

STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES OF MEETING BETWEEN SED CC GENERAL SECRETARY AND CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COUNCIL, ERICH HONECKER, AND OTHER MEMBERS AND CANDIDATES OF THE POLITBURO AND THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CC CPSU AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR, LEONID ILYICH BREZHNEV, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND PARTY DELEGATION ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1979, IN THE RESIDENCE OF THE STATE COUNCIL

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[...]

BREZHNEV: [...]

You have recently informed us about the desire of Chancellor Schmidt to meet with you. We agree with you that it would not be good to avoid such a meeting although the preparations will probably take a certain amount of time. The meeting, of course, would in itself constitute a certain support for Schmidt and the government coalition on the eve of the federal elections. It therefore seems to us to be necessary to utilize such a meeting, possibly even the preparations for such a meeting, in order to influence the chancellor's position in a direction we deem necessary, among other things with regard to the question of plans for the stationing of American medium-range missiles in Europe.

If you wish to consult with us, Comrade Honecker, about the questions relating to this meeting, we are willing to do so.

[...]

Of increasing importance to us is the question relating to the plans to station new American medium-range missiles in Western Europe. It seems that the FRG Government and Federal Chancellor Schmidt personally do not play the smallest role in the preparation of these plans. They are also inducing other NATO countries, especially Holland and Belgium, to station new American missiles on their territories. It is planned to take corresponding decisions at the NATO meeting in December.

In different ways, among others through our contacts with the leadership of the FRG, we are making efforts to actively move against the implementation of the plans. It is important that there is a common front of all Socialist countries in this question.

One has to realize in the FRG and in all of Western Europe that Washington and Bonn have begun a dangerous game, that the implementation of the plans would be a severe blow against détente, which would result in political and strategic measures on the part of the Socialist countries, ultimately also in a growing risk for the Federal Republic itself.

I think that such pressure, supplemented by constructive steps of the Socialist countries in the field of military détente, will achieve some results.

With regard to the constructive measures, after we have researched the problem and consulted with you and the leadership of other allied nations, we intend to do the following: We will declare that we are ready to limit the number of medium-range missiles in the European part of the USSR, if the USA and NATO completely give up their plan of stationing American missiles in Western Europe.

We declare that as a gesture of goodwill the USSR will concede certain arms and force reductions on the territory of the GDR and that it will call upon the Western countries to follow the example of the Soviet Union. I intend to give our view on this question and others at my appearance at the festivities [30th anniversary of the establishment of the GDR] here in Berlin.

I would like to emphasize that such steps will not lead to a weakening of the defense capabilities of our armed forces, among them the troops stationed on GDR territory. You can be sure of that.

Now something on the situation with regard to the ratification of the SALT II Treaty in the USA: It is our impression that until recently those who supported the ratification of this treaty had the upper hand. Now the situation has become more complicated. The hysterical clamor in the United States - in which the Carter administration directly participated - over the stationing of a Soviet brigade in Cuba has become a serious impediment. We as well as the Cubans have taken a firm position against the American blackmail. We have vigorously opposed all attempts on the part of the Americans to coerce concessions or to intervene in our relations with Cuba. Carter was left with nothing else but to retreat. In the defensive, he now attempts to demonstrate strength, especially in the Caribbean region.

But there is still another inconvenient side effect in this question. The situation with regard to the ratification of the SALT-II-Treaty, in which Carter should be interested, has now become a bit worse. Disconcerting is also the open tendency in Washington, regardless of SALT-II, to build up vigorously their own armaments as well as the NATO arsenals as a whole.

Probably our common task will be - so that we will now and even more so after the coming into force of SALT-II-Treaty stand in a broad front - to pursue a vigorous fight against this tendency whereby we have to make use of all means of political, diplomatic and public influence.

In its policy against the Soviet Union and the entire Socialist community, Washington is increasingly actively playing its Chinese card. The American-Chinese rapprochement, one can state, has taken on a demonstrative character. Such a line on the part of the Americans de facto encourages Peking to new adventures in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Here we must especially watch out.

Now the Soviet-Chinese negotiations over the normalization of relations are starting in Moscow. The first meetings were devoted to organizational questions. Therefore it is difficult

to state with some certainty, what the Chinese have brought to the conference table. Our delegation has clear instructions. They are to try to give the negotiations a substantive character. But we do not have any illusions. We are facing a difficult, hard political fight. We will attempt to normalize our relations at least to some degree. It is now hard to tell if it will be possible. Beijing's policy is today still deeply hostile towards peace and socialism.

Now briefly on the situation in Iran and Afghanistan. - Tendencies of a not particularly positive character have lately surfaced in Iran. The Islamic leaders have begun to persecute the progressive forces. They ruthlessly suppress the activities of national minorities. In addition, they try to blame us for the instigation of the activities.

Our initiatives with regard to the development of good neighborly relations with Iran are currently not gaining any practical results in Tehran. We know all that.

But we also understand something else: The Iranian Revolution has undercut the military alliance between Iran and the USA. With respect to a number of international problems, particularly with respect to the Middle East, Iran is now taking anti-imperialist positions. The imperialism tries to regain its influence in the region. We are trying to counter these efforts. We are patiently working with the current Iranian leadership and moving them to develop cooperation on an equal and mutually beneficial basis.

We have recently briefed you on the latest events in Afghanistan. Supplementing this, I would like to say the following: We have given Afghanistan more than a little economic support. We have sent our advisers there, civilian as well as military, and have supplied them with significant amounts of weapons and military equipment.

The situation in the country has improved. In some provinces, however, military encounters continue with the hordes of rebels who receive direct and indirect support from Pakistan and direct support from Iran, from the USA and from China. In addition, there are tensions within the Afghani leadership. Our efforts were directed to contribute to the unity of the Afghani leadership and not allow for divisions to happen. But Amin has taken advantage of Taraki's indecisiveness and, as you know, eliminated him; he has achieved the leadership. Amin did this even though he was held as Taraki's friend. You know that Taraki had a stopover in Moscow on his way from Havana where the Conference of the Non-Alignment Movement took place. I met him and advised him to take measures to stabilize the situation in his country and among other things begin with the work on a constitution and to keep up revolutionary lawfulness etc. We now see that Amin is implementing what I told Taraki.

Frankly, we are not pleased by all of Amin's methods and actions. He is very power-driven. In the past he repeatedly revealed disproportionate harshness. But with regard to his basic political platform, he has decidedly confirmed to the course of further development of the Revolution, of furthering cooperation with the Soviet Union and other countries of the Socialist community.

It is a fact that many of Amin's followers and partisans are honorable people who are faithful to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and take a good attitude towards us.

By taking into consideration the actual situation, we will continue to support Afghanistan and give it a variety of support and help it in its fight against foreign aggression and the domestic counterrevolution.

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[Source: Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv"(Berlin), DY30 JIV 2/201/1342; document obtained and transl. by Christian F. Ostermann (The National Security Archive)]