

N A T O C O N F I D E N T I A L

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MEMORANDUM

To: Political Committee

From: Chairman

EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN
ENVIRONMENT

Attached at Annex is a contribution which has been jointly drafted by the Scientific and Political Affairs Divisions of the International Staff.

2. This draft could be discussed at the next meeting of the Political Committee on 21st September, 1971.

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N A T O C O N F I D E N T I A L

EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

1. The problem of the human environment occupies a rather special place among the range of issues that could possibly be tackled under an expansion of East-West co-operation. By their very nature, environmental questions call for solutions which transcend national frontiers. Furthermore, as these nuisances directly affect the everyday lives of people in the East and West, the political implications are less pronounced than in the other possible fields for negotiation. Most important of all, the East European countries have, on several occasions, expressed interest in taking concerted action with the West to protect the environment. The Soviet leaders did so at the 24th Party Congress and again in subsequent statements. The recent ECE Symposium in Prague also provided an opportunity for the Eastern countries to demonstrate their interest and express their views on this problem.

2. It may therefore be assumed that common ground will be more easily found early on in discussions with the East in this field than in the case of more politically sensitive issues. It will probably be easier to identify the concrete benefits likely to stem from East-West co-operation.

The special nature of environmental questions is also the reason for the fact that the considerations outlined below do not follow exactly the same pattern as that adopted in the other sections of the report.

Allied point of view

3. In any discussions with the East, it will be necessary to highlight the active rôle played by the CCMS in the study and careful preparation of a large number of environmental questions. There is much to be gained from emphasising in this way the painstaking preparatory work which has been carried out over the last few months, not only within the Alliance, but also by the national authorities. This is a good way of making the point that in this field, as in others, the Allied countries are not in the habit of putting forward proposals unless they have been thoroughly mooted, unlike the Eastern countries which do not hesitate to throw out suggestions which are not backed up by comparable preparatory work.

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4. Within the general context of East-West negotiations, environmental questions provide the Allied countries with an opportunity of furnishing additional proof of their goodwill and their desire for fruitful co-operation, from which in actual fact the Eastern countries will derive most benefit. The negotiating position of the Alliance is bound to capture the imagination of the public, which is fully conscious of the need to protect the environment.

5. In framing Western proposals, it will also be necessary to take account of the Eastern viewpoints which are summarised below.

Point of view of the Eastern countries

6. General considerations

- (a) The fields of the environment on which the East places the greatest emphasis are the problem of pollution and the preservation of natural resources.
- (b) It will be noted that, in contrast to Western proposals, Eastern statements on this matter remain vague and undefined and have not been the subject of careful preparation. It would appear, therefore, that research and action programmes in the East are far less advanced than in the West.
- (c) It is clear that the East would favour a regional approach rather than the so-called global approach. For example, Mr. Kosygin confined his proposals to the European region.
- (d) It is also noteworthy that Soviet leaders do not draw a clear distinction between environmental co-operation and purely economic projects, such as the development of power, transport and communications(1).
- (e) The high cost of corrective measures against pollution seems to be of major concern to the East. Presumably for this reason, the ECE Prague Communiqué favours a preventive rather than a remedial policy.

(1) Kosygin's remarks at the 24th CPSU Congress are also illustrative of this point. He stressed that the holding of a CES "could create conditions for solving such problems as the organization of transcontinental carriages, the building of large power transmission lines and establishment on this basis of a single European power grid, leading up to cardinal advances towards solving the problem of the fuel-and-power balance".

- (f) Another matter of concern to the East seems to be the impact of environmental policies on foreign trade. The Prague Communiqué stressed specifically that environmental measures should not interfere with international trade.

Procedure proposed by the East

7. At the Prague Symposium on environmental problems, the participating nations put forward several proposals concerning the possible forms of international co-operation:

- (a) Co-operation could be realized on a bilateral basis directly between Eastern and Western countries through:
- exchange of information;
 - consultations (if conflicts of interests arose between nations);
 - agreements between neighbouring countries (when an environmental problem goes beyond national borders; in this case, practical measures would be particularly desirable; in fact, they would be indispensable);
 - development of a system of generally accepted principles in the social and economic fields;
- (b) Co-operation could also be pursued on a multilateral basis within the framework of the ECE:
- the senior environmental advisers of governments of ECE countries might undertake sector studies on ways and means of diminishing pollution and begin some inter-disciplinary studies in that field;
 - the ECE might study the possibilities of creating an information centre on the environment;
 - attention was drawn to the need to create teams for inter-disciplinary research on environmental problems and to provide for close co-operation among the scientists of various countries.

II. POSSIBLE FORMULAS FOR CONCRETE EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION

8. The foregoing suggestions will not be submitted to the East before the start of the preparatory phase of the conference. Some of them are already being acted on, but this will not prevent their inclusion in the Western proposals, which could make it clear that the Allies want to bring forward new ideas and at the same time put existing practices on a systematic footing.

Pilot nation initiatives

9. The pilot nations can probably play a dominant rôle in initiating East-West co-operation since pilot projects are national rather than NATO undertakings. Subject to the usual consultative procedure, Allied countries might agree that the pilot countries co-ordinate and centralise contacts and negotiations with the appropriate Eastern countries along the following lines:

- (i) pilot nations could invite experts from the East European countries to attend their meetings. There are already precedents for this suggestion, as invitations of this kind were extended for the experts' meeting on earthquakes in San Francisco. Furthermore, Italy, as pilot nation, proposes to invite observers from the East to the forthcoming meeting on meteorology in Southern Italy;
- (ii) pilot nations might also associate certain Eastern countries with the implementation of projects for which they are responsible(1).

Possible rôle of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

10. As stated above (paragraph 7(b)), the idea of using the Economic Commission for Europe - to which reference is made in the Communiqué on the Prague Symposium - came from the East. It is worth noting that this is in line with a similar suggestion put forward in our last report(2). It was suggested there that before new machinery for East-West co-operation is introduced, it would be as well to see whether use could be made of existing international organizations, if necessary through the creation of ad hoc committees. Under such an arrangement, the Allied countries, in agreement with the countries of the East, would entrust the ECE with the study of certain specific topics connected with the human environment, in accordance with procedures to be worked out.

Action by the CCMS

11. Reference has already been made (in paragraph 3) to the advantages of highlighting the active rôle of the CCMS. In this connection, there are a number of possible suggestions:

- (i) the CCMS could invite Eastern observers to its meetings. There is no reason why the Council should not agree to the presence of observers from the Eastern countries at any CCMS meetings,

(1) In this connection, specific proposals will be found in Section III of this report.

(2) C-M(71)40(Revised) paragraph 111

since these meetings will be unclassified and take place in a non-secure area. To make the invitations more attractive to the East, not only the CCMS but also other regional organizations involved in environmental matters, such as the Common Market and the OECD, could be encouraged to invite observers from the East;

- (ii) there is another tentative suggestion which, as it has both advantages and disadvantages, will require further study within the Alliance. The CCMS representatives could be authorised to take part in common activities organized by neutral countries, international organizations or even by Eastern countries on environmental matters. For example, the CCMS could have been represented at the Prague Symposium and could attend the Conference on the Environment which is to be held under the auspices of the United Nations in Stockholm in 1972.

III. SUBSTANCE OF A POSSIBLE WESTERN PROPOSAL

12. General principles

As an introduction to the Western proposals, it will be necessary to define the basic principles underlying the desired East-West co-operation. Most of the points to be included in such a definition have already been listed in C-M(71)40(Revised).

13. Choice of issues

It would seem logical to start by giving prominence to issues in which the Eastern countries have already shown interest. Other topics for co-operation which the Allied countries have an interest in tabling could be added later to the initial list.

Areas of co-operation proposed by the East

14. Ocean pollution

(i) Comments by the Eastern countries

Kosygin has expressed interest in this question. Furthermore, in the recently published programme for intra-CIEMA co-operation, one of the aims is to guarantee that the quality and quantity of COMECON water resources - with special reference to the Tisa and Danube basins - are adequate.

(ii) Western proposals

The pilot country - Belgium - might consider whether and, if so, how one or several Eastern countries could participate directly in any of the three present projects:

- establishment of a mathematical model of the North Sea;
- evaluation of technologies for reducing pollution;
- implementation of oil spills elimination policy.

Turkey might consider re-opening the question of the technical participation of Western experts in a Black Sea programme, which is being undertaken by the USSR, Bulgaria and Rumania.

The dumping of toxic and solid wastes in recognized and potential fishing grounds, in shallow areas or in the high seas could also be included.

(iii) Advantages for the West

Such proposals would offer the advantage of building on the already considerable success the CCMS has enjoyed in this field.

15. Public health

(i) Comments by the Eastern countries

International co-operation was called for by the Soviet leaders in two fields - treatment of cardio-vascular and heart diseases and cancer - eradication of the most dangerous and widespread diseases.

(ii) Western proposals

The United States intends to present shortly to the CCMS a pilot project on Health Care Delivery Systems, aimed at improving, through internal co-operation, the technology applied to health. Since the proposed project has not yet been considered by the CCMS, it is difficult to pinpoint any specific areas in which concrete proposals could be made. Tentatively, consideration might be given to shaping the programme so as to facilitate co-operation with the East.

An effort could be made to enquire into the interest shown by Eastern countries before developing a CCMS programme so that the programme can be made compatible more easily.

A link might also be established here with consideration of the methods for educating more efficiently and rapidly medical students or technicians in countries which are academically less developed.

(iii) Advantages for the West

From a technical point of view, it remains to be seen whether the West would derive much gain from such an exchange of information, since at least in some sectors health care seems to be at a much less advanced state in the USSR and Eastern countries than in the West. However, the development of common research in this field could be a sound indication of Western willingness to promote co-operation.

16. Air pollution

(i) Comments by the Eastern countries

The East European countries hold the view that many air pollution problems would benefit from co-operation with present international efforts.

(ii) Western proposals

The suggestions set out in paragraph 58 of C-M(71)40(Revised) could be put forward. It might be added that the European air pollution survey carried out by the OECD could usefully be expanded to include Eastern countries.

Other areas of co-operation of interest to the West

17. Inland water pollution

(i) Advantages for the West

The purpose of the CCMS study directed by Canada is to draw attention to ways in which countries can co-operate in reducing inland water pollution to their mutual benefit. It will develop improved techniques and concepts for fresh water quality management - with special reference to spheres of legal competence.

A number of the large rivers in Europe flow through several countries. Moreover, the dispersion of the effluents has an immediate bearing on the problem of coastal water pollution. This is therefore likely to become a most fruitful field for East-West co-operation.

(ii) Western proposals

Canada, the pilot country, may want to invite Eastern experts to participate in aspects of the study where exchanges of information and know-how may prove mutually beneficial.

Contacts could be established between scientists and experts in inter-state bodies which administer or supervise the utilization of international rivers, such as the Rhine, the Danube or the Elbe.

A link might be created with the pilot study on Environment and Regional Planning. Here, useful exchanges could take place about French experience regarding the setting up of the "Agences de Bassin" and the management of river basins.

18. Highway safety

(i) Advantages for East and West

The Soviet Union and the Eastern Allies are on the verge of developing large-scale car production. Consequently, the volume of traffic, which is still light, is likely to become greater. Any preventive measures that can be taken to reduce the level of casualties to be expected as a result of the increased traffic should be welcomed by the East. Moreover, should new safety laws be adopted in the future, they will undoubtedly have an impact on the development of international trade and, therefore, should also attract interest from the East. Road safety is one of the areas in which CCMS work has progressed fast, and considerable information of great interest has already emerged. Various international agreements have also been concluded, especially as regards the development of an experimental safety vehicle.

(ii) Western proposals

Consideration could be given to the following suggestions contained in paragraph 61 of C-M(71)40(Revised): drunken driving and road safety, accident investigation, experimental safety vehicles, pedestrian safety and emergency medical services.

IV. OTHER POSSIBLE FIELDS FOR EAST-WEST CO-OPERATION

19. Disaster assistance programme

(i) Advantages for East and West

Large-scale natural disasters are increasingly disruptive and costly because of urbanization and economic specialization. Generally, they cannot be avoided, but prevention programmes can be designed to mitigate their effects. Natural disasters do not normally affect several countries at one time, and therefore remain essentially national in character. International scientific co-operation is indispensable for the research and identification of preventive techniques, and is highly desirable for the development of these techniques and the assistance to be provided after a disaster has occurred. Eastern countries are also facing increasingly rapid urbanization and economic specialization; this entails correspondingly greater risks from natural disasters and makes it all the more necessary to prevent them or mitigate their effects.

(ii) Western proposals

A first step was the invitation recently extended by the United States, pilot country, to several Eastern governments to participate in an earthquake meeting held in San Francisco under the aegis of the CCMS. Although, generally speaking, the preventive or mitigating aspects of environmental challenges should be considered first, the question of how to deal with natural disasters may be an exception, and the rehabilitation of the people's living conditions, housing, public facilities or land reconstitution would probably take precedence.

20. Urban problems

(i) Advantages for East and West

Urban problems do not seem to be of major concern in Eastern countries where adequate housing is still scarcer than in the West. However, the East may be willing to take stock of Western investigations into ways and means of improving and renovating the urban environment and of countering pollution by preventive rather than remedial methods.

(ii) Western proposals

Inasmuch as the results of the pilot projects which may emerge from the Indianapolis Conference are not shaped up, it is difficult to pinpoint a specific course of action as yet. However, it may be recalled that the French project on Environment and Regional Planning specifically aims at developing techniques to prevent pollution as from the inception of a new town. Such projects, therefore, could serve as a basis for co-operation with the East.