

**Comrade Todor Zhivkov's Speech at the Meeting of the
Warsaw Treaty's Political Consultative Committee in Prague
January 25-26, 1972**

Dear Comrades!

First of all, I would like to voice our agreement with what has been said here, particularly Comrade Brezhnev's complex and thorough analysis. The usefulness of this and future meetings is evident. Previous experience has unambiguously demonstrated that our consultative meetings play a major role in the formulation of our countries' coordinated foreign policy, in the reinforcement of our international standing and in the strengthening of the socialist community.

More than a year has passed since we last met. The events of this period verified the correctness of our collective appraisals, of the foreign policy actions of our parties and countries. The program for peace and international security adopted by the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU, which has become the program of all our parties as well, is of tremendous significance.

We agree with the assertion that the most characteristic trait of the present international situation is the dynamic foreign policy being pursued by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty, particularly our offensive initiatives aimed at relaxing international tension. We are carrying out a true international peace offensive. The treaties concluded by the Soviet Union and Poland with the FRG were followed by the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin. The GDR's talks with the FRG and the West Berlin Senate have reached a successful conclusion. The international agreement banning the use of bacteriological weapons has been worked out in Geneva. The United States and the Soviet Union signed an agreement that reduces the danger of an accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. The bilateral contacts of our countries with a wide circle of other states, especially the NATO member-states, have broadened and become more active. We must underline the importance of Comrade Brezhnev's meetings with Brandt and Pompidou as well as Comrade Kosygin's visits to Canada, Denmark and Norway.

Our delegation is in full agreement with Comrade Brezhnev's appraisal and conclusions regarding the present situation in Europe. I want to express just a few ideas regarding the European conference on peace and security.

Indeed, when our countries came up with specific recommendations in Bucharest a few years ago for the consolidation of peace and security on our continent, even we could not foresee that these ideas would elicit such a broad and quick response and would win not only the support of the masses but also a favorable reception on the part of several West European governments. There has never been an atmosphere in Europe so

conducive to the acceptance of the principle of peaceful coexistence and for the victory of lasting peace and cooperation as the one that has come about as a result of the consistent and decisive peace-loving policies of the Warsaw Treaty member-states.

The idea of collective security has found concrete expression in the preparations for the all-European conference. The political situation in Europe today allows us to pose the maximalist target: to hold the conference this year or next year at the latest. The guarantees for this are the realistic preconditions that we have described here. It is undoubtedly true that the tactical moves that our countries have made jointly and separately at different times, underpinned by good argumentation, have contributed to the acceptance of the idea of the conference even by those countries that were wavering or hedging their bets.

At the same time, it is correct to draw attention to the factors and forces in Europe and beyond that still oppose the idea of collective security and make ceaseless efforts to foil it. True, the stronger the conviction breaks through that we need to convoke the conference as rapidly as possible, the harder it will be for those forces to act against it. Therefore, their resistance has been evolving and will become more masked and hypocritical.

And what are the facts? The main force not interested in the convocation of the European security conference and its success is the North Atlantic bloc. And this is no coincidence. Its basic aims and tasks are fundamentally opposed to the principles that our countries have raised in connection with the conference. But NATO is no longer the same as it used to be twenty or even five years ago. The centrifugal forces within it are stronger, and we are eyewitnesses to the fact that at its latest meeting in Brussels, NATO, which had completely rejected the notion of European security two years ago, came up with a detailed analysis of our proposals. We know what positions the individual countries have taken. There are some significant facts that I would like to emphasize:

First of all, there are some states in NATO such as France, whose positions are identical or close to the stance of our countries;

Second, there is a group of countries that is wavering and would definitely not adopt the radical position of opposing it [the European security conference];

Third, diehard opponents such as the United States and England are in the minority, but in the final analysis, they are still able to impose their will on the others in some important questions.

We think that in the present phase we should outline and devote special attention to NATO's position and working out our joint response to NATO's tactics. Since the leading imperialist powers were unable to foil the initiative to convoke the European security conference, they are now trying to grab control of it and dictate its further

progress. This was clearly demonstrated at the two most recent meetings of the foreign ministers of NATO in Rome and Brussels. The United States knows well that if the conference succeeds, its alliance system with the West European countries, which took such a long time to build, will significantly erode, along with its dominance in Western Europe.

Therefore, in the future, it will actively try to prevent the conference and seek natural allies among the West European countries. It could be significant for us that at the present moment, the US cannot stand up against the aspirations of the West European states without risking isolation.

The amendments to our proposal that were approved as a result of their pressure contain some important elements concerning our agenda.

They propose that questions related to regional arms control be added to the first point of the agenda. This would mean diverting attention away from the central questions of the conference. Instead of discussing general principles regulating mutual relations between states and serving the goal of European security, NATO recommends the subordination of the central problem – the creation of an all-European system of security – to the prior resolution of this issue of partial importance, which is a function of the main problem. This attitude will have to be unmasked regularly and consistently as a ploy on the part of the United States and NATO to foil the conference.

With regard to the second point, the Western states are placing primary emphasis upon the “free movement of people, ideas and information.” It is not at all hard to discover what triggered this concern. We are facing an open and shameless attempt to exploit the European conference for ideological subversion. They hope that if their proposal is accepted, they will be able to use the conference as a pulpit for attacks against the socialist countries. They are counting on being able to exploit the conference as a means of broad ideological penetration into our countries. If we reject their proposal, they will have yet another argument to accuse us of not being constructive, to say that things are being delayed because of us. Our position is clear on this point as well. This matter is not a central question. It could become a subject of debate at the level of bilateral talks or at the conference-committee level after the establishment of a permanent organ for European security.

In analyzing the NATO position expounded at the meetings of NATO foreign ministers, we see that although they show signs of compromise, on the whole they are exponents of the foreign policy of the chief imperialist power, England. For the United States, the “Atlantic spirit” – i.e., unconditional loyalty to NATO’s military-strategic objectives – is the guiding principle in its attitude toward European security.

And for this reason – having seen that the conditions and obstacles that they are raising in NATO regarding an all-European meeting are manifestations of an openly hostile attitude – we must simultaneously take note of a series of signs that are not so

open, but which in terms of their consequences constitute serious attempts to arrest the process towards mutual understanding and cooperation in Europe.

At the Brussels meeting, the most reactionary forces in NATO were able to pass new measures directed toward increasing the military potential of the bloc, improving the bloc's military structure and modernizing its armed forces. Such measures essentially mean an acceleration of the arms race.

Besides the North Atlantic Treaty there is another significant factor in Europe, the Common Market, whose membership has expanded with the inclusion of England and some Scandinavian countries. British membership in the organization lends it a stronger political character, although its main purpose is economic. The nodes of conflict among its three most important members – England, France and the FRG – are of varying significance for us, given the varying distributions of power. To take these new factors into account will require that our organization analyze the new situation and work out collective guidelines regarding the Common Market.

We must notice and properly evaluate the fact that non-European countries besides the United States – primarily the People's Republic of China – are searching for ways to influence our continent. Unfortunately, China's increasingly active foreign policy in Europe is directed toward marring the notion of collective security and the socialist countries' efforts at achieving it. As we travel down the road toward collective security in Europe and its first practical manifestation, the convocation of the all-European conference, we must have an unambiguous, well-grounded and flexible program, which is suitable not only for overcoming the obstacles but also for providing a convincing and constructive alternative for the future development of our continent. While we cannot cede the initiative, we must be capable of linking the specific question of the European conference's convocation with a long-term vision of the future – approximately the next ten to fifteen years – with the intention of introducing and establishing those principles of state-to-state relations that provide the most favorable distribution of power for socialism on the continent.

For this reason we fully support the draft declaration put before the Consultative Committee. The draft contains proposals for long-term actions. The evaluation of the present situation on the continent contained in the document focuses our attention on those requisite tasks and preconditions that must be guaranteed in order to successfully prepare and hold the conference. At the same time, it expounds the basic principles of bilateral and multilateral cooperation that are directed toward creating a firm and mutually acceptable system of security.

The inviolability of boundaries, renunciation of force, peaceful coexistence, consent and cooperation for the sake of peace, mutually beneficial bilateral relations, disarmament and support for the UN – these are principles that, beyond their universal nature, bear concrete significance in terms of the development and fate of each European

country and each of its peoples. The strength of these principles resides precisely in the fact that these are not slogans deprived of content, but have been dictated by experience, verified by life and tested under hard historical circumstances.

Our countries' full and partial employment of these principles has promoted and continues to promote the successful preparation of the conference. The foreign policy of our countries should focus on increasing our efforts to hold the conference this year.

All our initiatives and actions in international life – official meetings, negotiations, consultations, discussions and declarations, etc. – should be subordinated to this end or connected to it.

General détente in Europe – this is our indisputable success. This is the collective achievement of our community and a success for us all. The conference will conclude the postwar phase of development in Europe, consolidate the political changes that have occurred as a result of World War II, and serve as further proof of the effectiveness of peaceful coexistence.

Comrades!

The Bulgarian People's Republic will do everything possible to contribute to our common struggle in the international arena. We shall use all our contacts with West European and other countries – such as meetings, talks and consultations -- to bring to the fore the questions of peace, cooperation and security. We will strive to consolidate our joint position regarding a European security conference.

As we do this, we are invigorating our relations with the leaders of the West European countries even more. Our Politburo has approved a program that contains mutual visits with government and state leaders from several West European countries. We are laying special stress upon good-neighborly relations, upon building and expanding cooperation with the Balkan states. We are led by the conviction that peace and security in the Balkan peninsula also plays an important role in the improvement of the general European political atmosphere.

That the positions of the United States and China coincide with regard to a growing number of international questions is a cause for increasing concern. Peking's position is truly strange with regard to the struggle of the peoples of Indochina, the struggles for national liberation by the people of Bangladesh and the Arab peoples, who are all fighting against the consequences of American and Israeli aggression.

We do not intend to dwell on the Chinese question in great detail. But we, the whole Bulgarian communist party, think that the foundations of the Chinese leaders' policies in international life and within the international communist movement reflect a total renunciation of our theory and practice, wild anti-Sovietism, and in essence, anticommunism. The Chinese leadership has practically opened a second front against us.

We need to be vigilant and also wage an unrelenting struggle on this front as well.

[Translation by László Borhi]