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**Hungarian Foreign Ministry report on the
consultation regarding the establishment of a
working relationship between the Warsaw Treaty
Organization and the Arab League in Prague 27-28
April 1987**

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Summary:

This report issued by the Hungarian Foreign Ministry describes the discussion of relations between the Warsaw Pact countries and the Arab League, which were determined to be unprecedented in Warsaw Pact history and require further consideration.

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R e p o r t

on the consultation regarding the establishment of a working relationship between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Arab League
(Prague, 27-28 April 1987)

On the basis of the minutes (point 13) of the session held by the Foreign Ministers' Committee of the WTO on 25 March 1987 the heads of departments of the foreign ministries of the member states competent in Middle Eastern matters held a workshop in Prague on establishing permanent dialog between the WTO and the Arab League and on its form and content.

Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Hungary sent head of departments, while the Soviet Union and the GDR sent deputy heads of departments to the meeting. The host country - which treated the meeting as a consultation forum for experts - did not initiate the elaboration of a document or a communiqué.

[....]

This is unprecedented in the practice of the WTO. If we do this in connection with the Arab League, it can easily extend to other regions as well in the future. He did not agree with the Czechoslovakian proposal according to which the dialog would lead to creating new bodies within the WTO. He also said that the planned dialog with the Arab League would hurt other national interests of Romania and, for example, its relations with the Israeli State.

III.

The workshop held in Prague suggested that it would be effective to make the Middle Eastern consultations a regular exchange of ideas which would facilitate the coordination of the foreign policy of the member states. The host party summarized the results of the workshop as follows:

- The proposals submitted during the meeting should be further studied.
- We should continue exchanging documents between the Arab League and the WTO. We should stress the need for mutual agreement on this.
- We should initiate consultations between the European socialist countries and the member states of the Arab League prior to the UN sessions.
- The issue related to the authority of the WTO should be treated separately by experts. The topic could be readdressed at the Prague session of the Committee of Foreign Ministers.

- The Czechoslovakian foreign minister intends to present a Czechoslovakian opinion to the Secretary-General of the Arab League upon his upcoming visit to Czechoslovakia claiming that multilateral relations as well as bilateral relations should be improved with the Arab League.

IV.

During the unofficial talks the heads of the delegations informed one another of the timely issues related to the Middle East, the most important events that were to take place in bilateral relations and high-level visits. Almost all the speakers made mention of the increasing difficulties in economic cooperation with the Middle Eastern countries and the decline in trade. The Czechoslovakian party suggested that the solutions should be sought after within the Comecon in order to counterbalance the difficulties.

V.

Because of the Romanian attitude it was not possible to create a unified approach to the permanent dialog with the Arab League at the workshop. The Czechoslovakian idea to create permanent bodies for the dialog also proved unrealistic.

The participants of the meeting emphasized the importance of the bilateral and multilateral approach and their complementary nature.

The exchange of ideas on issues that affect the Middle East also proved to be useful. The Bulgarian party proposed that the next meeting of experts should be held in the fall of this year in the Bulgarian People's Republic.

The Hungarian party explained the previously approved position (attached here). When summarizing the experiences, the Czechoslovakian party attached particular importance to the following comments that we made:

- Until direct contact is established with the Arab League, the WTO member States should broaden cooperation with the specialized (economic and cultural organizations, agencies responsible for providing information, etc.) of the Arab League.

- The organizational and other issues regarding the relations between the WTO and the Arab League should not burden the Committee of the Foreign Ministers; these issues should be addressed by experts for the time being.

- Continuous dialog and the institutions required for it will incur extra costs. We need to prepare for it with due care because the Hungarian party cannot take extra burdens.

Comment: The Czechoslovakian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the WTO member states separately about on the discussion between the Czechoslovakian foreign minister and the Arab League. This information will also deal with how Secretary-General Klibi responded to Comrade Chnoupek's initiative. Next, the 9th Regional Department will submit a proposal on our approach in the future and the things we need to do.

Budapest, 30 April 30 1987.

[illegible signature]