Strictly Confidential


In his letter of January 1968 addressed to the first secretaries of the fraternal parties, Comrade N. Ceauşescu recommended that the Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee be convened in order to discuss the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty. The member-states accepted the proposal, and at the same time, they unanimously agreed to review the Vietnamese question and also to hear the Supreme Commander’s report at the meeting.

At the two-day meeting, the disputes and divergent views between the six concurring member-states and the Romanian state and party leadership manifested itself on two occasions. Therefore, there was a long, occasionally tense debate regarding the nuclear nonproliferation draft treaty. We managed to agree on the declaration regarding the Vietnam question relatively quickly. According to the third point on the agenda, we should have coordinated with each other on some ideas for developing the military organization of the Warsaw Treaty. Because the Romanians objected, we unanimously agreed to postpone this question.

I.

Due to the significant divergence of opinions, two positions were formulated with regard to nuclear nonproliferation. The representatives of the six member-states agreed that we are at a significant threshold in terms of nuclear armament. Taking into account scientific, technological, and productive capabilities, a number of
capitalist countries (the FRG, Japan, Israel, Brazil, the Republic of South Africa, India and other states) will be able to produce nuclear weapons within 10-15 years. Thus, states that are pursuing – almost without exception – aggressive, reactionary policies could end up with nuclear weapons. If this should come to pass, the forces of socialism will have to wage the struggle between the two systems from a more disadvantageous position, and the danger of conflicts will grow in various parts of the world. All of this would raise armament and weapons to a new level and would mean an extraordinary material sacrifice on the part of the Soviet Union and the other member-states.

The conclusion of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty would mean that we could use international law to put a brake on the process and prevent the capitalist states from acquiring nuclear weapons for 25 years. If we achieve this – pulling the rug out from under a whole series of imperialist squadrons – we will create more favorable conditions for ourselves in the worldwide class struggle.

Currently, for various reasons, favorable conditions exist for concluding the treaty. Because of the growth in military tensions in recent years, world opinion is reacting more favorably and is more visibly supporting a reduction in the arms race and nuclear nonproliferation. In order to preserve their positions and military monopoly within the Western world, the American imperialists are inclined to sign the treaty. Thinking of the French example, Johnson is guided by the fear that the appearance of new atomic powers could result in a loosening of the Western political and military alliance. In a presidential election year – in order to counterbalance the effect of the Vietnam War – Johnson wants to present himself as a man of peace, and

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1 Transl. note: The words struck out in the translation were struck out by hand in the Hungarian original.
for this reason—because of domestic political campaign reasons — he is also inclined to sign the agreement.

Taking advantage of all these favorable factors after lengthy preparations and as a result of debates and talks, the Soviet Union was able to get the United States to present a parallel, draft agreement that was coordinated with the Soviet Union at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament talks in Geneva that corresponds to our interests. Hence, the conclusion of a nuclear nonproliferation treaty became a realistic possibility. The six member-states considered this achievement to be a victory for the socialist states, primarily for the Soviet Union, and as a new phase in our offensive against the imperialism’s positions.

The Romanian comrades do not share this position. They think that the draft suffers from basic shortcomings. In their view, the agreement would serve the interests of peace and socialism if it were amended with the following articles:

a/ The atomic powers undertake to begin dismantling their nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles without delay.

b/ The nuclear powers should guarantee that they would not use atomic weapons against states that do not possess nuclear arms (irrespective of whether they have foreign nuclear bases on their territory or not).

c/ Among the states that do not have nuclear weapons, nuclear activity can be subject to inspection only in those states where a potential for manufacturing weapons exists; inspections of other states would constitute a violation of their sovereignty;

d/ The UN will implement local controls over military bases on foreign soil;
e/ In order to control the treaty’s implementation, conferences are to be held every five years, and if it turns out that the execution of the treaty’s articles is not progressing at a satisfactory pace, the countries that are party to the treaty can quit the agreement without giving a reason.

The representatives of the six countries showed with arguments and facts that the Romanians’ proposals basically correspond to the interests of the socialist countries and the peace-loving forces; nevertheless, they are maximalist and unrealistic because there is no way that the other side could be compelled to accept them. Insisting on them could lead to the postponement or even failure of the treaty, the loss of the results achieved so far. A linkage of disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation could lead to a dead end because at present the United States is interested only in nuclear nonproliferation. It is unwilling to decrease its own nuclear arsenal; on the contrary, it has been increasing it every year. Our delegations showed that the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty is the most that can be achieved. The Romanian comrades are following the principle of “all or nothing” in this question, but for us the question is: nonproliferation treaty or no nonproliferation treaty; therefore, we support the Soviet draft.

In keeping with its mandate, our delegation expressed the view that the Hungarian People’s Republic supports efforts directed at bringing the treaty to fruition and for its own part is ready to accept it and sign it. (The text of comrade Kádár’s speech is at appendix 1 to the report.)

The long and tense debate did not change the Romanian position. Comrade Ceauşescu declared that, according to the resolution passed by the Central Committee, they would present their proposals on March 18 and publicize them in Geneva. He also referred to the fact that they would present the above position at the
forthcoming session of the UN, in their whole foreign policy and in their public program as well.

Thus, a situation occurred in which for the first time in the history of the Warsaw Treaty, the public has been made aware of the fact that the member-states have different positions regarding an important question. The first secretaries of the fraternal parties and the prime ministers of the six concurring member-states discussed the situation at two separate meetings. These discussions showed that the recent, pronounced separatist line and the oppositional behavior of the Romanian party and state leadership have caused great irritation to the fraternal parties, especially to the Polish leadership. In this mood the Polish – and to a lesser extent the Bulgarian – party leaders took the position that in this situation we should get rid of the factors impeding our organization’s work by expelling the Socialist Republic of Romania from the Warsaw Treaty Organization. During these exchanges, our delegation sought to act in such a way that the concurring countries would present the correct position regarding the questions being debated, but at the same time, given the Warsaw Treaty’s role in the world, we would not allow our organization to fall into disarray because of the current mood.

Eventually, as a result of the Soviet comrades’ responsible attitude, the meeting of the six reached the following agreement:

a/ With regard to nuclear nonproliferation, the communiqué from the Sofia meeting should find a brief wording acceptable to all member-states – i.e., the parties exchanged views and expressed their standpoints;

b/ The six states should make a brief declaration supporting the nuclear nonproliferation treaty’s rapid conclusion.
With regard to the six countries’ communiqué, Comrade Kádár recommended that we should wait a few days before publishing it. The remaining member countries rejected this. They did accept Comrade Kádár’s the Hungarian delegation’s proposal that the Romanian comrades should be informed about the six-power declaration in advance. Comrade Brezhnev did communicate this to Comrade Ceauşescu orally.

II.

It took a relatively short while to agree on the Vietnam declaration. While we were preparing the text, the Polish and the Bulgarian comrades asked the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam what ideas they would like to see in the document. The Vietnamese comrades asked us to praise their successes, to condemn the United States, to support the four points of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the new program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, to emphasize that the war’s conclusion and peacemaking is solely up to the Americans, and to reiterate that at the request of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, we are prepared to send volunteers.

As the text of the declaration was being finalized, the German Democratic Republic asked that it condemn the government of the German Federal Republic for their assistance to the Americans.

III.

With regard to military questions, it became clear that there had been no change in the Romanian attitude since the July 1966 meeting in Bucharest. The
Romanian party and state leadership continues to oppose the more active work and better coordination of the Warsaw Treaty military organs and the resolution of some particular problems (creation of the staff, a military council and a committee on technology) that would assist the work of the organization. In order to mask their obstructionist attitude, the Romanians submitted that first the ground rules for the unified armed forces will have to be worked out. By making this proposal, by putting this question of primary importance on the table, they think they can postpone the timely resolution of the problems in cooperation for years.

As a result of Romania’s obstructionist attitude, the six countries agreed that Supreme Commander Iakubovskii should provide a presentation that was only a few minutes long. In it he stated that there had not been any progress regarding the basic questions of the military organization for years and that in this respect the Prague meeting of the deputy ministers of defense yielded no results either. He proposed that the ministers of defense give further thought to the questions on the agenda.

After Supreme Commander Iakubovskii’s briefing, a resolution of the Political Consultative Committee charged the ministers of defense with studying questions concerning the ground rules of the unified armed forces and questions pertaining to the establishment of a staff, a military council and a committee on technology and to report on their work in 6 months.

IV.

1/ At the meeting of the six, the fraternal parties voiced their thanks and appreciation to the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party for organizing the Budapest conference, for its successful conclusion and for the work – principled in content and flexible in form – throughout the meeting.
2/ At the meeting of the six the participants accepted Comrade Kádár’s proposal that at some point, under calmer circumstances, when daily matters are not overwhelming, the first secretaries and prime ministers of the six concurring countries should get together for the sake of unfettered, comradely talks. It was agreed that the meeting should be held no later than this June. Welcoming the idea of such a meeting, Comrade Ulbricht, without specifying any topics, commented that some important questions would have to be discussed. Comrade Dubček thought it expedient that we should discuss matters relating to our economic cooperation.

3/ The leaders of the six parties also supported Comrade Kádár’s idea that on certain occasions, depending on the agenda, we should also invite the leaders of the Mongolian People’s Republic to the meetings of the concurring European fraternal parties.

4/ On the occasion of the meeting in Sofia, our delegation acted in the spirit of our attitude at the consultative meeting in Budapest. In keeping with these norms, our delegation in Sofia told the Romanians openly about which questions regarding the agenda we disagree with them, but at the same time, in keeping with the norms of courtesy, we spoke with them on two occasions. During these conversations, there was an agreement in principle that the practice of holding annual, two- to three-day bilateral summit meetings – as has taken place since 1964 – should continue in 1968.

5/ During our delegation’s stay in Sofia, Comrade Kádár met with representatives of the Hungarians working at the embassy and informed them about topical issues.
Draft Resolution

1/ The Political Committee and the Government approves of the activities of our delegation in Sofia, of Comrade János Kádár’s preliminary briefing on March 8 and the delegation’s report.

2/ Comrade Lajos Czinege is charged on behalf of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party and the Government with initiating preparing the convocation of a meeting of the ministers of defense of the Warsaw Treaty member-states as soon as possible in order to discuss current problems of military organization.

Budapest, March 9 1968

Compiled by Károly Erdélyi
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Annexes

János Kádár’s speech at the March 7 meeting

Text of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty presented by the Soviet Union

Romanian amendments to the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty

[Translation from the Hungarian by László Borhi]