

**Speech by the Head of Soviet Delegation at the Meeting of the Warsaw Treaty's
Political Consultative Committee, April 17-18, 1974, in Warsaw¹**

Dear Comrades!

Please allow me to greet you all cordially once again on behalf of the Soviet delegation. We express our profound satisfaction that we are meeting again to discuss current issues with regard to our common activities in the field of foreign policy and to agree upon further steps in the struggle for European security and détente.

We want to thank our Polish friends for their hospitality and for providing excellent conditions for our work.

In the last years, our meetings in the framework of the Warsaw Treaty's Political Consultative Committee and our unofficial fraternal meetings in the Crimea have become regular. And every time we meet, when we draw the balance of our activities, we are convinced again and again of the extent to which the coordinated policies of the fraternal states of the Warsaw Treaty make a difference in international affairs and lead to significant results.

I remember well how nine years ago, we met in the same place, here in Warsaw, and discussed how to achieve a radical turn towards improving the continent's political atmosphere. Back then, when the "cold war" was still in full swing, we set a concrete task: to foil NATO's plans to create multilateral nuclear forces with the participation of the FRG.

A lot of things have transpired since then! NATO's above-mentioned plans have been relegated to the bottom of the archives. The FRG government has practically recognized the existing borders; due primarily to our influence, the policy of the FRG itself has changed and has become more realistic. The Munich *diktat*² is no longer valid. The situation around West Berlin has relaxed considerably. And finally, Comrades, we can mention such a principled result as the GDR's consolidation in the world arena as a sovereign state with full rights.

Thus, the postwar settlement in Europe that has been delayed for almost three decades has now been concluded. For all practical purposes, we have been able to resolve all the problems that we set as a precondition for the signing of a German peace settlement.

The results of our common actions are truly palpable even beyond the confines of Europe. A lively phase of diplomatic activity is unfolding in the world arena: the all-

¹ Excerpt from the Hungarian transcript of the meeting at
<http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic.cfm?lng=en&id=18172&navinfo=14465>.

² Reference to the Munich Agreement of 1938.

European conference is just about to reach its final stage, preparations are being made for the forthcoming session of the Geneva conference on the Middle East, in Vienna we are searching for ways to reduce armaments and armed forces in Central Europe, important talks are being conducted between the Soviet Union and the United States for the reduction of strategic arms. And all this came about directly or indirectly as a result of our initiatives and is related to the common struggle of our fraternal parties and the socialist states.

Since we last discussed the international situation at the meeting in the Crimea, events have occurred that have tested détente and stability in a particular way. I am thinking primarily of the upsurge of fighting in the Middle East. Détente withstood this test. What we have already achieved was really a huge step forward and it has proved impossible to turn it back. This, I might say, is the most important result of recent times.

Let me mention one characteristic moment. Just before Kissinger's³ last visit to Moscow, we had received a letter from Nixon.⁴ The basic idea in the letter was that in Soviet-American relations, in relations between the states of the two different world systems, there was no alternative to peaceful coexistence and that détente could and had to be made irreversible. Nixon reaffirmed this idea to Comrade Podgorny⁵ during their talks in Paris. In Pitsunda France affirmed its intention to pursue the policy of détente with full dedication. Brandt⁶ sent a written as well as an oral message to us through Bahr⁷ in the same spirit.

Of course, détente does not always and everywhere proceed "according to schedule" or precisely in accordance with our ideas. The ruling circles in the West are striving to impose upon us their own conditions that are advantageous to them with regard to peaceful coexistence. The opponents of peaceful coexistence have also become more active. What's more, a kind of unified front has been forged between all those who dislike our peace-loving policy of class struggle – ranging from arms manufacturers and the owners of the most reactionary imperialist media; from Zionists and fascists to Maoists and extremist imitators of the left.

But experience shows that despite resistance, the cause of a rational transformation of international relations is moving forward. Wide-scale support for our policy of détente has been expressed by a whole range of social strata and political currents, as was amply demonstrated by the World Congress of Peace Forces held in Moscow.

³ U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

⁴ U.S. President Richard M. Nixon.

⁵ Nikolai Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and member of the CPSU Politburo.

⁶ West German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

⁷ Egon Bahr, West German Minister for Special Affairs under Chancellor Brandt.

Détente is creating the conditions for new successes for the socialist world and for the [national] liberation movements, is contributing to a loosening up of the capitalist world and is intensifying the contradictions within the capitalist world to an ever-growing extent.

I think we can say that we have been witnessing the most intense clashes among the capitalist countries and the centers of imperialism – the United States, Western Europe and Japan – since the Second World War. In addition to their previously existing economic conflicts, intensified by the current energy crisis, they also have their political differences. The United States' attempt to preserve its present role in the capitalist world by establishing a kind of "Neo-Atlantic community" has run into serious resistance. Things went so far that President Nixon changed his plans to go to Brussels for the anniversary meeting of NATO where they had been preparing to solemnly sign the new Atlantic Declaration. Even the widely-propagated meeting itself was cancelled. The Western press has made no secret of the fact that conflict within the NATO camp was the reason for this.

It is natural that neither the European partners of the United States nor the Americans themselves are prepared to torpedo the North Atlantic bloc. The Western ruling circles are doing their utmost to stop the weakening of the bloc structure of the imperialist world. NATO's preparations for war have not decreased one iota; on the contrary, they are growing broader.

Considering all this, and without losing sight of the goal that the military-political blocs should be replaced by a system of collective security, in the current situation we must consolidate the Warsaw Treaty and constantly develop and improve the forms of its multilateral activity.

Under conditions of international détente, the processes of destabilization within the capitalist states have been gaining momentum. This has become increasingly clear as of late. The Republican Administration in the United States -- what's more, the country's administrative system -- is struggling with tremendous difficulties. The governments have changed in England and Italy in the midst of serious domestic political and economic turmoil. A pretty unstable balance has come about between the ruling and the opposition parties in the FRG, France, Canada, Sweden and some other countries.

The working classes of the capitalist states are intensifying their struggle for their rights, and the communist parties have steered this struggle into an even more active political channel; have turned this popular discontent against the aggressive and reactionary ruling circles; and have launched a broad struggle for the consolidation and deepening of détente. Under these conditions the social democrats and all other parties that seek to represent the broad masses are compelled to take a stand on fundamental political issues, including international ones.

Domestic hardships and the competition of the bourgeois states necessitate that they expand their political and economic links with the socialist states. It is clear that all this can and should be utilized in the interest of socialism in our fight for the consolidation of peace. Please allow me to proceed directly to European affairs.

We are currently concentrating on the all-European conference. In summing up the results of the consultations in Helsinki during our meeting in the Crimea, we anticipated that the West would employ the usual method of procrastination and would attempt to divert us from some of our principled positions. This is precisely what has happened. They focused their main attack on questions such as the inviolability of borders, issues of military détente (so-called stabilizing and confidence-building measures), information exchange, direct contacts between people, and the countries' level of representation at the third phase of the conference.

We have recently received signals from Geneva that larger and larger difficulties have arisen in discussing these questions. We are making strenuous efforts to improve the situation. Therefore, in January, we dispatched confidential messages to the leaders of the Western powers in which we asked them to adopt more realistic positions. At the same time, in public speeches (in Cuba, for example) we criticized the Western tactics of procrastination. In previous months, questions relating to the all-European conference formed the basis of serious discussions with President Pompidou, Secretary of State Kissinger and Federal Minister Bahr.

Our measures have brought satisfactory results. First of all, we managed to convince our negotiating partners not to oppose the clear and unambiguous wording of the principle of the inviolability of borders. We know that as a result there were preliminary consultations about this question at the Geneva conference. Characteristically, the attempts by the West German delegation to assert its demands were not supported by the rest of the West European states, and the French and the Americans actually opposed the FRG's position.

We were able to make progress to some extent on issues related to the third point on the agenda of the conference as well. You know that Westerners wanted to force us to discuss unacceptable, sometimes even absurd ideas regarding this point. The French delegation recommended that states should have the right to open movie theaters with their own management and programs on the territories of other participating countries. When we asked the French in Pitsunda what they meant by setting up these "extraterritorial" cinemas, they replied that this was the first time they had heard about this and that they understood they could not come up with unrealistic demands. The Americans agreed in their discussions with us that the conference document on the development of cultural relations should contain a clear reference to honoring the universally-agreed principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.

Our position on the third point of the conference is a matter of principle, but at the same time it is also flexible. It is based on our willingness to broaden relations significantly but with respect for state sovereignty and without interference in each other's legal systems and domestic affairs. Any other approach to this question would be contrary to the consolidation of détente and would renew the "cold war." Of course, our countries would never tolerate activities aimed at undermining socialism and would not open the door to bourgeois ideology or morals.

For the time being, there has been no progress in the area of so-called confidence- and stability-building measures. Generally speaking, although some caution is justified, there is nothing unacceptable to us about the practice of mutually warning each other about larger military movements or exchanging observers in war games. But the Western powers have been intentionally raising unacceptable demands. These demands are not meant so much as to build confidence but to bring the dislocation and training of our troops under their supervision. Of course, we have rejected these proposals. We need to place discussion of a given question within an objective platform and to find a solution that does not impinge upon the security of the participants.

In our discussions with Western representatives we argued that the concluding meeting of the all-European conference should be held at the summit level. It is obviously not palatable to the Western powers to raise the political significance of a meeting whose convocation was initiated by the socialist states. There is a certain amount of tactical calculation in this; they are trying to make the level of the third phase contingent upon the concessions that we make on other issues.

As a result of our negotiations, the evasive French position with which you are all familiar has improved somewhat. As far as the Americans are concerned, Kissinger told us confidentially that if we accept at the conference the kind of documents that are currently under negotiation in Geneva, Nixon would consider them wholly acceptable for signing at the summit level. As far as we can infer from Bahr's declarations, Brandt is approaching this issue in the same way.

The fact that the work in Geneva is dragging on impedes a fundamental improvement of the situation in Europe and around the world. Therefore, we suggested a deadline for concluding the conference to our negotiating partners. Orally, they all agreed that the work of the conference should be sped up. The United States thinks that it should be possible to conclude the conference at some point around July of this year. I think that this deadline is acceptable to us.

Of course, Comrades, we are far from thinking that we have done all the work and that the conference will succeed of its own accord, automatically. We must continue to act forcefully, and we must work with our partners persistently on all levels, making step-by-step progress in our struggle against the opponents of détente. The coordination of our

moves, the activities of all the fraternal countries with regard to our common goals, will continue to be of primary importance.

Our representatives in Geneva must demonstrate sensitivity, and when need be, flexibility with regard to our negotiating partners; we must proceed actively and ambitiously, and most importantly, they must always sense each other's readiness to help.

They must fulfill the guiding principles of our Central Committees and make certain that good drafts are produced regarding all four points at the conference as soon as possible.

In setting our future political guidelines for European affairs, we must consider matters of great significance such as the appearance of the "Nine" on the continent's political scene. But even now, the "Nine" are turning against the political interests of the United States. At this stage, this activity is practically unraveling NATO or at least is weakening the position of the U.S. within the bloc.

On the other hand, we cannot disregard the tendency in the development of the "Nine," that they are planning the establishment of a military bloc, about which there is much talk in the West.

Of course, there is a great distance from this rumor to the actual creation of a military alliance. The United States opposes the formation of such a bloc decisively, for it sees a means for weakening NATO therein. France, which seeks a leading role in the West European grouping, does not hide its desire to see West Germany's role constrained to human resources and the transportation of infantry. Naturally, the FRG disagrees with all this. It seeks a dominating role in Western Europe itself.

In one word, many things prove that conflicts between the Western powers, including the ones between members of the "Nine," are quite profound. Nevertheless, a certain kind of sentiment favoring military integration can be perceived within the "Nine" group, and this cannot be disregarded. The appearance of a new military bloc in Western Europe would undoubtedly have negative consequences for peace on the continent and for the interests of our countries as well, especially if we consider that in the longer run the FRG will acquire nuclear weapons either way (it is true, France opposes this rather decisively).

All of this, Comrades, makes our struggle for the consolidation of European peace -- including our aim that political détente be coupled with military détente -- even more pressing. This is why our countries have proposed that negotiations take place about the reduction of armaments and armed forces in Central Europe.

I don't think any of us are expecting rapid success in the Vienna talks. The questions to be discussed there are too complicated and sensitive. You are well aware of the essence of the Western position. They would obviously like to use the talks to change the balance of power in Europe to their own favor. It goes without saying that there can be no agreement based on such conditions. I believe that at the Vienna talks we must

stick to our realistic and constructive position of principle. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility of tactical moves and the demonstration of a certain flexibility in seeking mutually acceptable solutions.

Comrades! No matter how important our all-European activities are, the success of our policies toward Europe largely hinge on the development of relations between the capitalist and socialist states in Europe. And in this regard we must focus our attention on the FRG. It took hard work to undermine the influence of the forces in that country that kept the FRG in a state of confrontation and hostility toward the socialist countries for years. Every Warsaw Treaty state already has normal diplomatic relations with the FRG. We have seen time and again the importance of acting in a unified and ambitious fashion regarding these matters, being mindful of the interests of each of our countries and of the interests of the whole socialist commonwealth as well.

You well know that recently the position of the Brandt Government and the Social Democrats – as the main governing party – has worsened noticeably. The Social Democrats are continuing to lose votes in regional elections. The signs of crisis in the capitalist world – inflation, price hikes, the energy crisis – have not evaded the FRG. A country that once utilized the services of millions of foreign workers is now on the brink of unemployment. All this is leading to a resurgence of the right wing. The opposition is skillfully exploiting all this, claiming that the Brandt Government's domestic and foreign policy is "wholly outdated."

Obviously, the Brandt Government's policy is inconsistent, and its domestic policy is far from progressive. But in this situation we are not interested in weakening the position of this government, and we believe that it should be supported. I think we all share this view. This will be our point of departure in preparing for our meeting with the Chancellor this summer.

And last but not least, we set our policy toward the FRG in accordance with our own interests: to find and purchase with cash documentation, licenses and equipment for the first unit of the Kursk Metallurgical Plant. This step put an end to CDU/CSU speculations about loans to the Soviet Union, and the Brandt Government very much appreciated this move as support for its position.

Understandably, our goodwill towards the FRG is limited. In cases where the West German government plays upon on its own difficulties in trying to extract concessions from us at the expense of our common interests – for example, in relation to the GDR or the West Berlin question – we have struck back in an appropriate manner and will do so in the future.

We understand that in developing our relations with the FRG we can try to attain the following goal: the creation of a system of obligations, of realistic political and economic relations, which, on the one hand, would lead to a consolidation of the positive tendencies in the West German government's current foreign policy, and on the other

hand, would guarantee that even if a turn occurred in the FRG's domestic policies, it would not return the country to an atmosphere of "cold war." But to a large extent this is contingent upon further European developments.

French foreign policy toward the socialist countries has had a palpable influence on European affairs. While we continue to cooperate with France, occasionally, we openly lay out our views to the French about the negative aspects of their attitude in questions like the reduction of armed forces, continued nuclear tests and so on.

At the meeting in Pitsunda Pompidou solemnly assured us that understanding and cooperation with the Soviet Union represents one of the fundamental elements of French foreign policy. Pompidou is deceased, but a personal change at the helm of French politics will surely not alter this political direction. Their stance against the United States, their concerns about the growing strength of the FRG, the turmoil in their relations with England is truly pushing France toward cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist states.

As far as England is concerned, many unresolved questions accumulated in our relations during the period of Conservative rule. In the election campaign the Labour Party pledged a serious readjustment of the country's political course. But the position of the Labour Party government is volatile. Only time will tell what their policy will truly be like. We are considering whether to meet Wilson⁸ at the appropriate time. This would help us to gauge the real intentions of the Labour Government and to influence them in a direction that is favorable to us as much as possible.

All in all, we can say that the situation in Europe is conducive to our policies: the consolidation of the positions of socialism and international détente. We know that all the fraternal countries have made a strong effort to develop their relations with the West European countries. The Comrades will surely discuss their experiences in this work.

Some time ago, Comrades, we agreed to establish relations between the Comecon and the EEC. Last, fall the Comecon put out feelers, but no response came for six months. The EEC member-states were unable to reconcile their positions. But in March, they declared officially at the meeting of the European Parliament that the Common Market reaffirmed its interest in relations with Comecon. Obviously, concrete proposals will have to be drafted based on principles worked out in the Comecon about the nature of our agreement with the Common Market that will take into account our collective interests as well as the interests of the individual countries and search for ways and means of influencing the EEC. We undoubtedly have such possibilities. Among other things, we have been informed that the other economic community in Western Europe, EFTA, is allegedly ready to establish ties with the Comecon with no strings attached. Although with England's secession, the member-states – Austria, Norway, Iceland,

⁸ Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

Portugal, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland – are not so large, and their position is not of indifference to us, especially if we take into account the association's conflicts with the Common Market. So I think there is a reason for consideration here.

Today, when practically everything was or is being fulfilled in terms of what we planned at the meetings of the Political Consultative Committee, we must do good work in setting concrete tasks for the next phase of the struggle for European security and cooperation. This, Comrades, is the task of our foreign ministries and then for all of us in the immediate future.

And now, let me say a few words about our relations with the United States. Considering the multifaceted nature of these relations, we think that the main thrust of our efforts should be reducing the danger of strategic nuclear war and limiting the arms race, areas where we have already achieved some results. I am referring to the agreements on the prevention of nuclear war and the limitation of strategic arms.

We will be focusing on the issues of further reducing the danger of war and arms limitations in preparing for President Nixon's scheduled visit to the Soviet Union this June. These were the main questions in the conversations with Kissinger in Moscow. What, specifically, did we discuss?

First. The agreement signed in 1972 on the limitation of offensive strategic weapons, as we know, is provisional. It will expire in 1977. Given that strategic weapons are developed on the basis of long-term programs, now is the time to define our stance for the period ahead. This is why it would be expedient to make the provisional agreement permanent or to extend it for a few years. In theory the Americans are not opposed to this. But they are linking the treaty's prolongation to the inclusion of an article in the agreement that would limit both countries' development of new MIRVed⁹ missiles. The concrete wording of this article is currently under negotiation. The United States is seeking unilateral advantages in this area, so it will be hard to reach a deal. Nevertheless, we must search for a rational, mutually acceptable agreement because without it the logic of things will ineluctably draw the Soviet Union and the United States into a new round of the arms race with all its consequences for us and for the international situation in general.

Second. We are discussing the possibility of the institution of new measures by the Soviet Union and the United States for the limitation of ABM¹⁰ systems in further development of the 1972 agreement. I think we will find common language regarding this question.

⁹ Multiple, independently targeted reentry vehicles – i.e., multiple nuclear warheads on one missile, capable of striking different targets.

¹⁰ Anti-Ballistic Missile.

Third. It is known that the 1963 agreement¹¹ banned nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater. The issue of underground nuclear tests remained unresolved. Now, we are proposing to the United States that within a certain time our countries should agree on banning underground tests as well. The Americans would not agree to ban these tests completely, but it is possible that they will agree to ban the underground detonation of nuclear warheads above a certain magnitude. We are also proceeding from the assumption that if other countries continue with their nuclear tests, then the Soviet Union and the United States will be forced to review the situation after a certain time.

Fourth. We are proposing that the Soviet Union and the United States initiate the signing of an international agreement to ban efforts to influence the environment and the climate for military or other objectives that are incompatible with international security or the health and wellbeing of humanity.

Fifth. In order to move forward on the issue of banning chemical weapons, which has been under discussion for years, we have recommend a phased resolution of the problem. This means that we should first ban the development, production and use of the most dangerous, lethal chemical weapons, while the placement of a ban on other types of weapons would remain under discussion.

Finally, we recommended to the United States that we agree to withdraw from the Mediterranean Sea – this explosive region – American and Soviet nuclear-armed submarines, missile cruisers and aircraft carriers – namely, the carriers of the most destructive and deadly weapons.

This is the set of new and important proposals that we have presented to the Americans. I must say that their response to the last three questions – environmental and chemical weapons and the Mediterranean Sea – was rather reserved, although they haven't given us a final answer. We intend to keep putting pressure on them about these questions, assuming that even if we cannot reach an agreement, we can still profit from raising them. At the appropriate time we can always publicize the fact that we had made such a proposal but the Americans had rejected it.

The main thing, though, is not a propaganda victory but the implementation of realistic measures designed to reduce the danger of war and to limit arms. This, I repeat, is the essence of all our efforts in our relations with the United States. New successes in this field would bring the most palpable results both in the reduction of the danger of war and the liberation of our materiel resources for the benefit of our national economy. Of course, all this must happen without the least amount of damage to the security of the socialist countries. We are not conceding an inch on this score.

¹¹ The Limited Nuclear Test Ban Agreement.

And now briefly on our commercial relations with the U.S. Although trade between our countries is growing, the main problem is still that the United States needs to eliminate discriminatory practices against the Soviet Union and most of the socialist countries. The economic disadvantages of this situation are obvious -- not to mention the fact that our countries cannot tolerate enduring discrimination based on political considerations, either.

In opposing the elimination of these discriminatory practices, the American reactionaries focused the fire of their propaganda against the USSR and left the rest of the socialist countries outside their sights. But I think that the delusory goal of this perfidious tactic of these out-and-out scoundrels, these bourgeois hack politicians, is to drive a wedge between the countries of our community.

Among other things, we tried to put pressure on the American side to end this abnormal situation as soon as possible during our talks with Kissinger in Moscow. But we must admit that the U.S. administration itself and Nixon personally has taken a consistently forthcoming position on this issue. As Kissinger told us, the government hopes that this question will be resolved positively by mid-year.

Some words on the domestic situation in the U.S., including the things that Nixon has to face personally. It is clear to us that the so-called Watergate affair and everything connected to it reflects the exacerbation of conflict within the American ruling classes, primarily in questions of foreign policy. Nixon's domestic political difficulties are explained by the fact that influential circles in the U.S., including forces reflecting the interests of Zionist circles and the military-industrial complex, are dissatisfied with Nixon's foreign policy, especially with regard to the socialist countries. This thing has degenerated to such an extent that they are openly attempting to limit Nixon's freedom of maneuver in foreign affairs -- among other things, they are trying to call into question his impending visit to the Soviet Union.

Of course, we are not constructing our policies based on the activities of one leader or the other in the capitalist world. But it would obviously not serve our interests if the forces uniting against Nixon removed him from power. Of course, we are not constraining ourselves to contacts with members of the Nixon Administration. We have never rejected a dialogue with representatives of the Democratic Party. Among other things, I recently met with one of the outstanding personalities of this party, Senator Edward Kennedy, who had long requested this.

All in all, I think we have every reason to assert: Life has fully verified the correctness and foresight of the policy that we have pursued toward the U.S. in these past few years.

In our foreign policy in general Japan has one of the most important places in the international activity of the Soviet state. The interests of Japanese capital are increasingly at odds with the interests of American capital and West European capital. At the same

time, the initially intensive development of Sino-Japanese political relations has slowed down. The reason is a new phase in the Maoist “Cultural Revolution.”

This is complemented by a particularly acute energy crisis hitting Japan, which is 100 percent dependent upon imported oil and has forced the Japanese to persistently search for alternative resources. In this regard, their interest in developing economic relations with the Soviet Union has doubtlessly grown.

Naturally, the Americans and particularly the Chinese will make every effort to impede a Soviet-Japanese rapprochement, but all in all, the situation is favorable for the prospective development of Soviet-Japanese relations. These relations can develop quite successfully in a variety of areas. Although the Japanese government has not recently been pushing its territorial demands against the Soviet Union (the question of the four islands), we must count on the fact that they will still link the signing of a peace treaty to this. The best thing in this situation is not to insist on talks with Japan about a peace settlement, but to develop our relations calmly and methodically in the fields of general political and cultural relations and especially economic cooperation. Given our countries’ economic profiles and natural resources, there is every chance that such cooperation can become broad, lasting and truly mutually beneficial. In the meantime, preparatory talks for a peace treaty (or some other long-term political treaty) will proceed.

Comrades! One of the nerve centers and very real powder kegs in world politics continues to be the Middle East. The October 1973 war left its mark on the whole region. The way operations unfolded, the decisive and rapid support from the Soviet Union and the majority of the socialist countries provided the Arab states with a convincing show of solidarity, which manifested itself for the first time in a long while both militarily and politically – all this forced Israel and its American supporters to evaluate the situation in a new, more realistic light.

The legend of the Israeli Army’s invincibility evaporated already in the first few days of the war. We can state with satisfaction that the weapons they [the Arabs] received from you and us were a decisive factor; in those days, the political and military leaders of the Arab countries openly admitted it. But soon a train of events began, the origins of which are shrouded in mystery. Why was the Egyptian army’s attack halted after the initial successes? Wasn’t there collusion here with the Americans or somebody else? Whose fault was it that they let the Israelis break through to the western side of the channel despite the generally favorable situation for Egypt? It is difficult for us to provide an answer. Nevertheless, the passivity and irresolute actions of the Egyptians on the front put the Syrians in a difficult situation and struck a palpable blow to Arab unity.

This is how the war took a turn for the worse for the Arabs. It was possible to avert something even worse through the concerted action of the United States and the Soviet Union, whose common initiative resulted in the UN Security Council’s passage of the known resolution and the resulting ceasefire. We want to emphasize that we did this

at the emphatic and direct request of Sadat¹² and Assad¹³-- no matter how the Egyptian President's recent speeches falsify this circumstance. At that point the Arabs needed the ceasefire urgently in order to avert a catastrophe. Moreover, we managed to obtain a ceasefire with conditions that the Arab states can exploit in their struggle for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Arab lands. And we reached this without a serious exacerbation of Soviet-American relations. The general relaxation of tension was very useful from the perspective of preserving universal peace. This is obvious.

It is also obvious – and it was not hard to foresee – that the imperialist states and the U.S. in particular exploited the cessation of operations and the relative relaxation of tensions to step up their activities aimed at restoring and even broadening the political and economic positions that they had lost in the Arab world due to their support for Israel.

This was manifested in the blatant actions of the West European countries most dependent upon Middle Eastern oil and most frightened by the oil embargo to improve their relations with the Arab countries by supporting their political position in the Middle East conflict. They came up with proposals to ameliorate their economic relations (among other things, of course, through long-term purchases of oil under conditions favorable to the Arabs). In general we can consider the “Nine’s” collective action in support of UN Security Council Resolution 242 and their demand for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories a good sign, even though this action wasn’t very clear.

As you are well aware, this policy of the West European countries has brought about a serious exacerbation of relations with the United States both politically and economically. One can say that after the October war, the Middle East has become one of the theaters of bitter rivalry between the U.S. and the “Nine.” This fact is highly interesting in itself from the viewpoint of our common policies.

Realistic possibilities for influencing the Middle Eastern situation, including Israel’s policy, do not lie, of course, in West European hands but in those of the United States, upon whose assistance Israel depends in every sense. U.S. diplomacy actively exploited this situation in the period immediately following the ceasefire when the two opposing sides had to be separated.

We all know about the feverish activity of American Secretary of State Kissinger and the result of this activity, the Egyptian-Israeli agreement on troop separation. True, this agreement enabled Egypt to rid itself of the consequences of its military misfortune (the potential destruction of the Third Army, which was surrounded on the east bank of the Suez Canal) and to retrieve a small portion of the Sinai Peninsula. But it paid a dear price for it. Sadat agreed not to initiate military or paramilitary measures against Israel

¹² Egyptian President Muhammad Anwar Al Sadat.

¹³ Syrian President Hafez al-Assad.

and thus did not insist upon a permanent settlement of the Middle East problem. Thus, Israel was given an opportunity to freeze the situation as it was and to pursue a line that allows it to interminably delay the withdrawal of its troops from the occupied Arab territories.

Moreover, Sadat submitted to a separate agreement with two such partners as Israel and the United States, circumvented the Geneva Conference where the Arabs' friends are taking part and thus brought Egypt into a highly unfavorable situation.

In a word, Sadat, as we can see, struck a deal with Kissinger at the expense of Egypt's fundamental interests. Whether this bargain was supplemented with some sort of secret deals or agreements we do not know. Both the Americans and Sadat deny it. But the facts are indisputable: Sadat has worked eagerly to eliminate the oil embargo against the U.S.; Egyptian domestic politics is openly distancing itself from Nasserism; well-known pro-American elements have become emboldened, and economic assistance from the U.S. has been widely publicized. All this dictates caution.

Thus, what is our policy in this situation? Our efforts seek to beat back the expansionist plots of the Americans without violating our basic agreement with the United States for the sake of a peace settlement and to provide the best possible conditions to protect the just demands of the Arabs, and to increase the prestige of both the Soviet Union and the socialist commonwealth, which are fighting for a just and solid peace in the Middle East as a matter of principle.

We have openly explained our position to Sadat regarding the deficiencies and, from the Arab perspective, the unfavorable aspects of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement and of the methods they used to reach the agreement. Comrade Gromyko¹⁴ spelled these out on behalf of the Politburo when he went to Cairo expressly for this purpose. Sadat assured us in every way that he would not permit Soviet-Egyptian relations to worsen. But his latest public declarations, intended to "lay the groundwork" for his pro-American line and thus misrepresenting the facts regarding Soviet-Egyptian relations, have warned us to have serious doubts about the sincerity of his pronouncements.

With regard to the impending talks on the Syrian-Israeli front, we have paid particular attention to Syria's position, which in general is more faithful to the anti-imperialist line. During our recent talks in Moscow, Assad assured us that if Syria receives an offer from Israel through the Americans that might serve as the basis for an agreement, all further talks regarding troop separation and the appropriate decisions will take place in the framework of the military group of the Geneva Conference with the participation of Syria, Egypt, the Soviet Union, the U.S. and Israel. If the Syrians keep their word, this will stop the U.S. from repeating the "Egyptian-Israeli" variant and at the same time will draw Syria into the Geneva Conference, where it has been unwilling to

¹⁴ Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

participate thus far. Syria affirmed, for its part, that the Soviet Union must take part “in every aspect and phase of the settlement.”

At the same time we exerted an active influence upon the U.S. We told the Americans quite unambiguously – I can even say forcefully – about our assessment of their unilateral activities on behalf of a Middle Eastern settlement. We did this in Washington, too, and also in my latest discussion with Kissinger in Moscow.

Kissinger tried to justify himself by claiming that this was only a so-called matter of “form” and that he is working for the “common interest.” All this, he said, involved only the issue of troop separation, but the other issues will be discussed in Geneva, where all will take part. We rejected these arguments as ones meant to conceal Washington’s unilateral actions. When we declared that under such circumstances we would have to go it alone, it visibly troubled Kissinger. Here he started to assure us that in the future the United States would be ready for joint action and acknowledged that no settlement in the Middle East was possible without the Soviet Union. This statement was also made publicly both by the Secretary of State and President Nixon.

Comrades, we still have a serious and presumably long struggle ahead until a substantive settlement of the Middle East question. We want this struggle to be waged within the framework of the Geneva Conference, convoked specifically for this purpose, where the correlation of forces more or less favors the Arabs and their friends. Beyond the diplomatic activities of the conference participants, the political struggle waged outside of the conference will also play a large role in this struggle. And, of course, the words and deeds of every socialist country will be important.

A significant component of our policy toward the Middle East is the reinforcement and development of our multilateral links with countries that have taken the clearest and most consistent anti-imperialist stance. These are primarily Iraq, South Yemen and Syria. We are striving to do everything possible in this regard. We have concluded a very important treaty of friendship with Iraq, we are maintaining lively economic ties with these countries, we are broadening these relations, and we are holding regular political consultations, including high-level talks. This March, I myself, Comrades Kosygin and Gromyko and other comrades conducted profound and detailed talks with Saddam Hussein, Vice President of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council. Then Comrade Grechko¹⁵ went to Baghdad, where he negotiated with President Bakr¹⁶ and signed a very important agreement on military shipments. We intend to strengthen and develop our relations with Iraq in the future even though in some political matters (for instance relating to the Geneva Conference), Iraq’s position differs from ours.

In the course of Assad’s visit we concluded a number of important agreements with Syria as well, which involve our cooperation along both party and state lines,

¹⁵ Soviet Defense Minister and Marshal of the Soviet Union Andrei Grechko.

¹⁶ Iraqi President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr.

including military and economic cooperation. We are also trying, to the extent that it is possible, to maintain close contacts with South Yemen, whose leaders, we believe, are good revolutionaries and honest patriots.

The situation is different with regard to Algeria and even more so with regard to Libya, whose politics are colored by a number of peculiar shades. We still consider it also to be necessary to conduct regular work with these Arabs, given that under the right conditions, these countries could usefully promote the anti-imperialist struggle. Comrade Grechko will soon be traveling to Algeria, and we are expecting the arrival of Prime Minister Jallud¹⁷ from Libya (probably in May), who some of you have received recently.

What I have said here, Comrades, does not mean that we are giving up Egypt with a wave of the hand. According to a Russian proverb, “a good place does not remain empty.” If we don’t all continue to fight for Egypt and the rest of the Arab countries to preserve their progressive stance and for us to preserve our influence there, others – namely, the imperialists – will take over. Therefore, we intend to develop our political and economic ties with Egypt and to extend some form of military assistance in order to prevent a further shift to the right by Egypt’s leadership and to preclude the consolidation of the reactionaries’ positions in that country. Future events will undoubtedly show the Egyptians that it is not the United States, but the Soviet Union and the other countries of our socialist commonwealth, that consistently protect the legitimate interests of the Arab countries.

We haven’t exploited so far the possibilities of coordinating the activities of the socialist countries to develop commercial and economic relations with the Arab world, primarily with the oil-producing Arab countries. I think the situation justifies our exchanging views about this topic at the level of heads of government.

Summing up the Middle East topic, I would like to say that the Soviet delegation supports the draft communiqué on this issue proposed by the Polish comrades.

I think that it would also be correct for our meeting to issue a communiqué on the Vietnam issue especially since the Vietnamese comrades have already presented us with such a request. We also support the idea of acting jointly in support of the Chilean democrats. In essence we have already been able to isolate the Chilean reactionaries internationally and to save the lives of many patriots and revolutionaries. There is no doubt that our common actions in the Chilean question will be encouraging for countries like Peru and Argentina; the support of these countries’ anti-imperialist regimes is now the most important task for our common policy toward Latin America.

A factor of great significance that we must consider in carrying out our countries’ foreign policy is and will remain China. Unfortunately, Beijing’s foreign policy is still a completely negative factor. No matter which aspect of our common efforts we look at –

¹⁷ Prime Minister Abdul Salam Jallud.

the development of fraternal relations among the socialist states, the consolidation of European security, the improvement of relations with the U.S., the elimination of the danger of a world nuclear war, or friendly cooperation with countries recently liberated from colonial rule on an anti-imperialist basis – China's current leaders are taking a stance of active hatred and opposition to the policies of the socialist commonwealth everywhere and, we can say, automatically.

In their struggle against the interests of the Soviet Union and our entire socialist commonwealth, the Chinese leaders do not even shrink back from spreading the most unlikely lies and cooperating with the most reactionary forces in the world.

All of this is not a new phenomenon. Perhaps some new elements can be discerned in the processes going on in China itself. But those are so complicated and contradictory that it is too early to offer a precise evaluation of them. We will pursue our policy of international détente persistently, and at the same time we will rebut Beijing's hostile actions and keep an eye on events on the ground. We, as communist-internationalists and politicians for whom the cause of world socialism is dear, have been and still remain supporters of a normalization of relations with the People's Republic of China and the restoration of friendship with China on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Comrades! It is obvious that the continued success of our common foreign policy depends not only on our active and ambitious activities in the international arena but to an even greater extent on the conditions in our own domestic affairs, the success of socialist and communist construction and the growth of our whole socialist commonwealth's strength.

Clearly, we are all happy about the consolidation of the socialist world, which is not limited exclusively to the confines of the Warsaw Treaty. Essentially, only China and Albania are absent from this process. Although the Mongolian People's Republic is not formally a member of our organization, it is acting in full concert with us in all questions. Our countries are actively cooperating with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as before. It is also a cause for joy that Yugoslavia acts in concert with us in international affairs. The Warsaw Treaty's contacts with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have become more active.

I want to mention Cuba specifically. In keeping with current trends, this fraternal socialist country is growing closer to the European socialist states. Cuba has joined Comecon; its cooperation with the countries of the Warsaw Treaty has intensified; and the coordination of our moves in the international arena is taking shape. It is hard to overestimate the significance of the meetings and talks with the Cuban comrades that have been conducted recently by Comrades Zhivkov, Husák, Honecker and others. As you know, the Soviet Union signed a joint declaration with Castro in Havana. We take

this document as a detailed blueprint for developing Soviet-Cuban relations in support of Cuba's struggle to overcome the imperialist blockade.

It also a cause for satisfaction that Cuba's prestige around the world is on the rise and that Cuba is already playing a significant role in Latin America and in the non-aligned movement. It is indisputable that this gives socialism a broader influence upon world affairs.

It is natural, Comrades, that with the consolidation of the principles of peaceful coexistence, economic competition between the two systems is becoming ever more significant and is influencing the stance of broad segments of the public. The Comecon member-states possess an enormous economic potential. Their growth rate significantly surpasses that of the capitalist states. We are solving tasks of an ever-greater magnitude every year.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, when we worked out the new five-year plan, we were planning several large-scale measures. In the recent speech that I gave in Alma Ata, I mentioned our decision to launch the construction of the Baikal-Amur railroad line. This is not only about the construction of a gigantic, 3200-kilometer-long line for transportation. When we carry out this plan, we will be able to gain broad access to the natural wealth of Siberia and bring an untouched, rich natural resource into our economic system. After we gain possession of eastern Siberia's natural resources, a new and powerful industrial complex will evolve in our country. Another national project of great magnitude is the development of non-black-earth agricultural regions with a population of 58 million people. We are spending 35 billion rubles for this purpose.

As we know, every people's democracy is carrying out or elaborating grandiose plans for its national economy. In addition to using every means to strengthen our political and military cooperation, we should do a better job of exploiting the possibilities of economic collaboration as well.

It is a cause for satisfaction that the burgeoning economic relations within the socialist commonwealth are becoming increasingly deep and diverse. The exchange of goods is on the rise, and cooperation in production and scientific-technical cooperation are growing. The complex program of integration has given a new impetus to everything, although it must be acknowledged that we have not yet reached the desired pace in its implementation.

I will not touch at this point upon the essence of our problems in economic cooperation and will only say that these problems will have to be discussed by the party leaders and heads of government in the way that it was discussed in the Crimea. This thing has dragged on a little and should be speeded up a bit.

Of course, the economies of the socialist commonwealth are not vulnerable to the painful blows from which the capitalist economy is suffering – the malfunction in its currency mechanism, the general rise in inflation, and the fuel and energy crisis that has

recently developed. At the same time some tendencies in the world market have had an impact upon economic relations between socialist and capitalist countries and also on relations within our community. For example, this goes for the dynamics and level of world-market prices for raw materials and finished goods. And we cannot expect these tendencies to go away or to weaken in the near future. Obviously, these questions merit our attention if we don't want changes in the world market to come about unexpectedly or to cause avoidable complications. So these are matters about which we should be thinking and exchanging opinions.

We think it is worthwhile to agree on how to organize the preparations for such a joint meeting. We had an idea: wouldn't it be expedient in this case to make use of the experiences from the XXIII Extraordinary Meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance? If the Comrades agree, we could ask the chairmen of our state councils to reach a concrete agreement on possible measures and on a schedule for the Comecon meeting in Sofia.

I would like to say a few words about our ideological cooperation. We think that the meetings of our parties' Central Committee secretaries regarding the coordination of ideological work and propaganda in foreign policy, as well as those on questions of party construction, have been very useful, just like the regular working contacts between our fraternal parties to elaborate on various ideological and international problems. These are undoubtedly valuable forms of our cooperation.

When our CC secretaries met to discuss ideological work they drew up a detailed plan of measures, the realization of which may promote a greater degree of coordination of our activities in this important sphere. But it is natural, Comrades, that these are just the first steps. Under current conditions there are especially high standards for ideological work. Backing up our domestic and foreign policy with active propaganda; an offensive against bourgeois ideology and other ideological currents contrary to Marxism-Leninism; and the systematic and knowledgeable dissemination of our ideas – all this has a significant role to play in acquiring allies, disseminating the real facts about socialism and bringing broader and broader segments of European and world public opinion closer to our standpoint.

We are now on the threshold of great historical anniversaries in a number of fraternal countries. I am talking about the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Poland and Romania and the 25th anniversary of the founding of the GDR.

These events have already attracted broad attention, and I think that it would be correct to use these notable anniversaries for the active propagation of the ideas and realistic results of socialism, to reinforce the ideas of socialist internationalism.

And finally, Comrades, one more important question. At our last meeting in the Crimea we already discussed the fact that conditions are ripe for another meeting of the fraternal parties. Since then, this idea has taken, so to say, deep root. The experiences of

the successful realization of the recommendations adopted at the 1969 Moscow meeting, whose fifth anniversary we will soon celebrate, definitely strengthened the desire of the world's communists to intensify joint action.

Based on our figures, the vast majority of the European communist parties – 26 of them – have already decided to support a new meeting of the European communist parties. We believe that the time has come for us to begin practical preparations for the conference. Several parties expressed the view that the conference could be held at the beginning of 1975. Now, I would like to offer some preliminary thoughts on the basic issues that we think would be worth discussing at the all-European meeting of the communist parties.

We think that the conference should draft a program of communist struggle for European peace, limitation of the arms race, and the development of peaceful cooperation between states. Among other things, we could exchange views on relations between the communists and social democrats. This problem is also important for relations between governing communist and social democratic parties. And finally, the conference to be convened cannot bypass the question of the struggle that the workers of the capitalist part of Europe are waging for the assertion of their vital interests, for social progress. This is all the more important since the question of progress in the field of détente is going to be the subject of intensifying domestic political struggle and it is in our common interest to support the forces that take positions that are the closest to or similar to ours in this fight.

It is obvious that the new meeting of European communists will serve the consolidation of our movement and not only in this part of the world. Similar to the 1967 conference in Karlovy Vary this conference could also be an important step toward the international conference of communist and workers parties.¹⁸

The idea of such a conference is already being supported by 58 fraternal parties in some form. The issue of convocation has not yet reached the preparatory phase. But perhaps it is time to think about its tasks and methods of preparation.

When I speak about all these matters, my starting point is that our governing parties bear a large responsibility for the fate of the communist movement, for the principled, Marxist-Leninist consolidation of its troops.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Soviet delegation, I would like to voice our conviction that the present meeting of the Political Consultative Committee will promote an even closer cooperation between our countries for peace and socialism in the international arena.

[Translation from the Hungarian by László Borhi]

¹⁸ Emphasis in the original.