

**DOCUMENT NO. 49: Working Notes from the Session of the
CPSU CC Presidium on
October 30, 1956 (Re: Point 1 of Protocol No. 49)**

On the morning of October 30, Nikita Khrushchev began another round of negotiations on relations within the socialist camp with a visiting top-level Chinese delegation. The Chinese favored greater equality among the socialist countries, particularly between the USSR and China. While these talks went on, the other members of the CPSU CC Presidium met to review Mikoyan and Suslov's latest report from Budapest, which essentially called for preparations for a military intervention. Impressed by the Mikoyan-Suslov report, the Presidium members in attendance immediately decided to send Marshal Ivan Konev to Budapest. At this point, Khrushchev joined the meeting. Ever worried about the consequences of a brutal military solution and reinforced in his views by a Chinese declaration favoring a pull-out and intra-bloc equality, he engineered a reversal of the hard-line course the Kremlin had adopted two days earlier. The Presidium thus approved a remarkable document entitled "Declaration by the Government of the USSR on the Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation Between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States," which opens up the possibility of a Soviet troop withdrawal from Hungary as well as other East European satellites (see Document No. 50). The Presidium also considered issuing an appeal to the Hungarian people supporting the Nagy/Kádár government, which the Soviet leadership hoped would be able and willing to consolidate the situation in Hungary on the basis of socialism. Eventually, however, no such declaration was issued. Instead a paragraph dealing with the events in Hungary and containing an appeal to the Hungarians was incorporated into the Soviet government's declaration. Faced with a choice between, in Khrushchev's words, "a military path—one of occupation" and "a peaceful path—the withdrawal of troops [and] negotiations," the "liberal wing" within the Presidium temporarily held sway.

Participants: 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.²⁰⁹

Cde. Zhukov provides information about the concentration of mil.-transport aircraft in the Vienna region.²¹⁰

Nagy is playing a double game (in Malinin's opinion).²¹¹

Cde. Konev is to be sent to Budapest.

*On Discussions with the Chinese comrades.*²¹²

(Khrushchev)

²⁰⁹ The whereabouts and content of Serov's report is unknown. For Mikoyan and Suslov's report, see Document 47.

²¹⁰ The transport aircraft in question were most likely those carrying humanitarian aid to Vienna, from where it was transported to Hungary.

²¹¹ Malinin sent regular reports to Marshall Sokolovskii, the Soviet chief of staff, on the Hungarian situation. These reports have not yet been opened for research.

²¹² From October 23–31, a high-level PRC delegation headed by Chinese Communist Party Deputy Chairman Liu Shaoqi was in Moscow for talks with Soviet leaders. While there, they were consulted by the Kremlin on both the Polish and Hungarian crises, and communicated regularly with Mao Zedong in Beijing.

We should adopt a declaration today on the withdrawal of troops from the countries of people's democracy²¹³ (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.²¹⁴

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.

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.²¹⁵

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.

²¹³ See Document 50.

²¹⁴ By 1956, under the terms of the Warsaw Treaty, Soviet troops were stationed in Poland, Romania, and Hungary. Although the German Democratic Republic was also a Warsaw Pact member, the Soviet military presence there was based on the Potsdam agreement on four-power occupation of Germany after World War II.

²¹⁵ *Pancha Shila*, the five principles of peaceful coexistence, were first formulated in a Sino-Indian agreement signed by Zhou Enlai and Jawaharlal Nehru in 1954 in the context of defining trade and other relations between India and Tibet. The principles of Pancha Shila became a fundamental part of the joint statement of Bandung in 1955. See also footnotes 152 and 163 in Part One.

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.

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).

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.

With regard to Romania—they owe us 5 billion rubles for property created by the people.²¹⁶

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*.²¹⁷

Kádár is behaving well.

5 of the 6 are firmly hanging in there.²¹⁸

A struggle is going on inside the [HWP] Presidium about the withdrawal of troops.

²¹⁶ Presumably this refers to the compensation Romania had to pay for the property confiscated from Soviet territory during World War II.

²¹⁷ No written record is available.

²¹⁸ The five HWP Presidium members are Kádár, Apró, Károly Kiss, Münnich and Szántó. Nagy is clearly the sixth.

The minister of defense will issue a directive about the suppression of insurgents in the cinema, using the armed forces.²¹⁹ (Malinin, apparently, became nervous and left the session.)²²⁰

Officers from the state security (Hungarian) are with our troops.

*Consideration of the Draft Declaration*²²¹
(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.

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 Kádár.²²²

Cde. Kaganovich, Cde. Molotov, Cde. Zhukov: We should mention the Potsdam agreement and the treaties with every country.

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.²²³
(*Cde. Khrushchev*)

We are turning to the member-states of the Warsaw Pact to consider the question of our advisers. We are ready to withdraw them.

²¹⁹ This sentence is presumably based on earlier information, since according to what is now known, there was no plan by the Hungarian forces to launch an attack on the Corvin passage after the cease-fire agreement on October 28. It is also possible that this represents a partial misunderstanding and the reference is to relief operations that were planned to end the siege of the party center at Köztársaság Square.

²²⁰ This most likely refers to the HWP CC session mentioned in Mikoyan and Suslov's October 30 report. See Document No. 47.

²²¹ This document has not yet been found. For the final declaration, see Document No. 50.

²²² This expression of support was eventually omitted from the final document, as was the explicit reference to Kádár and Nagy.

²²³ This reference was also omitted from the final text.

Further editing.

Transmitted via high frequency to Cdes. Mikoyan and Suslov.

Information from Cde. Yudin²²⁴ 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.

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. 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.

Kádár—a state minister.

Tildy Zoltán—

Kovács Béla—

Losonczy—a Communist and a supporter of Nagy²²⁵

[Source: TsKhSD, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 1006, Ll. 6–14, compiled by V. N. Malin. Originally published in English in the Cold War International History Project Bulletin no. 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997): 392–393. Translated by Mark Kramer.]

²²⁴ Pavel F. Yudin was Soviet ambassador to China from 1953–1959.

²²⁵ This note appears on the back side of the previous page. Apparently, this was the moment when news of the formation of Nagy's inner cabinet reached the meeting. However, the name of Ferenc Erdei, representing the National Peasant Party is missing from the list. It is also not mentioned that one seat was reserved for the Social Democratic Party.