

State and National

Conference documents omit Gorbachev's proposals

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — The Communist Party conference directed formation of a system of stronger government and individual rights, but Mikhail Gorbachev's proposal for a powerful new presidency was conspicuously absent from documents released Tuesday.

Resolutions of the four-day conference that ended Friday made no mention of the powers Gorbachev sought for the presidency and gave a lukewarm endorsement to his proposal to make local party leaders head of their areas' legislative bodies.

The proposed changes could have given Gorbachev significant new powers as president while he retained

the job of party general secretary, which now is the single most influential position in the Soviet Union's system of collective party leadership.

A high-ranking party official said after the close of the conference that Gorbachev had won approval for a presidency with powers to control domestic, international and defense policies.

But the resolution on that issue wasn't published until after the ruling 132-man Politburo met Monday in special session to review the conference's work. A knowledgeable Soviet source, when asked privately what had delayed publication of the resolution, would say only, "Editing."

One Western diplomatic source in Moscow, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the absence of a stronger reference to the presidency was surprising, but that it was too early to say Gorbachev had lost a political battle on the question.

The documents also made the following directives:

■ A Constitutional Supervision Committee will be formed to make sure laws and government decisions are legal. Police work is to be improved, and the national Interior Ministry will take over many police investigations. Defense lawyers are to get involved earlier in criminal cases.

■ Members of the policy-making Central Committee should become more active in the work of the Politburo. Commissions with Central Committee membership should be formed to deal with foreign and domestic policy issues.

■ Party and government elected officials should be limited to two 5-year terms, and there should be more than one candidate for party and government elected positions.

The documents, released by the Tass news agency, backed Gorbachev's call to take the party out of day-to-day administration of the economy and government and reduce party bureaucracy.

They supported Gorbachev's call

for a new legislative body, the 2,250-member Congress of People's Deputies, that would select a smaller standing legislature, the Supreme Soviet. It also would "elect by secret ballot the president of the Supreme Soviet."

That was the only reference to the presidency in the 15-page resolution on political reform, one of six released by Tass on Tuesday. A seventh, setting a timetable for reform, was released Saturday.

In his speech opening the conference June 28, Gorbachev said a stronger president "could exercise overall guidance in the drafting of legislation and of major socio-economic programs; decide on the key issues of foreign policy, defense and national security; chair the Defense Council; submit proposals on nominating the Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers."

But there was no mention of those powers in the official conference documents.

The presidency, now a ceremonial job, is held by Andrei Gromyko.

The resolution also made only a brief reference to Gorbachev's proposal to make party leaders also head of their local governing councils. It said the councils would be stronger if the party leader "were usually recommended" to lead them.

For the Record

The June 30 Tar Heel article "Toll-free AIDS hotline serves North Carolina," incorrectly reported that the national AIDS hotline was scheduled to be phased out by the end of June. The hotline, which is operated by the American Social Health Association with offices in Research Triangle Park and New York City, will remain open to answer any questions the public has about acquired immune deficiency syndrome. The hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can be reached by calling 1-800-342-AIDS. The N.C. hotline in Raleigh may be reached at 1-800-535-2437. The Tar Heel regrets the error.

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