

MEETING OF THE POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FORMED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE WARSAW TREATY
Prague, January 1956

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STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
Comrade ANDRÁS HEGEDÜS
27 January 1956

Dear Political Consultative Committee!
Dear Comrades!

On behalf of the government of the Hungarian People's Republic, please allow me to greet the participants in the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee – the representatives of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries and the observer from the People's Republic of China. The most significant events in international politics last year – such as the signing of the State Treaty with Austria, the successful Soviet-Yugoslav talks in Belgrade, the Big Four summit meeting, and, subsequently, the meeting of the Big Four Foreign Ministers in Geneva, the 10th Session of the UN General Assembly, and the acceptance of new states into the United Nations, and, finally, as a worthy conclusion to a year that was rich in foreign policy accomplishments, the trip of Comrades Bulganin and Khrushchev to India, Burma, and Afghanistan – grant us the right to view 1955 as a year of significant progress in the cause of international détente.

The fact that the past year went down in history not as a year of increased international tension, escalation of the cold war, and buildup of international conflicts, is a consequence of the relentless efforts of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries – first and foremost, the Soviet Union. They are repeatedly taking new measures to hamper the aggressive forces and to improve the international atmosphere.

All these efforts resulted in a clear understanding even outside the borders of the socialist camp – by the people and, more importantly, by the ruling circles in many countries – that negotiations based on mutual respect and broad representation of the participants' interests are the only correct way of resolving impending issues satisfactorily.

The consistent, peaceful policy of the countries of the socialist camp – and the Soviet Union, first of all – as well as the growing popularity of this policy in all the countries of the world, has led to a complete failure of the notorious policy of force.

Taking into consideration the vital interests of our people and of all peoples of the world, while consistently adhering to a policy of peace, the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic has fully implemented the honorable commitments that it took upon itself by signing

the Warsaw Treaty. In a spirit of sincere cooperation, it has strived to participate in all international efforts aimed at the consolidation of peace and security of peoples. It has put all its strength into reaching these goals.

The famous decision of the United Nations, based on the proposal of the Soviet Union, to accept 16 countries, including the Hungarian People's Republic, as members has been very important for the international status of our country (along with the normalization of relations between the countries of the socialist camp and Yugoslavia and the resolution of the Austrian issue).

Our participation in this global organization opens up an opportunity for us to establish international ties on a broader scale. It provides us with the possibility to implement even broader international cooperation with other countries by developing diplomatic, economic, and other relations based on complete equality of rights and broad respect for mutual interests, and to serve more effectively the cause of mutual understanding and the development of cooperation among nations.

In the opinion of the Hungarian government, the current international situation, in contrast to the previous period, is characterized by the following: many countries are striving to carry out independent foreign policies and are abstaining from joining the aggressive blocs. These aspirations are playing an increasingly significant role in the struggle for the alleviation of international tension.

This striving for neutrality has been expressed especially strongly in the many countries of Asia and Africa that are trying to reinforce their newly won freedoms and independence. The historic trip of Comrades Bulganin and Khrushchev to India, Burma, and Afghanistan has raised the prestige of the Soviet Union among the people in the nations of Asia, Africa, and South America who are fighting against colonialism. It has unmasked the imperialists' plans and strengthened the position of those supporting peace.

We consider the expansion of our trade relations with these countries to be an important goal, and, in this respect, we also view the Soviet Union's initiative as a model worthy of following.

We think that this initiative is also important because it helps the people fighting for their independence. It prevents the imperialist powers from exploiting the industrial underdevelopment of these countries by providing so-called economic assistance that is linked to political conditions that forces these countries into dependence or makes their dependence grow stronger.

In order to improve the international atmosphere and bring different nations together, the Hungarian government would like to maintain normal relations with the three great powers of the West.

Despite some progress last year, we have kept in mind that some Western circles are not happy about the improvement in the international situation. These circles are trying over and over to turn the course of events toward an escalation of cold war.

This became apparent already at the Geneva Big Four Foreign Ministers conference, where, as a result of this tendency, we failed to achieve any substantive results. The meeting of the NATO foreign ministers turned into a pulpit for the apostles espousing a policy of force, a policy of threats. At a time when the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty member-countries, including the Hungarian People's Republic, have reduced their current-year military expenditures, the United States has budgeted military appropriations unsurpassed in its history. The Western countries continue to expand their policy of creating aggressive blocs. They are trying to expand the Baghdad Pact and to strengthen military preparations in the Near and Middle East.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic fully supports the decision by the *Volkskammer*¹ to create its own armed forces – the People's Army. Given the current situation in which West Germany is participating in aggressive western blocs and is contemplating how to equip its army with nuclear weapons – according to the confessions of the military ministry in Bonn and the NATO staff – this step of the German Democratic Republic is quite well-warranted and necessary.

In connection with this, we would like to emphasize that the Hungarian Government still attributes great importance to the peaceful resolution of the German question and the creation of a strong, unified, peaceful and democratic Germany. We consider it necessary and worthwhile for the Warsaw Treaty member-countries to continue to take the initiative in favor of a system of collective security in Europe, and until this system is fully implemented, they should undertake all necessary measures to reach preliminary agreements between all interested parties. This would open up opportunities to slow down the arms race in Europe and contribute to a reduction in the threat of a new war that has arisen as a result of West Germany's rearmament and its membership in a military bloc. We could thus reduce the arms race and the military expenditures that put a heavy burden on the people of Europe.

The demands to resolve international issues peacefully, to stop the arms race, to conclude a collective security treaty between the most affected countries, and to put an end to the policy relying on force for once and for all, have been met with unabated enthusiasm beyond the socialist countries. The elections in France speak to this; the French people voted against the policies of the parties that support the North-Atlantic military bloc – thus voting against the escalation of international tension and against policies relying on the use of force.

We are firmly convinced that real conditions do exist for a further lessening of international tensions and the establishment of cooperation between countries.

¹ The parliament of the German Democratic Republic.

In the future we will continue to participate in all international activities aimed at consolidating peace and security in Europe and in the entire world.

The Hungarian People's Republic attributes great importance to the cooperation among the countries of the socialist camp. We consider it a force that has been and will continue to be one of the most important factors contributing to the further favorable development of the international situation. Therefore, with pride, we welcome this first meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries, which reflects the friendly relations and cooperation between our countries and develops them further.

The people of Hungary have never looked to the future with such well-grounded certainty as they do today, as our forces – the forces of peace – gain strength with each passing day and receive growing recognition throughout the entire world. Our people are very proud that, within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, they can fight for a stable, universal peace and the noble cause of social progress alongside the nations that belong to the peace camp led by the Soviet Union.

[Translation by Julia La Villa Nossova]