able to keep Khrushchev apprised of the Chinese leader's views of the situation in Poland and Hungary.

7 Rokossowski had been removed from the Polish Politburo on 19 October. On 13 November he was replaced as Polish national defense minister by a Polish officer, Marshal Marian Spychalski. Rokossowski was then recalled to the Soviet Union, where he was appointed a deputy defense minister. Evidently, Khrushchev had spoken with Gomulka by phone that morning.

8 The five principles of Pancha Shila-(1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, (2) non-aggression, (3) non-interference in internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful coexistence-were endorsed in a joint statement by Chinese prime minister Zhou Enlai and Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi on 28 June 1954. The principles were intended to "guide relations between the two countries" as well as "relations with other countries in Asia and in other parts of the world." For the full text of the statement, see G. V. Ambekar and V. D. Divekar, eds., Documents on China's Relations with South and South-East Asia (1949- 1962) (New York: Allied Publishers, 1964), pp. 7-8.

9 Zhukov is referring here to the Political Consultative Committee (PKK) of the recently-created Warsaw Treaty Organization. The PKK convened only seven times between 1955 and 1966, despite its statutory requirement to meet at least twice a

year.

10 During major international crises in the post- Stalin period, the Soviet Presidium/Politburo occasionally would convene a Central Committee plenum to give the CC members a sense of involvement in decision-making and to ensure that the leadership's policies would be firmly obeyed at lower levels.

11 Saburov is referring here to Furtseva's suggestion that a CPSU CC plenum be convened for informational purposes.

12 This presumably refers to Soviet property transferred to Romania during World War II, rather than to Romania's war reparations, which by 1956 were no longer of great magnitude.

13 Khrushchev is referring here to the six-member HWP Presidium. The only holdout was Nagy.

14 The State Security Department (Allam-Vedelmi Osztaly, or AVO), which was reorganized in 1949 and renamed the State Security Authority (Allam- Vedelmi Hatóság, or AVH), was reincorporated into the Hungarian Internal Affairs Ministry in the autumn of 1953. Formally, the agency was given back its old name of AVO, but it was still almost always known as the AVH. One of the earliest and most vigorous demands of the protesters in October 1956 was for the dissolution of the AVH. On 28 October, Nagy promised to fulfill this demand, and the Hungarian government approved the dissolution of the state security organs the following day. Because the AVH had been instrumental in carrying out repression and terror in the late 1940s and 1950s, some state security agents became the targets of lynchings and other violent reprisals during the 1956 uprising. Hungarian state security officers would have joined up with Soviet troops mainly to seek protection, not to assist in counterinsurgency operations. On this matter, see the documents transmitted by Suslov and Mikoyan on 29 October, cited in Note 78 supra.

15 It is interesting that, when referring to Soviet troops deployed in Eastern Europe, Khrushchev does not mention the Soviet troops in East Germany, implying that they were not necessarily there "with the consent of the [East German] government and in the interests of the [East German] government and people."

16 The final Declaration noted that "Soviet units are in the Hungarian and Romanian republics in accordance with the Warsaw Treaty and governmental agreements. Soviet military units are in the Polish republic on the basis of the Potsdam four-power agreement and the Warsaw Treaty." The Declaration then claimed that "Soviet military units are not in the other people's democracies," omitting any mention of the hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops in East Germany.

17 Khrushchev presumably is referring here to both the military advisers and the state security (KGB) advisers.

18 When this editing was completed, the Presidium formally adopted Resolution No. P49/1 ("Vypiska iz protokola No. 49 zasedaniya Prezidiuma TsK ot 30 oktyabrya 1956 g.: O polozhenii v Vengrii," 30 October 1956, in APRF, F.3, Op. 64, D.484, Ll. 25-30) stating that it would "approve the text, with changes made at the CPSU CC Presidium session, of a Declaration by the Government of the USSR on the foundations of development and the further strengthening of friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries." The resolution ordered that the "text of the Declaration be broadcast on radio on 30 October and published in the press on 31 October 1956." For the published text, see "Deklaratsiya o printsipakh razvitiya i dal'neishem ukreplenii druzhby i sotrudnichestva mezhdru SSSR i drugimi

sotsialisticheskimi stranami," Pravda (Moscow), 31 October 1956, p. 1.

19 It is unclear precisely when the Chinese changed their position from non-interventionist to pro-intervention. The statement recorded here, if correctly transcribed, would suggest that the change occurred before the final Soviet decision on 31 October, but almost all other evidence (including subsequent Presidium meetings recorded by Malin) suggests that it came after, not before, the Soviet decision. In any case, if the change did occur before, it did not have any discernible effect on the Soviet decision at this meeting to eschew intervention.

20 Molotov is referring here to major developments in Hungary. On 30 October, at 2:30 p.m. Budapest time, Nagy announced the formal restoration of a multi-party state and the establishment of an "inner cabinet" of the national government. The new cabinet consisted of Nagy, Zoltan Tildy, Bela Kovacs, Ferenc Erdei, Janos Kadar, Geza Losonczy, and Anna Kethly (from the Social Democratic Party). That same day, a "revolutionary national defense council" of the Hungarian armed forces was set up, which supported the demands of "the revolutionary councils of the working youth and intellectuals," and called for the "immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest and their withdrawal from the entire territory of Hungary within the shortest possible time." The new Council also promised to disarm all agents from Hungary's disbanded state security forces (AVH), who had been notorious agents of repression during the Stalin era. A Revolutionary Armed Forces Committee also was formed on 31 October, and it was empowered by the government to create a new army.

21 These are five of the seven members of Nagy's new "inner cabinet." Anna Kethly's name is not listed here because she had not yet been appointed. (Nagy mentioned in his speech on 30 October that "a person to be nominated by the Social Democratic Party" would be in the inner cabinet, and Kethly later turned out to be that person.) It is unclear why Malin did not list Ferenc Erdei's name here.