

March 2, 1977

**Clarifying the Position of the USSR and Guidelines
for the Resumption of Preparatory Work for the
Belgrade [CSCE] Conference**

Citation:

"Clarifying the Position of the USSR and Guidelines for the Resumption of Preparatory Work for the Belgrade [CSCE] Conference", March 2, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Diplomatic Archive; Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Opis 29p.; arhivna edinitsa [archival unit] 186; pp. 40-43 <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121202>

Summary:

This report explains the position of the Soviet Union on the realization of the Final Act of the Pan-European Summit by outlining remarks from a speech by L.I. Brezhnev in preparation for the CSCE follow-up conference at Belgrade. Points of consideration include the understanding that this is a long-term program for strengthening peace, security, and cooperation in Europe; Belgrade should not turn into a "bureau for complaints;" Belgrade should not be unjustifiably drawn out; and that the Belgrade meeting cannot alter decisions of the Final Act.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Clarifying the position of the USSR and guidelines for the resumption of preparatory work for the Belgrade [CSCE] conference

The work on clarifying our fundamental position on questions of realization of the Final Act of the Pan-European Summit and preparation for the meeting in Belgrade should continue actively. In that respect, it is necessary to be guided by the speech of L.I. Brezhnev from the October 1976 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union delivered on the solemn meeting in Tule on 18 January 1977, and also by the Declaration of the Warsaw Pact members on 6 November 1976.

1. As the main, central concept, one ought to single the opening remarks of Comrade Brezhnev, which contained the assessment on the decision of the Pan-European Summit as a long-term program for countries' activities, directed towards strengthening peace, security and cooperation in Europe. One should emphasize that the transformation of this program in reality is not a one-time achievement, but a long and an uninterrupted process. Some of the instances of this program have been realized, others are in the process of transformation, some are just being worked out. The implementation of the Final Act depends mainly on the level of disarmament and on the status of the political relations among countries.

Concerning the intensifying propaganda campaigns on the part of some western countries against socialist countries as we near the Belgrade meeting, it is to be stressed that activities of the kind, accompanied with attempts to promote deliberately distorted representations of the positions and the actual content of the Helsinki accord, are found to be in clear breach with the letter and intent of the accord; we decisively reject all attempts for meddling with our internal affairs. Socialist countries are not looking for confrontation in Belgrade; they stand for positive results at the end of the meeting, and for a favorable atmosphere at the meeting - an atmosphere of cooperation and a release of tension.

2. The main focus in sight now should be that among participants at the Belgrade meeting a common political concept for the carrying out the meeting consolidates strongly, mainly a concept of mutual understanding with the intent that the meeting should bear a constructive nature, should be addressed above all to the future, should not turn into a "bureau for complaints," and should serve the goals of continued disarmament.

At the meeting, there could be no speeches on "reporting" [otchetnosti] or "accountability" [podotchetnosti] on the part of the participating countries concerning the realization of the positions of the Final Act.

3. Representatives of western countries nowadays more and more often raise various organizational questions, related to the meeting in Belgrade: in what order it should be carried out, how long it could last, should any committees be created in the course of the meeting, in what form it should be led as a whole, and so on.

In relation to that, it should be emphasized during discussions that questions of this kind are tangential in terms of the main political concept of the Belgrade meeting.

Following mainly from this notion of the Belgrade meeting, the organizational procedural aspects of the conference course are being thought through in Moscow. In particular, we consider that the meeting should not be unjustifiably drawn out. As it is known, the Final Act stipulates that at the preliminary meeting the duration of the main meeting should be established - not only its opening date, but its closing date as well.

4. The Belgrade meeting is not a second Pan-European Summit, but a conference with a consultative character. The meeting does not have, and cannot have the authority to make decisions that alter or "retouch" the Final Act, signed by the highest political leaders of the participating countries.

It is obvious that, at the meeting, some practical agreements on matters, in principle already decided in the Final Act, could be finalized; for example, the planned duration of the meeting of experts on issues of peaceful mediation of disputes; coordinated recommendations on such concrete questions should be reported by the participants at the meeting to their respective governments.

We have considered the consultative character of the meeting in determining our level of participation in it. Our delegation will be lead on the level of members of the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Kolegii MID].

5. In the course of the discussion the question may arise whether the Soviet side considers bringing up to the attention of the participants at the Belgrade meeting the decision of the Final Act for no-first-use of nuclear weapons - popular among members of the Warsaw Pact. In answer to that question, consider that in our perspective, this important proposal needs special discussion. As such, the proposition itself represents a major peacekeeping initiative on the part of the Soviet countries, and stands on the agenda for international cooperation, as being in the spirit of disarmament. In this context, it undoubtedly concerns all participants in the forthcoming meeting in Belgrade.

6. It is to be noted, that the Belgrade meeting may facilitate the formation of an agreement among countries participating in the Pan-European Summit concerning the role and place of the suggested by the Soviet Union "congresses" on environmental preservation, transportation, and energy in the broader sense of country-to-country economic cooperation in Europe on the basis of the Final Act. Those questions fascinate many countries, and relate immediately to the lives of millions of people. Obviously, accomplishing this proposal, the results of its further examination on the 32nd session of the European Economic Commission of the UN (in April 1977) will be considered. At the same time, it is to be noted that the "congresses" are considered individual international forums that necessitate the participation of experts with specialized knowledge for their preparation and for carrying them out. The final decision on these congresses should be made on the governmental level.

7. Following the meeting in Belgrade, the Final Act stipulates the execution of another meeting of the same kind for the continuation of the work at the Pan-European level. In the event that the given situation raises questions that concern the duration, the character, and the frequency of such meetings, consider that the respective practical decisions would in considerable degree depend on the note on which the Belgrade conference as whole ends.