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Speech of General Secretary of the CC of the CPC and President of the ČSSR
Gustáv Husák at the Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the
Warsaw Treaty Member-States in Prague,
January 4, 1983

Dear Comrades,

Our meeting is taking place in extraordinarily grave times, when Europe and the entire world find themselves at a dangerous turning point and when all key issues on which the future fate of mankind depends – namely those of war and peace – have come to the forefront once more.

Peace-loving people the world over rightly expect that our current meeting in Prague will provide a proper response to the warlike and confrontational course of the USA, that our countries will present new initiatives and proposals that show a way out of the present difficult situation.

We all feel a deep responsibility for the fate and future of the world. We must do everything possible to avert the threat of nuclear war and to maintain and strengthen peace as we build socialism and communism in our countries. This will also provide support for progressive developments around the world, including the ongoing struggle of peoples for national and social liberation.

A policy of confrontation is alien to our socialist countries. We have always promoted the principles of peaceful coexistence and mutually advantageous contacts in our relations with capitalist states.

The address of the General Secretary of the CC of the CPSU, Comrade Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, provided a fitting description of our common policy. We agree with

the analysis of the current international situation presented in Comrade Andropov's speech and fully support his proposals and conclusions.

We, too, strongly oppose the plans of the most reactionary imperialist circles, which have recently unleashed a veritable "crusade" against peace and socialism. We believe that the strong unity, alliance, and fraternal cooperation of the socialist commonwealth, along with the peace-loving, anti-imperialist, and democratic forces of the entire world, have provided us with sufficient means and resolve to thwart the risky and hazardous plans of imperialism, including its attempts to attain military superiority and halt the process of world revolution and national liberation. Now that certain representatives of imperialism have openly stated that their goal is to destroy socialism, we must do everything we can to retain the initiative in world developments and thwart their plans. We can achieve this by maintaining even closer unity among the socialist countries and cooperating as closely as possible in every way.

Comrades,

Recent developments have demonstrated that we cannot afford to underestimate the adventuristic policy of the imperialist circles, especially the USA, which is seeking a way out of the ever-deepening crisis of capitalism through militarism and heightened aggressiveness. The Reagan Administration, in its blind anticommunism, has launched a political, ideological, economic, and military offensive against the socialist commonwealth in order to weaken the main link in the world-revolutionary process.

The fact that they would prefer to rely on nuclear weapons and military power in the conflict between the capitalist and socialist systems indicates that American leaders do not believe that capitalism will be able to hold its ground in peaceful competition with socialism and to prevent a further erosion of imperialism's positions. They have done everything possible to compel their allies, under the guise of Atlantic unity and solidarity, to participate in their adventuristic plans. Given the class solidarity of the capitalist world, it would be a mistake to

underestimate these efforts. Leading politicians from the West European member- states of the North Atlantic Pact have not spared any words in assuring their support for détente. In their policy toward the socialist commonwealth, however, they support – or at least allow themselves to be carried forward by – the militaristic course of the USA, including its plans to station U.S. intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

However, vacillation and discord still exist among the imperialist states, especially between Western Europe and the USA. Their disputes are manifested most visibly in the economic sphere, in the struggle for markets and for sources of energy and other commodities. However, even in the political sphere, the West European governments cannot afford to entirely ignore the peace and antiwar movement and the masses' growing resistance against the feverish arms race and, in particular, against the U.S. strategists' plans to assign Europe the unenviable role of a future battlefield in a nuclear war. As far as the principal issues in the fight against socialism are concerned, the class-motivated subordination of the West European states to Washington's confrontational course still plays the leading role, but we must consider the aforementioned facts and respond accordingly in our foreign policy. We must keep trying to make them understand and face the reality that a nuclear war would threaten all nations, regardless of differences of class, politics or religion.

Because the situation is extraordinarily tense, we must open the broadest possible political dialogue regarding all of today's outstanding issues. Guaranteeing European security represents an important argument in our policy toward the West European states. We believe that our principled and realistic policy will attract increasing support and help blunt the edge of anticommunism.

Comrades,

The reactionary imperialist forces realize quite well that every success we attain in constructing socialism and communism has a great potential to attract others. This is especially

true now, as the capitalist system experiences its worst crisis since the 1930s. Consequently, it is no accident that bourgeois propaganda has unleashed an ideological and psychological war against us in an attempt to divert the attention of the workers, who are bearing the brunt of the crisis and the arms race, away from the chief culprit—the capitalist system. Its goal is to conceal the truth about the socialist countries' peace initiatives and to present the socialist commonwealth as the main threat to peace, freedom, and democracy.

Their policy makes use of economic pressure and discriminatory measures in trade and finance in order to destabilize the economies of the socialist countries and to subvert their social and economic development. Faced with this broadly-conceived and refined anti-socialist campaign, there is a growing need for a more offensive posture and closer coordination in implementing and clarifying the peace policy of the socialist countries; a more effective and convincing promotion of the achievements of real-existing socialism; and an unmasking of the dangerous plans of NATO and especially the USA.

We are deeply convinced that the socialist countries have sufficient strength and means to effectively confront this discriminatory policy. However, we must exploit all the possibilities offered by international socialist cooperation to strengthen our economic and scientific-technical potential. Thus, CMEA's entire operation must be tailored to meet current requirements. The most pressing task confronting our countries and the socialist commonwealth as a whole is the further deepening of socialist integration, further cooperation in production and scientific-technical research, and the broadening of mutually-beneficial cooperation in order to insure food production for our people and to resolve other problems. The experience of recent years has convincingly demonstrated the need to strengthen and consolidate the independence of our countries from capitalism in these and other areas, or at least to eliminate any over-dependence.

For its part, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will do everything to help lay the groundwork for the further expansion and development of cooperation with regard to all the

tasks outlined above. We believe that the forthcoming summit of the CMEA member-states on economic issues will significantly contribute to realizing these aims.

Comrades,

In our May 1980 Declaration, adopted at the Warsaw meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, we concluded that every step forward toward the consolidation of international security would require unyielding struggle against the imperialist policy of strength, *diktat*, confrontation, and incitement of conflicts.

In today's complicated situation, we particularly appreciate the consistency of the Leninist peace policy of the Soviet Union, focused on defending peace and supporting social progress in the world. All the peace initiatives of the USSR, aimed at consolidating security and world peace, are congenial to us and conform to the aspirations of our people. Taken together, they represent the socialist commonwealth's peaceful alternative for the world to nuclear confrontation. The historic commitment to the non-first-use of nuclear weapons, along with a realistic program for nuclear disarmament, together with the other Soviet initiatives for military détente, shows the proper way toward resolving these urgent problems.

Unfortunately, we must concede that the militaristic course of the American government has adversely affected the progress of all ongoing disarmament negotiations. The USA and its allies have actually been blocking them and have not been displaying a willingness to cooperate in achieving concrete results, despite the fact that the socialist countries have made concessions to our Western partners' positions regarding a number of matters. Thus, we will have to strive even more to win the support of the non-aligned and neutral states for our realistic and balanced proposals.

We consider our struggle against the deployment of the American intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe to be of the utmost importance for both our own and global security. We are aware that the USA is doing all it can to start implementing this dangerous,

militaristic plan as early as this year. This is also demonstrated by its destructive attitude at the Geneva talks with the Soviet Union on the reduction of intermediate-range weapons. In fact, it has thus far only been using these talks to deceive the European public and to present ultimatums to the Soviet Union.

A constantly growing part of the European public is becoming aware of the danger posed by the deployment of American missiles in Western Europe. They are rightly protesting against these plans, whose implementation would result in a serious deterioration of the situation in Europe and increase the risk of armed conflict. Consequently, there is no more urgent task than to do our utmost together to thwart these aims.

If the states of the North Atlantic pact indeed accept the deployment of the American intermediate-range missiles on the territory of the Western European states, our countries will have to consider necessary measures in response to this increased threat to our security. In the face of imperialism's reckless and militaristic policy, especially that of the United States of America, any unilateral disarmament or freezing or reduction of defense expenditures by the Warsaw Treaty countries would undermine the military balance and violate the principle of equal security. It would weaken us and strengthen the military power of imperialism. In a word, it would represent a serious political and military blunder on the part of our commonwealth.

The imperialist world has been building up and concentrating its conventional and nuclear forces along the ČSSR's western border. If we want to remain realists in considering the fundamental issues of our security, we cannot proceed from illusions or wishful thinking. This is why the ČSSR can neither accept nor support such proposals.

We fully share the opinion that, apart from the struggle against the nuclear threat, every effort should also be made to rid Europe, step-by-step, of another type of weapon of mass destruction – namely, chemical weapons. As a first step toward this goal, the ČSSR supports the proposed agreement to ban such weapons from the territories of the ČSSR, the PRP, and the GDR, on the one hand, and the FRG, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, on the other.

We are convinced that such an agreement would provide considerable impetus to the conclusion of a general convention for a total ban on and destruction of chemical weapons.

Comrades,

In the socialist commonwealth's foreign policy, the elimination of the use or threat of force in international relations plays an important role. This is also the goal of a new major initiative of the Warsaw Treaty, addressed to the NATO member-states. We believe that it is now expedient for us to submit jointly a draft treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and the preservation of peaceful relations. The importance of the proposal will be even greater if applied to relations with third countries, regardless of their bilateral agreements with NATO or the Warsaw Treaty states, along with the neutral and non-aligned countries. We believe that the agreement should be open to any state.

Given that in Europe states with different socioeconomic systems exist alongside each other, and given that the North Atlantic pact has no desire to accept the mutual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty and their military organizations, the implementation of the aforementioned plan would contribute significantly to the stabilization of the international situation. The proposal demonstrates our desire for peace, and we are convinced that it will be well-received throughout the world. We must jointly strive to make it the starting point for further negotiations on the consolidation of stability and security in Europe and the strengthening of mutual trust among European countries. Czechoslovakia is prepared to contribute actively to these joint efforts.

The significance of the proposed treaty on the renunciation of military force between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO had been underscored by the destructive power of modern weapons and the apparent willingness of the most reactionary imperialist forces to gamble irresponsibly with the fate of all mankind. The implementation of such a treaty corresponds to the wishes of

millions of people seeking to preserve peace, a desire that has been so convincingly demonstrated in the mass anti-war movement.

Now more than ever we must jointly assess the possibilities and measures that in the given situation will more effectively mobilize the broadest possible front for peace, which represents a serious political factor in today's world. The warmongers are very much aware of this as well; that is why they have been trying to divide, discredit, and generally weaken it. The forthcoming "World Assembly for Peace and Life, Against Nuclear War," which will take place in Prague this June, will play a positive role in the fight against such plans. Its agenda should focus on supporting the most urgent steps needed to eliminate the danger of war.

We consider it appropriate that our meeting is focusing on improving the situation in Europe, as developments on our continent are of fundamental importance for world peace. In fact, Europe has benefited the most from détente, which can and must be strengthened and developed further. This is our goal at the Madrid meeting. Its results, however, remain uncertain due to the obstruction of the Western powers.

We believe that the efforts to improve the atmosphere on our continent by continuing the all-European process launched at the Helsinki conference would benefit from the adoption of a substantive and balanced concluding document at Madrid. We must continue to provide our unswerving support so that it will call, first and foremost, for the convocation of a conference on confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament in Europe. However, our joint efforts to conclude the Madrid meeting soon do not mean that only the socialist countries are interested in its successful conclusion. We resolutely reject the West's attempts to abuse the goodwill of the socialist states for political extortion; to exact unilateral concessions or unilateral advantages; or to interfere in the internal affairs of our countries.

We want to continue to develop our relations with the capitalist countries based on the principles contained in the Final Act. This, of course, includes our closest neighbors in the West.

We have been closely watching developments in the FRG since the advent of the new coalition government. Under the previous coalition government of Social Democrats and Free Democrats, relations between most of the socialist countries and the FRG were normalized. Both sides benefited from the development of peaceful relations that resulted from the treaties that were concluded. We have been closely watching the multiplying signs of the new FRG's government growing tendency toward complete support of the USA's line, especially with regard to a further arms buildup. We are also concerned about the growing manifestations of Pan-German nationalism and especially the adoption of imperialist aims under the slogan of German unification.

We want to continue our present relations with the FRG, provided that the other side also demonstrates goodwill. We will proceed strictly on the basis of the 1973 Treaty on Mutual Relations between the ČSSR and the FRG and in accordance with the jointly- coordinated policy of the socialist commonwealth. We must resist the imperialists' efforts to subvert the cooperation and joint policy of our states, as has also been evident in the FRG's policy.

As you know, I was recently on an official visit to the Austrian Republic. It should be noted that this was the first visit of a Czechoslovak president to that country since the birth of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. We want to develop our relations with Austria in such a way as to prove the viability of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems. At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that there are influential forces in Austria that are systematically promoting ideological diversion in order to subvert the socialist order in the ČSSR and in the other states of our commonwealth.

We must also not weaken our vigilance with regard to developments in other parts of the world. Imperialism is fueling existing and creating new hotbeds of tension, using brutal military force, exporting counter-revolution, extending its vast network of military bases, and usurping other nations' right to decide their own fate. The ČSSR supports the peoples' struggle for national liberation, for the elimination of imperialist exploitation and oppression, for the

liquidation of hotbeds of tension and the danger of war, and for social progress. We are following unswervingly the line set by the 16th Congress of the CPČ, which proclaimed that “our country shall always stand on the side of the nations fighting for freedom and independence and will support their social and economic development.” We consider our deepening cooperation with developing countries, especially with those that have opted for the socialist path of development, as our contribution to the struggle against imperialism. The struggle of the non-aligned movement against the remnants of colonialism and imperialism and for the peaceful resolution of crises deserves our support.

Comrades,

The political declaration presented to our meeting for consideration and approval clearly shows the negative role of imperialism in the current development of international relations and the dangerous consequences of its policy. However, it also shows that the existing correlation of forces between socialism and capitalism no longer allows imperialism to arbitrarily determine world developments as it pleases. The shift in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism, a force whose weight is constantly growing and which is influencing life on our planet to an ever greater extent, cannot be stopped. Still, we must not let our guard down.

Imperialism’s current policy highlights even more the importance of the conclusions from previous meetings of the Political Consultative Committee, which underlined the necessity of strengthening our unity and cohesion. We consider our coordinated approach to be particularly important and relevant now. Unity is the major source of our strength and power – an important prerequisite for our successful fight against imperialism’s anti-socialist aims and in our struggle for peace and disarmament. We consider it extremely important that this meeting of the Political Consultative Committee is demonstrating anew our unity and our determined joint resistance against any imperialist attempts to weaken or undermine it.

It is our mutual victory that imperialism and internal anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary forces have failed to overthrow the socialist order in the fraternal People's Republic of Poland. The decisive intervention of the Polish leadership opened the way to a gradual normalization of everyday life, for the reconsolidation of socialism's positions, and the restoration of the ties of the People's Republic of Poland to the other states of the socialist commonwealth as an integral part of the Warsaw Treaty. It is good that the Polish comrades with Comrade Jaruzelski at the fore began to fight energetically against the counter-revolutionary forces and to deal decisively with the crisis. For this, they deserve our recognition and support.

The Czechoslovak communists and our people fully support the efforts at consolidation by the party and state leaders of the PRP. We sincerely rejoice at every achievement of the Polish comrades in their difficult fight for the renewal of socialist values and for the further construction of socialism in the PRP. We have assisted and provided support to the PRP in its efforts to fully normalize everyday life and to consolidate the authority and leading role of the Party and will continue to do so. We firmly reject the unscrupulous interference by the USA and other NATO states in Polish internal affairs, as Comrade Jaruzelski mentioned earlier. We consider it our internationalist duty to counter imperialism's attempts to exploit the internal situation in Poland as a pretext for attacks against the Soviet Union with the goal of weakening the cause of socialism and undermining the détente process. We are well aware that the struggle will not be easy in the years to come. However, communists have never spared or regretted any effort or sacrifice to further the cause of peace, progress, and human happiness.

Dear Comrades,

The unity and growing influence of the socialist countries are invaluable to the fate of peace and socialism. We can fulfill our unique and indispensable role only if we further deepen our political, economic, ideological, and military cooperation.

The ČSSR considers it highly necessary that we further strengthen and develop our cooperation, improve the operation of the Warsaw Treaty's political and military structures, and deepen the coordination of our international activities.

Comrades,

I have before me the draft documents for our present meeting in Prague – namely, the declaration and the communiqué. The Czechoslovak delegation fully agrees with them. They are documents of great significance, which present a comprehensive set of concrete and constructive proposals. As an alternative to the threat of nuclear war, we are proposing peace, understanding, and broad international cooperation in the name of preserving civilization and life on earth. Together, we must do everything to make the world public aware of our clear positions, so that they can play their mobilizing role in the struggle for peace and security.

[Translation from the Czech by Jiří Mareš]