

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

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STATEMENT OF COMRADE WALTER ULBRICHT
First Deputy Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic
27 January 1956

Dear Comrade Chairman!
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The government of the German Democratic Republic welcomes the convocation of the Political Consultative Committee in order to exchange opinions about the current situation and to develop joint measures based on the Warsaw Treaty.

The government of the German Democratic Republic welcomes the ongoing efforts of the peace-loving countries, especially, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, aimed at further alleviating international tension. The Big Four Summit Conference held in Geneva in July of last year proved that international mutual understanding is possible. The consistent implementation of signed agreements is imperative.

The government of the German Democratic Republic has aspired and will continue to aspire to promote mutual understanding and the resolution of disputed issues through negotiations. It has supported all efforts that contribute to international cooperation and has introduced some proposals of its own.

For example, the GDR Government made the following constructive proposals at the Big Four Foreign Ministers Meeting in Geneva:

1. The signing of a collective security treaty between the countries of Europe in order to abolish the existing military blocs, as suggested by the Soviet Union.
2. Ensuring the peaceful development of Germany by forbidding a revival of German militarism and by withdrawing all foreign troops from Germany.
3. The reunification of Germany as a peaceful and democratic state via a rapprochement and the achievement of an agreement between both German states; the creation of an all-German council.

The German Democratic Republic has not only deepened and strengthened its existing friendly relations with countries of the camp of peace, democracy, and socialism, but, in accordance with the principles of peaceful coexistence, it has been developing its relations with other states. The German Democratic Republic is engaged in extensive, mutually beneficial trade with more than a

hundred countries. It has signed long-term trade agreements with 20 capitalist countries. A number of countries have permanent trade representatives from the German Democratic Republic. In the interests of peaceful international cooperation, representatives of the German Democratic Republic are working actively in more than 70 international organizations, commissions, and committees. All of this demonstrates that our workers' and peasant's state is growing ever stronger and is receiving growing trust and respect from various people and states.

The German people and the nations of Europe are seriously worried about the significant threat of West Germany's remilitarization. The conversion of West Germany into a main NATO military base and the implementation of NATO's plans threaten the German people with horrible consequences.

The decisions approved by the NATO Council of Ministers last December contain plans for the expedited formation of NATO attack divisions in West Germany, the formation of atomic and missile regiments, preparation for air warfare, and the rapid development of the armaments industry. In order to emphasize the gravity of this development, we would like to draw attention to the fact that, according to NATO plans, by the end of 1957 twelve divisions should be established in West Germany. Additionally, the formation of twelve more divisions is planned. The old German general staff has been resurrected in West Germany. It is comprised mainly of Hitler's generals, responsible for the commission of war crimes during the Second World War. The war ministry in Bonn is staffed almost exclusively by officers of the former fascist *Wehrmacht*¹ (for the most part, from the general staff) who had been decorated with the highest fascist orders and honors by Hitler. The West German general staff is headed by the former fascist officer [Theodor] Blank, whose initial achievement was the creation of reactionary labor organizations. He is thus considered the most fit for the maneuvering associated with the armament of the West German army and for deceiving the public. His right hand is Lt. General Adolf Heusinger, who served from 1931 to 1944 in the Operations Department of the army and took active part in the development of Hitler's plans for attacking neighboring countries. After the war, he was put on the UN's list of war criminals. Also working in the war ministry in Bonn is Lt. General [Hans] Speidel. After Hitler came to power, Speidel was sent to Paris as the head of Hitler's military intelligence, and, in 1944, he became the Chief of Staff of the fascist occupation forces in France. Later on, he committed war crimes in the Soviet Union and Italy. Now, he is the chief of the Main Directorate of the Armed Forces in Blank's ministry.

War criminal Otto Bräutigam is the chief of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office in Bonn. During the Second World War, he held one of the leading positions in [Alfred] Rosenberg's so-called Eastern Ministry. He is responsible for the murder of thousands of civilians from many countries. Documents published in the West German press support this fact.

Working in the Personnel Committee is General Kuntzen. Until 1945, he had been the head of the Army's Personnel Directorate and was in charge of staffing the fascist officers' corps with

¹ The German army during the Second World War.

officers devoted to Hitler. Currently, he is undoubtedly introducing the influence of fascist forces into the West German officers' corps.

The threat of German militarism to Europe is growing due to the anticipated equipping of West German troops with nuclear weapons. Another fact demonstrating the aggressive character of German militarism is that leading positions in the West German economy lie in the hands of former members of Hitler's Council on Armaments.

Leading politicians in West Germany are instigating racial hatred and preaching for "invasion of the Sudetenland" and "invasion of Silesia".

At the same time, the remilitarization of West Germany helps maintain the domination of monopoly capital's military forces and military cadets in the face of growing opposition from the population. Implementation of the plans for militarization faces growing resistance among all classes and strata of the West German population. Opposition is growing exponentially, although it has no unified leadership. Members of the governing coalition who are disturbed by the vocal discontent of the electorate have joined those who have consistently fought for peace and other opponents of the militaristic, reactionary forces.

The policies of West German militarism will fail as they have failed in the past. How soon it happens will, to a significant extent, depend upon the engagement of the forces for peace in Germany.

Prior to the ratification of the Paris Agreements, the government of the German Democratic Republic had warned that the Federal Republic's incorporation into the Western European Union and the NATO bloc would render Germany's reunification impossible. It would force the government of the German Democratic Republic to create a National Armed Forces to preserve the peace and to defend the achievements of the working people of the German Democratic Republic. On January 18, 1956, driven by a feeling of profound responsibility for peace and the future of the German nation, the *Volkskammer*² of the German Democratic Republic unanimously passed a law establishing the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic and the Ministry of National Defense. The National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic will be an army of the working people, who love peace as much as they love freedom. All personnel in the future ground, air, and naval forces of the German Democratic Republic will have been raised in a spirit of friendship among nations and passionate love for the power of the working class and peasants; it is in this spirit that it will perform its duties. It will be at the forefront of those who guard peace. The government of the German Democratic Republic has addressed a request to the Warsaw Treaty member-countries that they permit the participation of representatives of the German Democratic Republic in the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces.

² The parliament of the German Democratic Republic.

In accordance with the agreements signed at the Big Four Summit in Geneva, on January 18, the government of the German Democratic Republic repeated its proposals to the German Federal Republic aimed at reaching a consensus between the two countries. These proposals raised the issue of both countries' focusing their efforts on signing an agreement on collective security in Europe and on reducing the number of foreign troops on German territory. It was also proposed that both German states assume a commitment to refrain from the use of force against each other and to strive to reunify Germany solely by peaceful means. Additionally, it was proposed to halt all forms of propaganda and preparation for nuclear war on German territory and to jointly renounce the production of nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the government of the German Democratic Republic and all peaceful forces in Germany, we welcome the proposals that are being discussed by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries today.

The German people are especially interested in these constructive proposals. The citizens of the German Democratic Republic and the population of West Germany, in general, understand that the presence of military blocs aggravates relations between states and that the measures to arm the NATO states has created new tensions in Europe. The German Democratic Republic supports the proposal to replace the existing military blocs with a system of collective security. If some of the European states, along with the USSR, Great Britain, France, and the USA, were to come to such an agreement, it would be a major step forward. We welcome the proposal to create zones in Europe where the states concerned would determine the number and placement for the deployment of military forces. We consider it desirable to give thorough consideration to the proposals of the government of Great Britain that were made at the Big Four Summit Conference in Geneva.

The German Democratic Republic does not object to an agreement that would limit the armed forces of the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic. The proposal to withdraw or reduce foreign troops in both parts of Germany also corresponds to the aforementioned proposal of the German Democratic Republic. We also agree with the proposal for controls over the implementation of such agreements. It is necessary to achieve an agreement that would prevent the equipping of Germany's armed forces with nuclear weapons.

The proposal to conclude a non-aggression pact among the European states, including a commitment to resolve all disputes by peaceful means, fully corresponds to the resolution of the *Volkskammer* of the German Democratic Republic of January 18, 1956, which was forwarded to the government of the German Federal Republic.

The German Democratic Republic will continue to make every effort to facilitate the creation of a collective security system in Europe and the reunification of Germany by means of an agreement. It will refrain from making any threats of force in its international agreements and will strive to resolve all controversial international issues peacefully. The GDR will do everything there is to be done to fulfill its commitments deriving from the Warsaw Treaty. This lies in the national

interests of the German people. The current session of the Political Consultative Committee is contributing to the strengthening of our cooperation and reinforcing the camp of peace.

On behalf of the government of the German Democratic Republic, I proclaim our full agreement with the proposals that are being discussed at this session.

[Translation by Julia La Villa Nossova]