

Strictly Confidential!

Two copies prepared

Minutes of the Politburo Meeting

July 12, 1966

Report of July 12, 1966, regarding the summit talks in Bucharest

Comrade János Kádár:

We put the delegation's position in writing; I assume it need not be repeated.

Given the present situation, the results from the two meetings, we believe, were satisfactory. Agreement was reached on a good document, one that I can call a good one, regarding two very important issues, and there was a useful exchange of views on a number of matters. This is why we think that the results can be called good, and we can use these documents in mass political work and also for our own work domestically – for the work that is necessary to realize the objectives that we have identified there, including [those relating to] Comecon.

Privately, we cannot say, however, that this is true regarding the way that these documents came into being and the way that discussions took place. They reflected the not-so-good situation in relations between the governments and parties represented [at the meeting]. Some aspects regarding very important political issues have not yet been clarified between the Romanian party's central committee and government, on the one hand, and the remaining parties and governments present there, on the other. And this came up in a very strange way; it emerged in procedural matters. This must be mentioned and emphasized because – unfortunately – we must take it into account in our future work. In sum, the actual degree of unity regarding the two matters in question was not as great as it seems, but it [unity] was achieved regarding them.

Regarding Vietnam, the political position, it turned out, was theoretically almost identical to Romania's, although there was a very slight difference here as well regarding Vietnam and the steps to be taken. The Romanian comrades were a step closer to the demagogic position of the Chinese, and even if this was only a nuance, it could be perceived nonetheless. This found expression not only in their being extremely anti-American but also in their unexpectedly raising the issue of withdrawing from the Geneva disarmament conference. In this connection they made such statements as: This is mere deception of the people because they [the Americans] are talking about disarmament here while

fighting continues over there. This alone could not explain the inhuman, nearly one-and-a-half or two-day dispute regarding alleged procedural issues, regarding which text should serve as the basis for debate.

There was a decisive difference of opinion. This was not, it seems, a momentary whim, but a long-standing divergence of views about the Warsaw Treaty's development in political and military matters, about the [other] six parties' initiative to increase consultations and improve the [alliance's] military work. The Romanian position, in contrast, opposed any such goals; indeed, the Romanian proposals reflected even more strongly than before the goal of not moving a step forward but loosening even the existing forms of cooperation. There were also emotional aspects, of course. Thus – rather to our surprise – the disputes and polemics intensified between the Polish and the Romanian comrades. The Poles' opinion --why should we negotiate [with Romania] – had already been evident regarding Comecon matters, but at this point the mood got really tense.

There has also been some turmoil in our relationships as well. This probably has to do with the fact that there is no unity. For example, with regard to Comecon, a situation arose in which the Bulgarian comrades, somewhat ignoring their previous positions, declared we could conceivably vote about agricultural prices in Bucharest, but they would [nevertheless] raise the prices of agricultural products forty percent. Then, they retreated a little, but the Romanians supported them, and for entirely different reasons, they were supported by the Mongolians, who sell sheep, etc.

Serious mistakes in the preparatory work played a role even in this procedural matter. There was the agreement of April 7, in which the foreign ministers agreed on who should prepare the documents. The document on European security was prepared on time, so the parties could deal with it, but we did not see a proposal on the Vietnam issue until we arrived in Bucharest, and when we asked what was going on, it turned out there were three proposals: a Soviet, a Romanian, and a Polish one. And then, it turned out, we had to decide in the afternoon which one to adopt. We said that we would vote, but that we were not familiar with any of them.

In the meantime, a preliminary meeting between the Soviet, Romanian, and Polish comrades decided that the Soviet text would not even be mentioned. The Poles declared that the Romanian one could not be accepted as a draft because even newspapers publish better articles than their text. The Romanians, on the other hand, said that they would not accept the Polish text because it was opportunistic and defeatist.

The preliminary meeting, it turned out, took place – as seen in the report – after we had set the agenda and the two documents were ready and had to be signed. The remaining issues were discussed in a different manner; they were debated separately by the foreign

ministers and the heads of subcommittees. Characteristically, the Romanians declared that the Polish text was unsatisfactory because it was defeatist. In response, Comrade Gomułka lodged an official protest and declared that the Poles are not defeatist but are engaged in a historical struggle and – as he put it – one should know as a host how to behave properly toward one's guests.

Then, Comrade Brezhnev spoke again about which text was suitable or unsuitable to serve as a starting point. He also spoke with some indignation. While we bicker about such things, he said, the war continues and people are dying; he [then] described the Soviet Union's participation in the Vietnam War. He referred to the earthquakes and floods in the Soviet Union and said that they had other things to do than to sit around here and quarrel. The declaration, he said, could be signed by the six. With that he sat down. I had the feeling that the Romanians were waiting for an opportunity to be insulted. Comrade Ceaușescu shouted back that they would put in writing that they were being put under pressure and that they would inform each fraternal party. This was more or less the high point of the debate. Comrade Gomułka explained that it was not the six parties that were trying to put pressure on them [the Romanians], but it was they who were putting pressure on the six parties. He asked them to take it [the Soviet draft declaration] as a starting point and to provide their comments. There was a break then, and the parties reconvened after an hour. We ran through the text in about 12 minutes and came to an agreement.

Then - confronted by this situation – we and the others (meaning the six parties) decided to remove the issue of organizational matters from the agenda. Since nothing would obviously come of it, the situation would become acrimonious. The Romanians, it was clear, would reject the whole thing, and we could not accept their text. The Romanians also agreed to take it off the agenda.

At the end of the report, there are a few proposals that I would like to explain.

First of all, we are asking that our work be approved and that the Council of Ministers be informed about it. The material should serve as personal information for the members of the Council of Ministers. Obviously, the Central Committee needs to be informed as well.

We must work on Comecon because nothing has been decided on this score. The eight parties have expressed their views, which are familiar, because they are the same as before. It was useful because the seven parties argued calmly and tore apart the Romanian proposal because their proposal has no basis in reality. In response, the Romanians put forward their positions without clarifying their arguments. They also continued to employ such nice expressions as: we need to cooperate because it is so useful. Comrade Ceaușescu's speech made it sound as if we are the ones who are paralyzing the work of the Comecon because we want to push things through that are

contrary to the ground rules. This is why our work has come to a standstill even as we need to press ahead – but he didn't say in what direction. We must remain focused on this issue because the other leaders explained what their parties require. They will leave the rest to the wisdom of the [Comecon's] Executive Committee, which should somehow, mysteriously, make progress at its 20th session in December. We will thus have to deal with this issue again based on [the results of] the meeting. We will have to work out the Hungarian position based on the new arguments as soon as possible; let a three- to four-page typed draft be put together, as before, for presentation to the Politburo.

For similar reasons, Comrade Czinege should also receive an assignment. Currently, the Warsaw Treaty's military work is carried out on the basis of the Treaty that was signed back then and the 1956 document, the so-called Organizational Resolution. The Romanian comrades surprised us with several things. First of all, they did so with their own text on the European security issue, then on the Vietnam question, and then they submitted completely new military proposals that represented a step backwards in comparison to the materials from the Moscow meeting. They recommended modifications that would even loosen up the existing organization. We must look into these. Examining and scrutinizing them are important not least of all because sooner or later we will have to respond to these Romanian proposals.

For the same reason, the foreign minister should also receive something to do. The Romanian comrades surprised us with such recommendations as suggesting that the socialist countries should withdraw from the disarmament talks in Geneva. There cannot be any discussion of this. There are five socialist countries there, there are also five leading capitalist states and the rest are more or less representatives of the third world. This was initiated by the socialist countries and, whether or not the talks move forward, they exist and we cannot just pull out of them. What would the neutrals, which went there at the initiative of and together with the socialist countries, do then? This, then, is the big question.

Finally, the Romanian comrades, I would like to mention, greeted us upon our arrival with a pronouncement that they had retracted their position regarding the five questions on the agenda. This meant that they had modified their stance, after all, after taking into account the six parties' unanimous opposition. That was different. This was good, of course, and in a certain respect made the work easier. In other respects it was a bit frustrating. They know full well the work that had been going on. They should have assumed that the parties had been looking at these five points and could have dealt with them even though they were recommending modifications.

Eventually they conceded the procedural question on Vietnam as well.

This raises the issue of what lessons can be derived for our future work from this experience. It demonstrates that our Politburo was not mistaken: There is no common position, but in certain questions we must work together for political, moral, and other reasons. This goes for us as well as the Romanians. We were thus able to agree on a pretty good text. It also played a role to some extent that there was a unified front against the Romanians without any kind of "conspiracy." This influenced the Romanians to a certain degree. They are retreating and coming closer without surrendering their independence. We do not know what impact this will have in the future, but it is certain that the Romanians will deliberate upon their experiences as we have done and will reach certain conclusions.

I want to mention one more technical matter. The comrades are aware that five positions were debated here, and five Hungarian presentations were put together on this basis. But because the plenary session was so short, only one was delivered: the presentation on the Comecon question. I mention this in order to avoid the impression that this work was done in vain. I recommend this method for the future because the Political Committee must receive written draft position papers regarding such important matters for discussion that can then also be used for writing presentations. In this way, we will have clear positions approved by the Politburo and the Council of Ministers to assist us in our work and to provide us with background. I thus recommend it for the future.

Comrade Gyula Kállai:

It seems to me that some of the countries participating in the Bucharest meeting have already published official communiqués from the meeting, and more such statements and public communiqués can likely be expected. The Council of Ministers will meet this Thursday. This issue will be on their agenda, too. It goes without saying that the communiqué should mention the Council of Ministers' session. I also consider it possible that, unlike before, not only should the mere fact be stated, but also some kind of declaration should be made in which we refer to the most important aspects of the two documents and state what the government has said. Some political aspects of this could be emphasized, and a declaration could be addressed to the mass organizations, calling on people to fight for their realization.

But these talks were discussions not only between governments; they also constituted an inter-party meeting as well. The Soviet Union chose a solution whereby the Politburo of the CPSU and the government issued a joint declaration. This began with briefings about the talks to both the Politburo and the government; this met with their approval; the delegation's work was approved, and the political aspects of the work were emphasized. I recommend that we discuss what solution to choose. After the session of the Council of

Ministers, perhaps a declaration could be issued that a briefing took place in the Politburo as well as the Council of Ministers, and some aspects of these matters could be discussed, emphasized again.

Comrade Dezső Nemes:

I would like to add a few comments regarding the agenda. There was a certain anxiety among people – including myself – regarding the meeting’s conclusion under the given circumstances. As far as I am concerned, the declarations surpassed my expectations.

In what form should an official statement appear? This is a normal thing. Under the circumstances, there is some confusion, I see, because the differing views of the various parties and governments will be published in this case. Still, how and in which organ’s name should we present our position? The session of the Central Committee is scheduled for July 27. Maybe the members of the Council of Ministers could participate in the meeting. I would recommend this solution.

The comrades have mentioned the Romanian proposal regarding the Geneva meeting. I don’t think there is any basis in principle for this, but they are looking for ways to link up with the Chinese, and they see an opportunity here.

The comrades have said that the discussion about matters regarding the Warsaw Treaty has been postponed. This is good, but in the future we must face the fact that the Romanian position subverts and impedes cooperation. In the future we will need an alternative regarding what we can do to strengthen the Warsaw Treaty if we cannot convince the Romanian comrades of the correctness of our position. I am thinking of what came up regarding the Comecon—the suggestion to establish looser relations. Of course, the work created by Romania’s position has been perhaps even more unpleasant with regard to Comecon.

Comrade János Kádár:

I forgot to mention something. Back when the CPSU was commissioned to draft for the Soviet foreign minister our position regarding the question of Vietnam, it was naturally assumed that the Vietnamese comrades would be consulted. The CPSU did this. Without such a mandate, the Romanians also contacted the Vietnamese separately and individually and coordinated with them. Furthermore, Comrade Ceaușescu declared that he had spoken with Comrade Zhao Enlai regarding their intention to publish a declaration on the Vietnamese question.

In terms of soldiers, we must obviously prepare for a situation in which the Romanian comrades will make military cooperation more difficult or even try to impede it. This is in part already happening, and now they are going even further. I still say that we should not plan on saying what we are going to do in such a situation without a reason. We have experience in doing things separately that we cannot do together. Practically, this is already the situation; in all Warsaw Treaty countries, except Romania, work has been proceeding normally, and we know how things are going. These tasks require joint planning. Comrade Grechko will also meet with the leaders of the Romanian army – this means bilateral work. At present we have a situation in which the Romanians usually participate in our war games, but the relationship between the supreme commander and the leaders of the Romanian army is weak and hardly functions in practice. As a matter of fact, we did not enter the debate because we do not want to paralyze work along other lines. Of course, there were overtones of disappointment, albeit not at the meeting. People were saying that if the Romanians quit, we would be stronger, but because of the larger context, no one did not [sic] seriously raise this.

We should approve the delegation's work. The CPSU's position also reflected haste; they welcomed the presence of familiar issues in the declarations. Our press, I believe, has already published the declarations as well as a lead article. We should not be in such a hurry, perhaps in a fortnight's time we can say more. Still, we must find the appropriate form. Actually, a declaration could wait until the Central Committee meeting, and then we could publish a one-page resolution. But in this case the resolution should come from the government. The Council of Ministers will convene on Thursday. The joint communiqué cannot be published until Saturday morning, and we can refer to the Politburo in it. Everybody knows that the Central Committee did not meet. We need a brief communiqué that the Politburo of the Central Committee of the HSWP and the Council of Ministers reviewed the work of the delegation that had participated in the Bucharest meeting and approved it. A brief communiqué should thus come out. Of course, we can state the essence of the matter in a few sentences, but we should not go into details because all we can do is repeat what has already been published several times before, about which we have [already] written a lead article. The Central Committee should undertake a serious analysis. And the Central Committee's draft position should also speak in the name of the government.

Comrade István Szirmai:

Up to now, only the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's declaration has been published, and the Germans mentioned it in a formal speech. Is it not possible that the parties and governments of the signatory countries will make declarations one after the

other, while the Romanians remain silent? This is all the more likely to happen since, as we can see from the Western press, the Romanians have leaked everything that happened there and have describe it as a great political victory, as a Romanian victory. And in some respects, especially as far as the Warsaw Treaty and the Comecon are concerned, they are right, their position has prevailed. I don't think we should hasten things; the Central Committee will meet on the 27th, we can return to this matter then.

Comrade János Kádár

So, the communiqué will come out on Saturday. The communiqué should be drafted by the delegation's secretary, Comrade Károly Erdélyi, and I will also look at it. Let's look at it together with Comrades Szirmai and Kállai. Comrades Szirmai and Kállai should be asked to prepare a one- or two-page draft resolution to be put before the Central Committee. Let's put the report on the two meetings on the agenda of the Central Committee, and Comrade Gyula Kállai can speak to this point.

[Translation by László Borhi]