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Brezhnev's Crimea Meetings in the 1970s

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1) Introduction, by Jordan Beav

The "Crimean Meetings" of the Warsaw Pact Countries' Leaders

Personal contacts often play a key role in the relations among the countries. Unofficial meetings between monarchs, presidents and secretaries-general during a hunt or a sports event, at seaside and mountain residences, at a "business" breakfast or a midnight cocktail have settled complicated bilateral problems and regional crises. Issues that the wearisome official negotiations with their methods of the "traditional" diplomacy have not managed to do.

In the Warsaw Pact history such examples of informal relationship were the animated discussions during the notorious "Crimean meetings" of the East European guests with their Kremlin hosts. In contrast to some very formal meetings of the Warsaw Pact, where usually official speeches were delivered and preliminary specified documents were signed, the talks in the summer residencies of the Soviet leaders in Yalta and Sochi were far more open and spontaneous.

It is well known that even in the times of Joseph Stalin a series of important talks were implemented in informal settings. Thus for example, in June 1946 during a "comradely" meeting with his Balkan guests - Josip Broz Tito and Georgi Dimitrov, "the Kremlin's master" discussed the issues of the so-called "South Slav Federation" and the necessity to accelerate the hit against the "bourgeois opposition". Three years later during the celebrations of his seventieth anniversary at private talks with Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung, Stalin examined the views of the Asian comrades on the final solving of the "Korean problem".

Stalin's successor, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev was fond of such informal meetings, too. On 2 October 1958, for instance, at a Plenary meeting of the CC of the BCP the Bulgarian communist leader Todor Zhivkov informed his colleagues:

Comrades, during my vacation a month ago at his invitation I visited Comrade Khrushchev for a week in the Crimea where he was resting. At this meeting Comrade Khrushchev and I had an opportunity to exchange views on a number of issues, or, so to say, to "set our clocks to the correct time"...[1]

On 23 July 1961, Nikita Khrushchev invited for another long discussion Todor Zhivkov, the French Communist leader Maurice Thorez and other foreign guests in his government residence in Sochi, in the Crimea. A year later, on the opposite side of the Black Sea coast, in a state Bulgarian residence near Varna, the Soviet leader got at the idea of deploying missile bases in Cuba as opposed to the deployment of US missiles "Jupiter" in Turkey. In principle, no official records were kept of the "friendly and informal" talks of such kind and the information about their agenda is very scarce.

Leonid Brezhnev, however, was exactly the "Kremlin's host" who tried to turn the organization of annual "friendly" discussions into tradition during the summer vacations in Crimea in 1971. The first three discussions were multilateral and a series of important actual topics of the international situation and the mutual cooperation were discussed there. At the first multilateral meeting on August 2nd 1971 in Crimea the Czechoslovak and the Polish leaders Edward Gierek and Gustav Husák reported the measures for overcoming the inner social crises in their own countries.

According to Todor Zhivkov's information, at that meeting he himself proposed the establishment of a "coordination center of the seven brotherly parties for struggle against the Maoist ideology".[2]

Indeed, there were some foreseeable differences on this issue with the Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu. After returning from Yalta, Zhivkov informed his colleagues in the Bulgarian Politburo of Moscow's apprehension that "allied with each other and with China" Yugoslavia, Romania and Albania would eventually form a special group in the Balkans that might weaken the Warsaw Pact' Southern tier and would "openly or under cover" result into a regional Balkan bloc "based on anti-Sovietism". In Brezhnev's view, "Ceaușescu has gone too far" for which reason serious talks with him were on the agenda in order to help "the Romanians to realize that their actions had been wrong and injurious".[3] At the following multilateral meeting in the Crimea on 31 July 1972, one of the essential issues discussed was the topic of the further development and extension of the mutual economic cooperation and foreign policy coordination of the Warsaw Pact countries [4].

During the third multilateral meeting on 30-31 July 1973 a real scandal exploded. In his characteristic outburst of anger Nicolae Ceaușescu threatened that he would leave the meeting if Todor Zhivkov would not withdraw his critical remarks. The incident was overcome only with the imperative intervention of the Soviet host. This probably was one of the reasons, together with the aggravated health condition of Leonid Brezhnev, that during the following years the East European allies were not summoned for joint discussions, but were only invited individually and successively at intimate bilateral talks one by one in the Crimea.

In 1974 since no such meeting was held, however, a briefer informal "comradely" meeting without an official agenda for it, was organized on 18 March 1975 in Budapest. It is indicative that in it all leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries except Romania participated. Leonid Brezhnev explained that he had been ill for a long time and that had been the reason he was not able to conduct the preliminary appointed meetings with Kádár, Honecker, Husák, Gierek and Zhivkov. Quite tersely, he mentioned a lot of impending tasks, emphasizing on the preparation of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation. At the end of the meeting, János Kádár expressed the joint "satisfaction" of those present at the meeting with the improvement of Brezhnev's health and their "wishes" that he would not get overworked in the future[5]. This episode is symptomatic and marks the beginning of the so-called period of "stagnation" in the Soviet domestic and foreign policy. From that moment on till his death in November 1982, Leonid Brezhnev was a rather decrepit and irresolute political figure, well suited to the aspirations of the "gerontocratic" state and party leadership of the Soviet Union who were interested to keep as long as possible the existing "status quo" of their unlimited personal power and privileges. The Bulgarian State Records preserved series of shorthand records, which reveal the most important moments of the confidential talks between Brezhnev and Zhivkov during the last years of Brezhnev's life. From 1976 till 1982 in the beginning of August each year, the Bulgarian leader, like the bigger part of his East European colleagues, left for "a brief vacation" in Crimea, where a compulsory discussion with Brezhnev was held. Among the leading issues, besides the development of the international situation and the US-Soviet relations, the discussion about the political and the economical situation in the Warsaw Pact countries as well as the problems of the bilateral relations was assigned a place of importance. Significant priority was given to the unsolved economic issues. In an amazing way, this reminds the sagacious phrase from the famous US movie of the seventies, "TV Network": "What do you think they are speaking about in Kremlin? Ideology? Not at all! They are discussing petroleum and credits, dollars and rubles..."

At the meeting in Yalta on 14 August 1978, for example, Todor Zhivkov submitted to the Soviet leader a letter with a number of specific economic requests. The dialogue between them, ensuing from the reading of the letter, was quite characteristic:

BREZHNEV: It is good that you've expressed in written form your point of view on the unresolved issues in our relations...

ZHIVKOV: Bear in mind, comrade Brezhnev that the necessity to set these problems has been urged by the situation becoming uncontrollable... It was not easy to bring myself to set these issues before you.

BREZHNEV: The issues that you, Todor, are bringing forward cannot be solved immediately. But at the moment I can give you a guarantee of and a promise to help in their solving.[6]

A detailed discussion on the "troubled relationship" with the Romanian leader Ceaușescu took place during the same meeting in August 1978 in Yalta. Leonid Ilich was extremely close to his Bulgarian ally, having developed a very cordial relationship with him during the past decade:

I know, Todor, that you had many times the opportunity to speak frankly with Ceaușescu. It is obvious that the necessity of such an influence is now becoming extremely important, especially having in mind that with their policy regarding the Balkan cooperation the Romanians create diplomatic complications for Bulgaria. When they make a fuss over the question of the establishment of a Balkan cooperation, they do not do this merely as a whim. The issue of the regional cooperation development in the Balkans is seen by the Romanians as well as the Yugoslavs and the Greeks as a way to decrease the influence of the Warsaw Pact states in the region. This is the essence of their approach... We should decisively counter-act all the projects for creation of an autonomous Balkan group with its own 'particular interests'.

These words of Brezhnev's impart the quintessence of the firm Soviet attitude on the matter, expressed in the previous years mainly by the Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromiko. As his habit was, Zhivkov tried to maneuver carefully during the conversation in order to reach certain compromise concessions without making his powerful protector through whom he obtained considerable financial and economic support for improving the Bulgarian economy lose his temper:

Regarding our policy in the Balkans, I would like to state that we coordinate all our steps with the Soviet Union... The situation on our peninsula is extremely complicated... The steps, which we are undertaking here, are aimed at keeping Bulgaria from isolation. Of course, in no case would we allow the creation of a regional union in the Balkans, directed against the Soviet Union and Bulgaria. There are some common problems in the Balkans in the settlement of which Bulgaria should also participate. Otherwise we shall be isolated from the other Balkan states...

Further Zhivkov continued:

We would like to be properly understood. If we approach these questions with prejudice and strictly support the concepts of certain people [in this case the Bulgarian leader definitely had in mind Andrei Gromiko, J.B.] not to participate in any joint Balkan initiatives, we shall be isolated from the other Balkan states. And this will not do any favor to us jointly.[7]

A similar discussion arose during the [bilateral meeting in Crimea on 7 August 1980](#). Todor Zhivkov insisted emphatically on having Brezhnev's assistance in settling the issue connected with the increase in the import of Bulgarian agricultural production and foods into the USSR, which was of crucial significance to the Bulgarian economics, directed exclusively to the Soviet Union. Brezhnev replied: "Frankly speaking, our competent aities think that this issue can not find solution at all, but I assure you that it will be solved." [8]

After Leonid Brezhnev's death, in June 1983 his successor, Yuri Andropov, held a meeting in Moscow with his East European allies. Mikhail Gorbachev also repeatedly held multilateral discussions with them - in Moscow, Berlin or in other European capitals. However, the tradition and the atmosphere of "The Crimean meetings" never came back, and during the period of the "Perestroika" the differences and the disagreements among the leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries were growing more and more.[9] Thus, the talks in Crimea in the seventies remained a peculiar and unique form of consultations and political coordination in the Soviet bloc history.

In this documentary publication we have collected moments from the most characteristic and fully documented Crimean meeting, which also turned out to be the last one in that multilateral format - the meeting held at the end of July 1973. It includes the extremely extensive [report of Leonid Brezhnev](#) (68 pages) and [his concluding speech](#) at the end of the meeting; a [shorthand record](#) containing the most important point in the statements of the East European leaders; and, separately, the [speech of Todor Zhivkov](#). For the first and last time the Mongolian leader Tzedenbal attended such a meeting and this was not accidental, because one of the main accents in the discussion was put on the attitude toward Maoist China. It is specifically pointed out in a Bulgarian diplomatic document of that period: "The task set at the Crimean meeting is clear - Maoism to be shattered theoretically and politically as an anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist tendency, hostile to the general revolutionary movement..."[10]

We have also included certain interesting paragraphs from the Information on the [last bilateral "Crimean meeting" between Brezhnev and Zhivkov on 7 August 1981](#). The attention of them both was concentrated mainly on the development of the Polish crisis. It is evident from the shorthand record of the meeting that they discussed other issues, as well, which the Soviet leader had put forward during his bilateral meetings with other East European leaders.

The disclosure of the contents and the character of those "off the record" consultations in informal atmosphere contributes to a more complete documentation and exploration of the history of the Warsaw Pact, the specific mechanisms of coordination of positions and justification of government decisions out of the offices and the restrictions of the bureaucratic administrative protocol. This new documentation undoubtedly is an interesting and important supplement to the collection of documents in regard of the official meetings of the Political Consultative Committee and the other political and military structures of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The selected materials have been extracted from the CC BCP Politburo Records and Todor Zhivkov's personal files, kept now in the Central State Archive in Sofia.

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Notes

[1] *Central State Archive* [CDA], Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 5, File 353, p. 2.

[2] *CDA*, Fond 1-B, Record 35, File 2499, p. 10, 21.

[3] *Ibidem*.

[4] *Ibid.*, File 3390, p. 1-6.

[5] *CDA*, Fond 378-B, File 429, p. 1-18.

[6] *Ibid.*, File 960.

[7] *Ibid.*, File 495.

[8] *CDA*, Fond 1-B, Record 66, File 2507, p. 21-23.

[9] Paradoxically or not, the tradition of the Crimean meetings was not left in the past after the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe. According to an official Information of 6 August 2003, an informal meeting "in sweaters" and "without neckties" has been arranged for early September 2003 in Sochi between Russian president Vladimir Putin and his Bulgarian colleague Georgi Parvanov.

[10] *Diplomatic Archive*, Sofia, Record 26-P, File 265, p. 20.

2) Sample Documents

L. I. Brezhnev's Report at the Crimean meeting, 30 July 1973
[Source: Central State Archive, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 35, File 4300]

Personal! Top secret!

REPORT

Of Comrade LEONID ILYCH BREZHNEV at the meeting of the leaders of the socialist countries'
communist and working parties in Crimea

July 30-31st 1973

Dear Comrades!

Allow me once again to welcome you cordially and to express my pleasure that we are together again. The members of the CC CPSU Politburo asked me to convey to all of you friendly greetings and wishes for success of our meeting.

We meet in such unofficial atmosphere for the third time already - in this way a good tradition is being established. We see the great importance of these comradely meetings. They give us an opportunity in business atmosphere and without committing ourselves to formalities, to discuss important issues for the solving of which we are working together. Besides, we all have an additional opportunity for mutual talks.

In short, our meetings, as we believe, are useful in every respect. And, of course, they allow us to coordinate our moves at the international scene, to suggest new ideas, to consolidate the solidarity and the unity of the socialist countries - our most important and most cherished conquest.

I. RESULTS OF THE COMMON POLICY OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES DURING THE LAST YEAR

As you remember, during the last meeting in Crimea we discussed the issues of the international policy of our parties and countries. We spoke not only about the common perspectives of the struggle for peace and socialism, but we specified the tasks about whose solving we are going to work together.

At the foreground we placed the European problems: the ensuring of the international legal status of the German Democratic Republic, the normalizing of the relationships between Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany, multilateral consultations for the preparation of the European Conference. Besides, there was an exchange of views, though in a general plan, on the issue of decreasing the forces in Europe. After that we defined the basic lines of our policy in respect of the biggest capitalist countries - the USA, FRG and France, we

agreed on how to act to big international problems and first of all to the problem of Vietnam, having in mind to cooperate for the successful completion of the negotiations in Paris.

What are the results? Without unnecessary modesty you and we, Comrades, can rightfully say that we advanced significantly in the realization of our common line concerning the international interests.

[...]

It can be said most definitely that such positive results we couldn't have achieved without the coordination of the activities of all brotherly countries. In connection with this I would like to note especially the internationalist position of Bulgaria and Hungary in respect of the establishment of diplomatic relations with FRG which to a great extent contributed to the solving of the problems.

The main thing that we achieved as a result of our common policy regarding FRG consists in this that the government of this country and the great majority of its population practically have acknowledged that it is impossible to change the results of the Second World War. The Germany, which claimed to subdue Europe and the whole world, doesn't exist today and if we act as we did up to now, actively and in solidarity, it will never exist again.

[...]

We took into consideration all this during my recent visit to the FRG. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union informed all of you, Comrades, about the basic contents of our talks with the Federal Chancellor, as well as about the talks with Nixon and Pompidou. Everything, upon which we agreed in Bonn, is a common knowledge from the published documents. Therefore, allow me to concentrate only on particular moments of our talks with the government of FRG.

Being in Bonn, we felt that the West Germans intended to prolong the work of the European Conference. Therefore, during the conversations with Brandt was posed a question - by all means the work at the Conference to be completed in 1973. After certain hesitation, Brandt said that the FRG would agree with this. As far as the third stage of the Conference was concerned, Brandt on principle agreed to take part in it, although he placed this depending on the results which will be achieved during the second stage.

Brandt expressed willingness to look for mutual understanding with us at the negotiations on the problem for reduction of the armed forces in Europe, as well. But altogether his position on these issues was, I would say, evasive. Possibly, this is linked with the circumstance that the question for the reduction of the armed forces is still discussed in NATO.

[...]

And now, about the visit to the United States of America, undertaken by me on decision of the CC CPSU Politburo in June this year together with Comrade Gromyko and other our comrades. The very atmosphere of the visit, my negotiations with President Nixon, the signing of a series of new political, economical and other agreements between USSR and the USA - all this, it can be said,

as though establishes a new stage in the development of the Soviet-American relations on the basis of peaceful co-existence.

The documents signed by us in America are well known. All of them are published and there were no secret agreements whatsoever.

[...]

The contradictions between the USA and the other imperialistic countries in Europe and Asia, the complicated situation of the Nixon administration inside the country due to the intensified struggle between the parties and the political fractions - all this reinforced the interest of Nixon of achieving positive results in the negotiations with the USSR and established favorable prerequisites for the realization of the plans outlined by us.

The practical work on the preparation of the respective documents began long before the very visit, actually, immediately after the Moscow meeting with Nixon. As a result of this, till the beginning of the visit, the texts of the respective branch agreements were prepared. The most important is that we managed to achieve Nixon to accept the idea suggested by us for an agreement to prevent the nuclear war and to come to terms for such a text in this agreement which, although a compromise at certain moments, not so clearly and specifically formulates the responsibilities of the countries, as we would like it to do, but fully corresponds with our basic concept and our political goals, which we associate with this document.

[...]

Main place in the results of the visit takes, of course, the Agreement for prevention of the menace of a nuclear war. Journalists like bombastic words but I think that when this agreement is called in the press of the socialist and the so called bourgeois countries "historical", "a landmark", "a symbol for the end of the Cold War" and so on, here, probably there is no great exaggeration. It really has an enormous significance.

[...]

In our efforts for improving the political climate in Europe, a big role play our relations with France. With the arrangement of the Soviet-French cooperation, so to say, began a turning point in the détente and the improvement of the relations between the East and the West on the European continent.

The development of the relations of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with France facilitates the solving not only of the European, but also of broader tasks of our foreign policy, since France occupies an outstanding place in the capitalist world.

Our meetings with Pompidou in Zaslavl and Rambouillet included approximately the same range of themes: the European affairs, the situation in Vietnam, in the Near East, the relations with America and China. Even for this short period of time, which separated the two meetings, life brought in a lot of new moments.

One of these moments was our dialogue with Nixon, which visibly disturbed the French. From the talks with Pompidou I got the impression that he was concerned mostly with the political aspect - won't the attitude of the Soviet Union towards France change for the worse? I had to explain to Pompidou in a relevant way that the agreements with the USA do not affect the interests of other countries, especially those with France, with which we established certain relations in the political, economical and cultural spheres.

[...]

During the talks with Pompidou we expressed our attitude to some negative moments in the policy of France, too. In particular, we repeated that we could not understand why the government of France avoids the negotiations on the issues of disarmament... Pompidou declared that in the current circumstances, a reduction of the French armed forces is out of the question. The French obviously are inclined to go on increasing their nuclear and conventional weapons and they do not intend to curtail the tests of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. We can hardly rely that they easily will betray their views on the issues of disarmament. Welcoming not long ago here, in Crimea, the Foreign Minister of France, Joubert, I again turned his attention to the inconsistency of the position of France on these matters.

It is very useful that together with us in the same period, the other socialist countries also undertook a series of important actions in their relations with the outstanding capitalist countries. I mean especially the visits of Comrade Zhivkov and Gierek in France, the welcoming to the State Secretary of the USA Rogers by Comrades Kadar and Husak, the meeting of Comrade Honecker with Wener, the talks of Comrade Zhivkov and Kadar with the Prime Minister of France. Comrade Ceausescu, as it is well known, also paid visits to Italy and the FRG.

[...]

For a major achievement of our coordinated policy we justifiably can consider the beginning of the work of the European Conference. This is especially evident, if we remember the obviously negative reaction of the West regarding our first motions for the Conference.

Our countries implement a line the measures for the improvement of the political situation in Europe to be supplemented with measures in the sphere of military détente. The initiative for the practical treatment of the problem for mutual reduction of the armed forces and arms in Central Europe belongs to the socialist countries. It is true, that on behalf of some Western countries are being made attempts the problem to be presented in such a way as if not we but they make us to sit on the table of negotiations. But this is a bizarre "smoke curtain". In reality, in a series of West-European capitals and in the NATO headquarters they are afraid that these negotiations may turn against them, that they can increase the centrifugal tendencies in NATO and to lead to weakening of the military-political positions of the West.

I think that our countries can be pleased with the results from the consultations in Vienna. We succeeded in achieving the issue about the structure of the participants in the future agreements to be determined in accordance with the interests of the security of the socialist community. Other issues, referring to the organization of the forthcoming negotiations, are also settled.

After the end of the European Conference, the issue for the reduction of the armies will perhaps become a focus of the next stage of the struggle for the consolidation of security in Europe. This will become an important, long-term tendency of the foreign policy activities of the countries from the socialist community. In fact, for the first time in history of the European continent, as well as of the whole world, the task for the reduction of arms and disarmament is set on a practical basis. And everybody sees that this is merit first of all of the socialist countries.

The negotiations, of course, will be difficult and we have to be justifiably prepared for them. It is clear that for us it is disadvantageous and risky to undertake whatever steps which can shake the positions of socialism in the center of Europe. It is impending to our Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs to work hard on the development of the line on the essence of the problem; we have to carry out relevant consultations, too. We have to develop a clear, specific and convincing position.

[...]

When a balance is made, it can confidently be said that due to joint efforts last year we succeeded in achieving major changes in the international situation in general. Now really a radical turning point is being implemented, the period of "the Cold War" is changing with a new period in the international relations, whose basis is the broad realization of the principles of the peaceful co-existence.

[...]

II. ABOUT SOME BASIC TENDENCIES IN OUR FUTURE FOREIGN POLICY

Comrades,

We achieved serious results in the international détente. Now we have to use this détente and overcoming the resistance of its opponents, to make it irreversible.

Now in our relations with the major capitalist countries in basic outlines is established a system of treaties and agreements which contains the necessary legal frames for the development of the relations of the peaceful co-existence with these countries.

[...]

The countries of NATO implement rearmament of their forces with regard to the scientific and technical progress. They emphasize mainly on the quality of the armament. Carrying out from time to time even a certain qualitative reduction of the armed forces, the military and the political leaders of NATO endeavor to increase significantly the destructive power of their weapons. All this obliges us constantly to be on the alert, to take care of the necessary state of our armed forces - of all together and of each national army separately. I have already talked on this topic with the comrades Kadar, Husak, Gierek, Honecker and Ceausescu. I think that this issue deserves our common attention. Our defensive power plays far from last role in the successes of our foreign policy, too. We have to increase it further.

[...]

As the messages of our ambassadors in the Western countries testify, the signing of a Soviet-American agreement for prevention of a nuclear war brought in major dissension in the camp of NATO, caused new a strain in the contradictions among the European NATO member states and the United States. The soothing assurances of Washington can not obliterate the irritation of London and the suspicions of Paris.

As you see, our positive moves, aimed at development of the cooperation with separate Western countries, also have this peculiarity that sometimes they intensify the contradictions in the imperialistic camp.

I would like to concentrate on the issue of the situation in Indo-China.

It is clear for all of us that the situation in Vietnam and generally in Indo-China remains complicated... The issues concerning the situation in Vietnam and the tasks which confront the people of Vietnam at the new stage - a stage of the struggle for consolidation of the results of its historical victory, were discussed by us not long ago with the party-governmental delegation of Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Vietnamese leaders visited and intend to visit also some other socialist countries. Having in mind this circumstance, I will broach here only some key issues, on which it is important for us to consult.

The leaders of Vietnam point out that at the moment the central problem is the complete and unconditional fulfillment of the Paris agreement. We are entirely in favor of this position.

[...]

The Vietnamese comrades rely on receiving help from the socialist countries for the reconstruction of the devastated by the war people's economics of the country. They are interested in establishment of business connections with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). Isn't it worth in connection with this to think about a coordination of our work on rendering help to Democratic Republic of Vietnam, including through COMECON as well?

On our behalf we endeavored, as much as we can, to grant the requests of DRV for economic aid. In our striving to relieve its economic situation, we, as you know, have adopted a decision to consider free our aid to the Vietnamese comrades. We agreed to render them assistance in the development of the plans of reconstruction of the people's economy.

[...]

Our Politburo showed understanding about the necessity of consolidation of the defensive ability of DRV and the South-Vietnamese patriots. Nevertheless, we underlined that the measures undertaken to that effect, must not give grounds for accusations in breach of the Paris agreement, because it could be used by Saigon or by the Americans for its failure.

[...]

The situation in two other countries in Indo-China - Laos and Cambodia - has its specifics and its complexities. In Laos, are being held negotiations among the major political fractions and the process of normalization advances, although slowly.

In Cambodia, as you know, the military operations go on. The USA hasn't cut off their military support for the regime in Phnom-Penh and the bombing of the positions of the patriotic forces continue. Generally, the situation in Cambodia is vague. Different powers interact there. Sianuk is in China and this can not but influence his positions. The Vietnamese comrades, retaining their relations with "the red Khmers", support Sianuk at the same time. The USA, on their part, make attempts to achieve some agreement with the Chinese.

Based on our principal line for support of the Cambodian patriots, we made some moves with the goal for further development of the contacts with representatives of the National Unified Front of Cambodia (NUFC), and also for establishing, with the help of the Vietnamese friends, of direct connections with the Cambodian People's Revolutionary Party. Possibly, depending on the course of the events, we'll have to think about for additional moves, too.

We have to acknowledge, comrades, that the situation in the Middle East continues to be complicated and dangerous for the world peace.

[...]

The hatred towards the conquerors in the Arab world continues to grow and at any moment it can find an outlet in the form of military outbreak. We have bear in mind that in the policy of the Arab countries sensitively is manifested the influence of the petty bourgeoisie, characteristic with its fluctuations from ultra-revolutionarism to pessimism and decline of morale.

Among the Arab countries, like before, there is no unity on the political, nor on the strategic issues, which significantly weakens their positions in the conflict with Israel.

[...]

Our major and decisive interest consists in this to cooperate for the establishment in the Middle East - in this important geographical region, at that so near to our boundaries - of a lasting and long-term peace.

[...]

As you know, during our recent negotiations with Nixon, we tried to render strong pressure on him on the issue of the Middle East, pointing out how explosive and endangering the calmness and the peace in whole world is the situation in this region. At the negotiations about the problem in the Middle East were dedicated a lot of hours. But Nixon, although his denial in words, obviously feels too dependent on the pro-Israeli circles in the United States in order to undertake in the current situation something decisive to influence the position of Israel, although deep in his soul he, probably, understands the danger of the situation.

Nevertheless, we succeeded in one respect to advance a little the position of the Americans, making them in the text of a common communiqué, signed by Nixon and me, to acknowledge the legal interests of the people of Palestine.

To the intricacy of the situation are added the instability of Sadat and the rashness of a number of his acts. It is enough to remind you that he rejected the serious political trump which was in his hands - the presence on the Egypt territory of Soviet military personnel, invited there by an initiative of President Nasser and Sadat himself. In exchange of the withdrawal of these personnel, he could have obtained substantial allowances from the Americans and Israel. But Sadat, with his impulsiveness and self-will, did not want to take into consideration all this.

I'll tell you straightforward, comrades, we granted Sadat's request for the withdrawal of our people without any difficulties for ourselves. On the contrary, there was a certain plus in this, because the risk of involving the Soviet Union in direct military confrontation with the USA as a result of some irresponsible actions of that same Sadat was diminished. But the fact remains: Sadat, Egypt and the whole Arab world lost a lot with this in political aspect.

[...]

The Arabian leaders instigate each other, and their people, as well, and inflame belligerent emotions. At the background of all this we have to consider possible the resumption of the war practically at any time. We, on our part, did a lot in order to avert the explosion. We exercised influence in this direction on the leaders of Egypt and Syria and we organized our military shipments for these countries, so that to help for the consolidation of their defense, but not to give reasons for adventurous moves. For now, we managed to avoid an explosion but who knows how much longer this will go on?

If the war in the Middle East is resumed, it will be difficult to foresee how it will end. From our contacts with the Arabs it is clear that they themselves do not envision clearly the consequences of it. In any case, the whole international situation will aggravate and a lot of constructive plans will be breached. Obviously, all this is not in our interest.

[...]

Comrades, life itself prompts the conclusion for the increase of the role of the Asian tendency in the international policy. The assistance for consolidation of the powers of peace and the international cooperation in this very important region is not an easy task.

[...]

On the collective security in Asia. This concept is already introduced by the socialist countries as an international term.

Now it is important insistently, although without unnecessary rashness, to move forward the idea of collective security and to specify its contents.

[...]

The Chinese leaders declare themselves against our proposal for collective security in Asia. We must decisively denounce the slander that the collective security means a "surrounding of China" and will be used against the legal interests of the People's Republic of China or any other country.

Of course, to all of us it is clear that the creation of a system for collective security in Asia is an intricate and not immediate work. But its implementation would mean an important advance in the whole situation in the world. And it is worth to work on this issue, as well, exercising influence on broader and broader masses of people in all Asian countries.

Increasing attentions on our part require the social and political processes, which are growing in Latin America. The dimension of the anti-imperialistic struggle on this continent is expanding and more countries are involved in the stream of the movement for independence and social progress. However, all these processes take place in situation of intense struggle and constant attempts of the local reaction together with the support of the USA to gain revenge. For all this sufficiently convincingly speak the events in countries like Chile, Peru, Argentina, Panama and Uruguay.

The development of the Chilean revolution has already become one of the main political factors in the whole world and exercises significant influence on the mood of the masses and the positions of the political parties in many countries... For us, the socialist countries, the support for the Chilean revolution has already become a close to all of us cause and obviously in the future we will continue to fulfil our duty as communists-internationalists in this respect. It is very well that we have, it can be said, complete mutual understanding with the leaders of the Chilean Communist Party and with the state authorities in this country in the person of President Allende. Not long ago we granted the request of the Chilean government for shipment of some arms. We hope that this will help for the consolidation of the position of the Unidad Popular government.

We think that the progressive nationalistic leaders of countries like Peru and Panama deserve careful attitude and sensible support on our part.

We would like to express a wish for establishing a certain coordination of our activities in Latin America. It would not be bad if representatives of the international departments carry out in the near future consultations on the issues of the situation in Latin America and about the policy of our countries. Of course, very valuable in such consultations would be the participation of Cuba, which plays an active and important role in the Latin American affairs.

[...]

The changes for the better in the international climate allow us to pose on the agenda the task for activation of the struggle for termination of the race in the armament, for disarmament, including, in view of the agreements between the USSR and the USA, for the prevention of nuclear war.

[...]

In connection with this, naturally, arises the question: is it possible for a long time to be kept such a situation, when two nuclear powers reduce their strategic armaments, but others increase

them? It must be said that lately the Chinese and the French, too, do this in a very defiant way, demonstratively, without taking into consideration the protests of the international community and of the governments of many countries.

Obviously, this situation can not go on infinitely. In our view we have to deploy a broad campaign for exercising serious pressure on the other nuclear countries and to exploit the fact for the negotiations between the USSR and the USA for cessation of the rivalry in the strategic armament. It is important to mobilize all political means in order to make them join the process of limitation of the nuclear rocket armament. Comrades, now this becomes a pressing task.

[...]

III. ACTUAL ISSUES OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

Let me stress now on some principal issues of the cooperation between our countries.

[...]

The basis of the whole system of cooperation among the brotherly countries is the party relationships. Our Politburo appreciates highly the recently established forms of relations between the leaders of our parties, which include not only official visits and negotiations but also operative meetings on certain issues.

[...]

In our system of international political cooperation a main place occupies the organization of the Warsaw Pact. With the help of this organization we defended all conquests of the socialist revolutions - this is the main result of the activities of the Warsaw Pact which has to be celebrated when our organization turns twenty. It will happen in two years.

In the present state of affairs, when there is no real progress in the sphere of disarmament and the work still has not reached the stage of eliminating of the military blocks of the imperialistic countries, our task is to sustain constantly the necessary level of the defense of the socialist community, to perfect the political and the military mechanism of the organization of the Warsaw Pact.

Now we are moving confidently towards the solving of the tasks, which were formulated in the preamble of the Warsaw Pact - towards establishing a system for European security. Probably the comrades will agree that a necessity is ripe for holding the successive meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in order to discuss the course of the European Conference, and also to propose new political initiatives referring to the European affairs.

At the last meeting of the Political Consultative Committee an extensive support found the idea for improvement the mechanism of political cooperation within the bounds of the Warsaw Pact. Probably, this, too, can become a topic for discussion and solving at the forthcoming session of the PCC. Possibly, our Ministers of Defense should be invited and given a hearing. As far as the

date for summoning of the PCC is concerned, about this we can reach an agreement later, in view of the development of the European events.

I would like to say a few words about the development of the relations with the brotherly countries, which are situated far from us but are inseparable links of the world socialist system.

In this respect, all of us have done a significant work recently. It is enough to recall the visits of the comrades Zhivkov, Tsedenbal and Husak in Cuba, the visit of Comrade Husak in Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the meeting and the negotiations of other leading functionaries of our countries with the Vietnamese, Cuban and Korean leaders.

As you know, an agreement was reached about my visit to Cuba. We rely on conducting with Fidel thorough discussions not only on the issues of the Soviet-Cuban cooperation, but also on pressing issues of the common line of the socialist countries in the international affairs. This visit, especially after the visit in the USA, undoubtedly will be useful as a political support of the Cubans, as well, and will become a manifestation of our unfailing solidarity with brotherly Cuba.

All of us understand the importance of the further solicitation to the common line of the socialist countries of the DPRK. Now its leaders took up a course to peaceful democratic unification of the country. By the way, the expediency of such a course was mentioned during our meetings with Kim Il-Sung a few years ago. The DPRK needs our support and nevertheless the well known to us moments in the policy of the Korean Labor Party, we consider it our responsibility to render it such a support. Implementing a correspondence with the Korean comrades, sending to Pyongyang leading CPSU experts and receiving in Moscow members of the Political Committee of the Central Committee of the Korean Labor Party, we aim to pave the way for closer and more extensive cooperation of the DPRK with our countries, which undoubtedly corresponds to the interests of the people of Korea and also of the world socialism.

A few words about Albania. Probably nobody of you is interested the tense and even hostile relations with this country to go on infinitely. Let's think what we can undertake in the current situation for normalizing of the situation and who is going to do it? We can act deploying different methods, but the most important is our policy to be coordinated.

[...]

Here we do not have the opportunity to discuss in detail concrete economical issues. Today I will allow myself only briefly to focus on two problems, which particularly worry us at the moment. First of all, this is the problem for the fuel and the raw materials. We know very well how acutely stands this problem now with our friends, we have undertaken and we will undertake all possible measures to aid them as much as we can. But you must understand, comrades, that even our capacities are limited.

[...]

IV. THE FOREIGN POLICY LINE OF THE CHINESE LEADERS AND THE WORLD POLITICS

Estimating the perspectives of the struggle for consolidation of peace and strengthening of the international positions of socialism, it is necessary to full extent to bear in mind the Chinese factor in the world policy.

With the sweeping entry of the People's Republic of China on the international arena, the essence of the Chinese policy and its goals did not change, although the forms and the methods of this policy underwent substantial alterations and became more dangerous. The Beijing leaders, rejecting the "ultra-revolutionary" ideological disguise, literally on all lines declare themselves as a power, hostile to the policy and the interests of the socialist world; besides, they become more often direct allies of the most reactionary imperialistic circles.

[...]

Particularly insistently the Beijing politicians and propagandists spread the thesis for "two superpowers" which allegedly made an agreement and want to impose their will on all other countries. This false thesis, taken up by anti-Soviet characters of all kinds and background, is the most blazing proof for the full rejection of Beijing of the class principles in the international policy, for their full breach with Marxism-Leninism, for their full retreat from the common policy of the socialist countries.

[...]

Comrades, for the course of the Soviet-Chinese negotiations on the issues of the boundary, we briefed you not long ago. As it is obvious, the Chinese used the negotiations as a screen to disguise their hostile to the Soviet Union policy. Possibly, we shall have to make the relevant conclusions from this.

[...]

V. ISSUES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

[...]

Recently, representatives of brotherly parties more and more often express the idea for the expediency of joint discussion of new problems. Comrade Berlinguer proposed a new meeting of the Communist parties of all Europe, like the one in Karlovy Vary. You know about this. Comrade Jespersen expressed a similar thought even earlier. As far as we know, the French, the Austrian, the Belgian and the English comrades confirmed this idea. In a word, it has already received definite acknowledgment.

If we principally agree to support this idea, then obviously we shall have to ask the secretaries of the Central Committees of our parties to prepare together with respective representatives of brotherly parties from Western Europe more concrete proposals in this issue. Probably it is best to hold such a meeting after the completion of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation.

[...]

However, it will hardly be correct the international activity of the communist movement to be limited in the frames of regional meetings. In our view, time has come to consider a new world meeting of the communists. And the regional meetings could practically become preparation stages to the common meeting.

[...]

We would like to hear the opinion of the comrades on all these issues.

[...]

[Translated by Julia Cherneva; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]

T. Zhivkov's statement at the Crimean meeting, 30 July 1973
[Source: Central State Archive, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 35, File 4300]

Personal, top secret!

STATEMENT
OF COMRADE TODOR ZHIVKOV AT THE CRIMEA MEETING

(A shorthand transcript)

July 30-31st 1973

Comrades,

The current meeting is our third Crimean meeting.

[...]

Each one of our previous meetings was interesting and very useful, it gave us an opportunity to exchange opinions on important and pressing issues, synchronize our moves, to define our political line, our tactics, our initiatives and mainly our practical actions on the world arena.

[...]

I want to join the conclusion which Comrade Brezhnev made in his report at our meeting, that the successes achieved in the improvement of the international climate do not eliminate the military threat on the part of the imperialism, therefore, it is our important responsibility not to lessen our watchfulness and the defensive powers of our countries.

[...]

We can not but note the realistic tendencies, as well: in the foreign policy of Nixon, Pompidou, Brandt and other bourgeois functionaries who accept the principles of peaceful co-existence.

[...]

I share also the views of the comrades Gierek, Honecker, Kadar and Husak displayed in their statements.

I share also a series of aspects in the statement of Comrade Ceausescu, but on some issues I have objections and I will focus on some of them in the course of my statement.

It is obvious that in the new stage we have to improve decisively our joint work and coordination on the party and the state line. In view of this, we support the proposal for the summoning of a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, which to discuss the course of the European Conference or its results; to undertake measures for the reconstruction of the work of our economic organization, COMECON, to improve the political and the military mechanism of the Warsaw Pact; to implement a meeting of the departments and the secretaries of the Central Committees on ideological issues in order to develop and approve a plan for coordinated actions in this sphere.

The necessity of establishing a closer coordination between our Foreign Ministers is evident.

Generally, along our whole front it is necessary to implement in due time coordination and conformity among our parties and countries, so that we can quickly reconstruct ourselves according to the new requirements both in the country and at the international arena, and our many-sided activity to be more effective and aggressive.

[...]

Together with the efforts for constant consolidation of our unity and solidarity, in our view, we need joint actions for further rapprochement and incorporation to the socialist community of Cuba, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, and as well as, a well-considered approach for gradual alienation of Albania from the People's Republic of China.

We are all unanimous that our former meetings in Crimea played an important role in the collective formation of our common policy and tactics and for the defining of our tasks on the international arena.

[...]

Therefore, we entirely support the proposal: more often and without special protocol arrangements, to implement such operative meetings on particular, pressing problems, to discuss them collectively and to define our common position on them.

Comrades,

As it is known, our party is one of those parties, which thinks that the conditions are already ripe for summoning a new international meeting of the communist working parties.

In connection with this, we by any means can not agree with the stated here by Comrade Ceausescu considerations on the issue of summoning of the impending meeting of the communist and working parties.

[...]

Therefore, we are not speaking about the overcoming of individual mistakes, weaknesses and theses in the activity of the present leaders of China, but about essential, radical deviations from our theory and practice. We can not agree with the proposition, with the thesis of Comrade Ceausescu that we have to keep silent about all this because everywhere and always - on the issue about the European security, on the issue of NATO, on the issue of the national-liberation movement and on the issue of consolidation of the communist movement, literally on all issues of our strategy, of our tactics, of our practical work and struggle - we come upon the splitting activities of the leaders in Beijing. We can not find a sole fact, absolutely no fact, and no aspect in their current international activities, which can serve us, which can be evidence that it is possible in some way to achieve unity with the present Chinese leadership.

If we adopt a decision, as the Romanian comrades say, not to criticize substantial weaknesses, which affect not particular aspects of our struggle, but our common course in the international development, then what will happen with our communist movement and with the development of the revolutionary process? We all can give an answer - this will lead to demoralization in our communist movement, in the world's revolutionary forces, practically this will be demoralization and a retreat before the imperialism, a retreat of the whole revolutionary front before the imperialistic machinations and actions. Therefore, we can not by any means agree with this approach, the approach that Comrade Ceausescu proposed to us.

That is why we consider it our responsibility...

N. CEAUSESCU: I want the floor. I do not agree with this that our party is criticized here. I reject what Comrade Zhivkov said. He can have whatever opinion he wants; this is his business, but I can not allow expressions of sabotage here, to the effect that Romania instigates toward policy of compromise with the imperialism. Under these circumstances I can not take part in the meeting. We came to a friendly meeting, but not to listen to such a distortion of the facts. We thought that once forever an end is put to this impossible practice in the relations among our parties. I can not take part in this meeting if these words are not taken back and if these positions are not corrected.

L. IL. BREZHNEV: I think, Comrade Ceausescu, that you early get heated and wrongly at that, you do not behave brotherly. While you were making your statement, you made a series of proposals, which I do not agree with, and I will say a few words on this occasion, too, but nobody interrupted you. What you are doing is untactful and not brotherly. Why should Comrade Zhivkov be deprived of the opportunity to express his disagreement, why do you have to use such words like contra and sabotage? Various words can be coined, but this is worse than you think, that we must not speak on some or other issues or to express disagreement. After all, each of us has the

right to say what he thinks. If you do not agree with something, make a statement in the end, but interrupting so harshly the speaker is untactful. That is why our meeting is a friendly meeting. And that is why, as a comrade, as a communist, I turn to you with a request not to interrupt and afterwards to elucidate the question. And as far as your treatment is concerned, that you will leave the meeting, I do not wish to use no terms, but in the end of the meeting I will also make a statement and take a position. Please, respect everyone who is making a statement.

N. CEAUSESCU: I did not interrupt anybody, I listen to everything which has been said here, no matter if I agree or not. I did not make a statement against the opinion of Comrade Zhivkov but against the accusations that he held against Romania. I have not humiliated any party and I can not tolerate any accusations against our party. I listened to everybody and I ask Comrade Zhivkov to take back the accusations.

L. IL. BREZHNEV: As far as I understood Comrade Zhivkov, he criticizes the Chinese communist party. I entirely share this point of view because I myself criticized their position. It turns out that such an attitude to criticism could be directed to me, as well, so why don't we listen to it. All of us display our position and listen to each other; we have not talked it over beforehand.

T. ZHIVKOV: I think that Comrade Ceausescu understood me wrongly, if he was left with the impression that I criticize the Romanian Communist Party. There is some misunderstanding here. I do not criticize the line and the policy of the Romanian Communist Party but I am making a statement on the issues that all comrades spoke about, including Comrade Ceausescu. And I do not share some aspects in his statement, and here, in friendly atmosphere, I displayed some considerations, and I think that there are no reasons for irritation and declarations, like Comrade Ceausescu did. These issues are common for us, that is why we pose them for discussion, because they are important for all our parties, for the international communist movement and they are in the interest of the consolidation of our forces, of our unity and solidarity.

In conclusion about the Chinese issue. We support what Comrade Brezhnev said, that our task now is to smash theoretically and politically the Maoism as an anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist tendency, hostile to the entire contemporary revolutionary movement.

Comrades,

In the end I want to focus briefly on some issues referring the situation on the Balkans and our tasks in this region.

First of all, what characterizes the situation on the Balkans at the moment?

First. The turning point in the "cold war" towards easing the tension in the international atmosphere, the consolidation of the principles of the peaceful co-existence among the countries with different social systems and especially the détente in Europe are having a favorable effect on the situation in the Balkans, as well. This is manifested in the improvement of the bilateral relations and cooperation among most Balkan countries, as well as in the amelioration of the atmosphere in our region.

Second. Underlying the new positive processes in the relations in our peninsula, however we can not but point out that on the Balkans there are some specific conditions and moments which by all means we have to bear in mind in implementing our policy, initiatives and practical actions.

[...]

Based on the current situation on the Balkans, we reckon that the most important thing for the further improvement of the atmosphere on the Balkans, for the consolidation of the principles of the peaceful co-existence in our region is the development of the bilateral relations between the separate Balkan countries.

This line precisely, which we have been implementing up to now, has already yielded and yields good results.

[...]

I point out these few facts only to support our conclusion that in the current situation, the most effective way for the improvement of the political climate on the Balkans is the expansion and the heightening of the bilateral relations between the separate Balkan countries.

Of course, in our view, also it is right to be undertaken and carried out all-Balkan initiatives in the sphere of culture, tourism, sport and so on. This is useful; it is being done and will be done in the future.

However, we think that for summoning an all-Balkan meeting on high level, what idea was implied, the conditions are not ripe yet, the required prerequisites are not yet at hand, so that its work be really successful and fruitful.

[...]

As it is known, the Balkans are located at the top center of the NATO's Southern Flank. It is a geographic region with an exceptional strategic importance, an important ground, water and air transport knot, which connects three continents, and is close to the Arabic East.

[...]

The class approach requires from us, the Balkan socialist countries, to implement a consistent and unabated struggle against the influence of the imperialistic countries and mostly that of the USA in our region; against the Maoist attempts to turn the Balkans into a region, directed against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

[...]

Comrade Ceausescu declared that the meeting is unofficial, that it is friendly.

Yes, our meeting is friendly. But we gathered here - the leaders of our parties, and we have the right to expose before the world our positions. On that level, the meeting can not be irresponsible and unofficial.

Comrades,

In conclusion, I want to assure you that in all further moves and actions on the international arena, our party and country will advance together with the Soviet Union, with the brotherly socialist countries and in the range of their possibilities, they will continue to give their contribution for the implementation of our common cause.

[Translated by Julia Cherneva; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]

**L. Brezhnev's Concluding Speech at the Crimean meeting,
31 July 1973
[Source: Central State Archive, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 35, File 4300]**

Personal, top secret!

CONCLUDING SPEECH

OF COMRADE L. IL. BREZHNEV AT THE CRIMEA MEETING
(A shorthand transcript)

July 30-31st 1973

Dear Comrades,

With your permission I will allow myself to turn your attention for a while to some particular moments.

First of all, I would like once again to thank all of you, to all brotherly parties, to their central committees, personally to you, my dear comrades and friends, for your active participation in the work of this meeting. I say this because at this meeting each of you made a thorough analysis of the international activities, shared the experience of his work and characterized the significance of our common successes. We are unanimous, we synchronize our moves and what is particularly important - we manifest unity on the issues, which constitute the essence of our policy.

Now, allow me to focus on those moments, with which I would like to complete my first statement. I would like as well to make a few comrade remarks of principle character on what the comrades, participants in the meeting said.

Comrade Ceausescu spoke about the contribution of the Chinese leaders in the decreasing of the world tension. Of course, every one of us can have his estimate. However, I think that the facts attest to the contrary of what Comrade Ceausescu spoke about. I touched on this issue in my statement and will not repeat myself. I will only say that I share the viewpoints and the estimates of the other comrades who made statements on this issue.

Speaking about the international meeting of the communist parties, as far as I understood, Comrade Ceausescu defended the principle of not criticizing other parties. Have I understood correctly? I personally want to express my opinion on this question. What is this - an unwillingness to be principle? If we all acted so - that is, we did not criticize, it seems to me that our movement long ago would have got stuck in opportunism. The communists were always able to stand up for and to defend their ideas from slander, distortion and so on, which obstruct us to move forward.

Comrade Ceausescu spoke as well about certain steps in the direction of simultaneous dissolving of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. I think that this perhaps is unacceptable in the current situation, when NATO obviously is intensifying its activities both in relation to armament and in relation to policy. This is well known. The other comrades who made statements here, underlined the significance of the consolidation of the Warsaw Pact and Comrade Ceausescu as if did not argue this. As far as the proposal of Comrade Ceausescu is concerned, about consolidation of the political cooperation in the bounds of the Warsaw Pact, we can, of course, only agree with this proposition and welcome it.

[...]

All of you expressed a wish, and we agree with it, for an announcement in the press about the results of our work. All comrades got acquainted with the project of this announcement, it seems to me, twice. I myself as you see, because of pressure of work, could not thoroughly develop each paragraph. In the end, a last version came out, which, it seems to me, can be approved. But Comrade Ceausescu expressed certain doubts in the possibility it to be approved in this form. Now we had an openhearted comrade talk with Comrade Ceausescu and we reached an agreement.

I congratulate you, comrades, with the big success in our work. I wish you health and happiness. I think that this meeting will help all of us to get better our bearings. I will report in detail to our Politburo about all statements of the comrades, so that afterwards we can proceed to practical implementation of what we spoke here.

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[Translated by Julia Cherneva; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]

**Eastern European Leaders' discussion during the Crimean meeting,
30 - 31 July 1973**

[Source: Central State Archive, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 35, File 4300]

STATEMENTS

At the meeting in Crimea

At the meeting in Crimea after the Report of Comrade Brezhnev statements have been made by Comrades Edward Gierak, Erich Honecker, Janos Kadar, Andrey Gromyko, Nicolae Ceausescu, Todor Zhivkov, and [Yumjaagiyn] Tsendenbal.

All comrades (with the exception of Comrade Ceausescu who on some issues took another stance, different from the common point of view) welcomed the initiative of the Soviet comrades for summoning a Crimean meeting, expressed full agreement with the report of Comrade Brezhnev and his concrete proposals on pressing issues of the international situation and on the cooperation among the brotherly socialist countries, expressed their attitude to the main issues, subject of the discussion at the current meeting in Crimea.

Therefore, we shall briefly point out only some moments and aspects in the statements of the comrades at the Crimean meeting.

EDWARD GIEREK:

[...]

Comrade Gierek informed about his talks with Pompidou, about the impending visit of Pompidou in Poland and about the forthcoming visit of the French Foreign Minister, which will take place this autumn.

He focused on the situation in Great Britain, which wants to join the all-European movement although in the beginning it made efforts to make difficult the solving of the problems of the European security. Now Great Britain is trying to come out of the isolation, to improve its relations with the socialist countries. They explore the ground for an eventual visit of the British Prime Minister Heath in Poland. Comrade Gierek thinks that they should do that.

In this way Poland wants to influence on Italy, too. The Polish Foreign Minister will visit Rome and the Vatican, which will be useful.

[...]

How are we to form further our relations with the FRG?

[...]

We have to be on the alert to the nationalistic, revenge-seeking and military powers in FRG, whose strategic goal remains the unification of the German people. Even Shell in Helsinki hinted about this goal of the FRG. Coordinated actions are necessary for consolidation of the position of the GDR. They outline measures for development of economic collaboration and industrial cooperation between Poland and the FRG and in this way further to involve the FRG in the process of normalizing of the relations with the socialist countries.

[...]

Some special issues:

About the establishing diplomatic relations with Spain. This issue will arise before us. Is the negative standpoint of the leaders of the Spanish Communist Party correct?

About the European Conference: there is a necessity to create a common range for intensifying of the process of détente in the international affairs. The ideas of the Conference will be not only ideas of governments, but also will become ideas of people.

[...]

In the overall balance prevail positive elements. But there will be difficulties and dangers.

About China: caution is needed to the actions of China, which is trying to impede the relaxation of the international tension. The nuclear test of China is not accidental. They implement policy

against our countries. In Europe the Maoists support the Cold War powers. They draw closer to the extreme nationalistic powers in FRG. They call upon consolidation of NATO and the Common Market. They aspire to resumption of the Cold War in Europe. All this requires unanimous attitude on our part to the negative course of Beijing, to its ideology of extreme nationalism and chauvinism. We need coordinated policy and actions of our socialist countries.

About the Common Market: he shares the common assessment. He agrees that it is necessary to establish contacts between the two economic groups and supports the idea for unofficial negotiations between COMECON and the Common Market.

ERICH HONECKER:

He underlined the favorable reflection of the political discussions of Comrade Brezhnev in Bonn for the development of the relations between the GDR and the FRG. He focused on the positive contacts of the GDR with the West German Bundestag.

[...]

He expressed gratefulness to the socialist countries for the help rendered to the GDR and especially thanked Bulgaria and Hungary, which up to the solving of the problem between the GDR and the FRG did not established diplomatic relations with Western Germany.

[...]

He denounced the policy of Beijing on the German issue: the Chinese leaders implement the old policy, directed against GDR, but with a new cover. The positions of China match the positions of the West German revanchists and they try to exploit this issue in order to incite a new conflict in Europe. Similar is the attitude of the Maoists to West Berlin, to Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America - everywhere they make attempts to increase their influence. They try to oppose the socialist countries to the Soviet Union and to each other. We need on a more extensive scale, more actively and more coordinately to denounce the Maoism in theoretical and political aspect, and by no means to allow Maoist ideas to penetrate in the countries members of the Warsaw Pact.

[...]

He spoke in details about the development of the relations between the GDR and the FRG on the main issues in this sphere. He pointed out the intense confrontation with the bourgeois ideology, the role of the West German television, the deployment of the telephone lines for ideological influence, the enticement of scientists from the GDR in the FRG through big material gains and so on. The SED party in the GDR successfully copes with the new situation.

[...]

JANOS KADAR:

In connection to Vietnam he declared that Hungary, together with Poland, participates in the Control Commission for Vietnam, that the situation in South Vietnam is very complicated, that the regime in Saigon has come out of the war stronger than ever. It is proper to be found organizational forms for closer participation of Democratic Republic of Vietnam in joint work, in the affairs of COMECON, as was the position of Yugoslavia, and so on.

He posed two international issues for consultation:

The first issue is about the diplomatic relations with the FRG: they are ready together with Bulgaria to declare an establishment of diplomatic relations with the FRG.

The second issue refers to the establishment of diplomatic relations of the socialist countries with Spain. This question stands out after the GDR declared that it is ready to establish diplomatic relations with Spain. The Spanish Communist Party has protested against it. He thinks that it is correct to be established diplomatic relations with Spain, but not hurriedly.

About Portugal: it is out of question to establish diplomatic relations under no form and kind.

Focusing on the work of COMECON, he posed the question about the prices, about common currency and more flexible attitude to the Common Market.

He informed about his talks with leaders of the British Labor Party.

About China: He accentuated that we need to lead struggle in the literal sense of the word against the anti-Marxist activity of the Chinese leaders. Once, some people said that after the October plenum of the Central Committee of CPSU in 1964 and the policy of dismissal of Khrushchev, the relations with China would normalize, that Chou Enlai would visit Moscow and everything would be in order. Obviously, the things here are much deeper and affect principle issues.

ANDREY GROMYKO:

Comrade Gromyko made a statement on two issues:

First - about the visit of Leonid Ilych Brezhnev in the USA and about the foreign policy of the USA.

Second - about the European security and the European Conference.

Comrade Gromyko assessed the visit of Leonid Ilych in the USA and the whole work, preceding the visit, as a rather bitter political struggle, a real political battle.

[...]

At the talks on the issue of the Middle East, for example, Leonid Ilych displayed our position for arranging the problem. He called things with their proper names. He called Israel aggressor and the USA - helper of the Israel aggressor. The American presidents have had and still have a lot of

meetings. But they do not often hear from their interlocutors such pungent assessments of the real behavior and acts of the USA.

[...]

In his talks with Nixon, Leonid Ilych adopted such an approach: he was analyzing our proposals on the issues and at the same time - analyzing the American proposals. He did the same with the issues of the European security, and with other problems.

In the very beginning of the first talk Leonid Ilych straightforwardly declared to Nixon: We are different people, the systems of our countries are different, and our ideologies are different. Of course, I have no intention whatsoever to try to make a communist out of you. Before us, at our talks, on the issues posed, there is one alternative: either to put aside the differences of opinion under the table, or war. There is no other way.

[...]

Comrade Gromyko focused also on the issue of Nixon's personality as a functionary and a president. The situation about him is very complicated, lately around his personality there is a big turmoil. Nixon's behavior during the visit of Comrade Brezhnev was a behavior of a host in his house. Our impression is that he was at the bottom of the accepted course of the relations between the Soviet Union and the USA. Hardly will there be found after the Second World War such a president of the USA who displays such an initiative and implements such a course of understanding with the Soviet Union like President Nixon. If in the White House there is such a president like Nixon, who is ready to sign such agreements with the USSR like the already signed, this is good for us. And now this assessment for President Nixon is valid.

[...]

The second issue, which Comrade Gromyko focused on, referred to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. He declared that we walked out well from the first stage of the European Conference. We came to the table in Helsinki with solid luggage, with documents and concrete proposals. Our socialist countries walk a few paces before the Western countries. The positive side of this fact is that we clearly posed our positions and suggestions. The negative side - the others did not propose anything or almost nothing and discussed only political issues.

The third moment, to which Comrade Gromyko drew attention, refers to the inviolability of the frontiers in Europe. This principle was acknowledged in the bilateral treaties with FRG. It would have been better if it receives an all-European sanction, too, in the documents of the Conference. In Helsinki this principle was acknowledged and accepted.

The fourth moment, on which Comrade Gromyko concentrated, concerned the economic and cultural issues of the Conference, as well as some difficulties in the further work.

He underlined that it is necessary to be on the alert, to prepare well for the second and the third stage of the Conference, to act in accordance and unanimously, to send experienced people, politically reliable and well oriented on the issues.

NICOLAE CEAUSESCU:

In his extensive (almost two hours) statement Comrade Ceausescu expressed his attitude to all issues and posed his considerations. On a series of problems he has expressed some differences from our common point of view. We shall point out only some aspects and moments of his statement.

First. About the character of the Crimean meeting. He thinks that the meeting is unofficial, that it is expedient to exchange thoughts about the international situation and about the cooperation in the economic and the social sphere, but not to adopt any decision. The detailed information of Comrade Brezhnev contains a lot of proposals for the international activity and for cooperation. He declared that he was not acquainted with these issues beforehand and he had no mandate to participate in adopting decisions on them or to give his consent for a document for the work at the Crimean meeting. Previously, nobody mentioned any decision, but in the beginning of the meeting such had been made by Comrade Brezhnev.

After the meeting he will inform the Executive Committee and the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party about the issues posed, they will adopt decisions on them in a suitable form and then they will participate in the discussion.

[...]

He welcomed the treaty about the nuclear arms between the USSR and the USA, but it is only a step forward, because there are other nuclear nations. The treaty about the nuclear arms interests the other socialist countries, as well, especially Romania, therefore, the Soviet Union had to consult them in advance.

Third. In connection with the changed correlation of the powers at the international arena, an important positive role plays China and its activities: the beginning of the normalization of the relationship of China with the USA, Nixon's visit in China. There is no doubt that all this also is a contribution to the easing of the tension in the international relations. China displays willingness and in this early stage of the new relations at the international arena to cooperate for the amelioration of the situation.

[...]

About the Warsaw Pact. In two years the Warsaw Pact will become twenty. It is necessary to think about what to do in the future. Why don't we express willingness to dissolve the Warsaw Pact simultaneously with NATO? This is noted in the Warsaw Pact treaty, too. It is necessary to undertake certain steps in this direction. We have to work not for military but for political consolidation of the Warsaw Pact.

[...]

He thinks that the summoning of a new international communist meeting and the posing of this task as practical, will be a mistake. According to Comrade Ceausescu at the moment there are no

conditions for the implementation of such a meeting. We have to ask ourselves: what do we want to achieve, who to participate and what to conclude such a meeting with.

A meeting at which some parties will be criticized and denounced is out of question. The tenth congress of the Romanian Communist Party has decided: the Central Committee must not criticize other parties, must not give judgements to other parties and must not interfere in the affairs of other parties. They will adhere to this decision. Therefore, the meeting should abstain from all criticism of other parties, which is hardly probable.

Besides, there are a lot of issues that need continued work for their clarification. In many parties there is vagueness and even special considerations and stipulations about the new course. Can we discuss these issues at the meeting? It means a long discussion, at that without criticizing and insulting other parties.

Therefore, it is necessary not to hurry with the meeting, in order to avoid misunderstandings and not to obstruct the consolidation of the solidarity among the parties.

In conclusion Comrade Ceausescu declared that he did not focus on all issues which were posed at the meeting. But not speaking about them does not mean that he fully approves everything said up to here. He underlined once again that the leaders of his party were going to consider all issues and then they would adopt an attitude on them.

GUSTAV HUSAK:

He gave a high assessment to the position of Bulgaria and Hungary in connection with the negotiations of Czechoslovakia with the FRG, which did not establish diplomatic relations with the FRG, submitting their own national interests to the mutual interests. He assessed this as a brotherly international approach to the issue, as a brotherly international help for Czechoslovakia.

He pointed out that in the new international situation we could not decrease the attention to the defensive powers of the Warsaw Pact and of the separate socialist countries.

[...]

In connection with an exchange of experience among the brotherly parties, he proposed to be found a way for exchange of reports before the plenums of the Central Committees of the separate parties, which are not published in the press.

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

[YUMJAAGIYN] TSEDENBAL:

In his statement he devoted a great deal of attention on the policy to China and on the Mongolian - Chinese relations and the numerous actions and provocations of Beijing to the Mongolian People's Republic.

He declared that China implements against Mongolia a great-nationalistic, chauvinistic policy, which the leaders in Beijing have not betrayed this course and that they adhere to it. In support of this he gave numerous facts:

Along the border of Mongolia, the Chinese concentrate a great deal of military power, they carry out maneuvers at 30 - 50 meters from the border, they systematically breach the border and Chinese military units encroach on Mongolian territory. The goal is to involve Mongolia into a military conflict. Mongolia displays patience and protects itself from military collisions with the Chinese.

In this situation, can we speak about any contribution of China for the lessening of the international tension? We can not. Such position is incomprehensible to us. We need to intensify the struggle against Maoism. This struggle is an ingredient part of the struggle against imperialism.

[Translated by Julia Cherneva; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]

Leonid Brezhnev - Todor Zhivkov Crimean meeting, 7 August 1981
[Source: Central State Archive, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 67, File 405]

TOP SECRET!

TO

Politburo members

And CC BCP Secretaries

INFORMATION

About the meeting in Crimea of Todor Zhivkov, Secretary General of the CC BCP and Chairman of the State Council of the PRB, and Leonid Brezhnev, Secretary General of the CC CPSU and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR

On 7th of August, 1981, in Crimea a traditional meeting of Comrade Todor Zhivkov and Comrade Leonid Brezhnev was held. The two Party and State leaders exchanged information on the internal situation in both countries, on some questions of the bilateral cooperation, and on most actual problems of the current international situation.

First statement was made by Comrade Leonid Brezhnev:

BREZHNEV: I cordially welcome you, dear Todor! Thank you, Todor that you have come. I am convinced that our new meeting here - in Crimea - will be productive...

[...]

By taking cares for furthering the development of our bilateral relations, together with our friends

and allies we have to devote maximum attention to consolidation of the unity and solidarity of the whole socialist community. This ensues from the general international atmosphere and, of course, from the lessons of the events in Poland. The congress there is over. But there was no turning point to the better. The crisis in Poland is intensifying. It is becoming deeper and more disturbing. The situation is complicated by the irresponsibility of Kania in solving some personnel issues. As a result of this, from the leadership went out experienced and trustworthy people and their place was taken by others who are either badly prepared or are questionable in their political views.

[...]

The steps taken by us - I mean the letter of the CC CPSU to the CC PUWP - were not useless. Without our common influence - and here we have not to guess - the situation would have been many times worse. Most possibly, the leaders of the party would have found themselves in captivity of the revisionists. But generally the party is seriously weakened. I sent you a transcript of my conversation with Kania immediately after the congress. Recently I sent him a telegram in which I posed the issues abruptly [...] In that telegram I required a written answer, so that I have a document before the impending meeting, because during the phone conversations Kania always agrees with me, but practically he does not undertake any moves.

[...]

All the time I talk to Kania about the necessity of confrontation. But so far they have not arrested nor condemned any enemy. Valesa is putting forward different demands and they do not take any steps against him either.

[...]

We are faced with undertaking big efforts in order to keep Poland as a socialist country. The overcoming of the crisis undoubtedly will be long. And it is very important to coordinate the efforts of our parties, of the other services and to urge the Polish comrades towards successive and decisive actions.

Kania and Jaruzelski had to arrive in Crimea for a talk with me. The meeting was set for August 11th, but Kania, as they announced, was ill. They reset at this date the Plenum of their Central Committee and now our meeting is laid down for August 14th. I intend to convince them in the vital necessity to hold firmly and not to be afraid of the confrontation with the enemy.

[...]

Of course, I will inform you about the conversation with the Poles. Depending on its results, it will be possible finally to define our position for the expediency of conducting in the near future of a meeting of leading functionaries of the Warsaw Pact member countries. Only then we will be able to decide whether a collective meeting is necessary.

I think, Todor, that we all have to draw lessons from the difficult events in Poland. Through the Polish case it can be seen to what leads the blind faith in the extensive connections with the West

- economic and others... This case shows the inadmissibility of such alien to the party phenomena, like illegal privileges and self-interest... We all have enough concerns and Poland increases them. Literally, every day we have to deal with the Polish problems...

I would like to express some considerations on international issues.

[...]

You, of course, had noticed that during the spring and the summer a lot of high-placed guests from abroad visited our country. Among them were a lot of distinguished European political leaders. We regularly sent you information about all meetings, so it is not necessary to detain our attention on the contents of the negotiations - with Brandt or with anybody else. It is clear that the negotiations with each of our guests have their own color, but nevertheless, there was something common in them. What namely? These negotiations show that between the position of the Europeans and that of the USA there is a certain distance. The Europeans are worried by the tendency of Washington for indiscriminate confrontation with the Soviet Union; they do not want blindly to follow the Americans. It is worthy to note also that the different European countries are beginning to express more actively for establishment of nuclear-free zones, for approving of serious measures for consolidation of confidence.

[...]

About the Balkans. You say "yes" to the good relations with your neighbors and at the same time you clearly say "no" to the idea of creating of some closed political or economic group on the Balkans. Particularly active in this matter are Romania and Greece. Yugoslavia, too, allegedly agrees with this idea, but with some reservations. The principal position of Bulgaria essentially predetermines the failure of these plans. Without Bulgaria, they will not establish such an alignment. And as far as the other idea is concerned, our common idea for transforming the Balkans into a nuclear-free zone, it is worthy to be popularized and advanced.

As you know, I met with Ceausescu here.

But he looks at his cooperation with us in the sphere of economics in a completely different way. As the saying goes, he votes with both hands for its development. But the missed opportunities during whole ten years, during which he set on the foreground the relations of Romania with the West, can not be corrected for a short time, while on a series of projects now can be noticed extension of the cooperation. Unpleasant dregs, as before, leave the statements of Ceausescu on a series of issues of the international policy. In them is felt the tinge of a pro-Chinese position, especially, when he refers to the situation in southeastern Asia, and the Afghanistan issue, as well. I will frankly say that during the conversation I had even to scold him. He speaks disoriented about Poland, too, although you can say that the situation there worries him. He became intense and said that he was ready to go to Poland and to advise the Poles how to introduce order. But in all his reasoning the share of ranting is big.

[...]

We are informed about certain actions of the USA towards Bulgaria. I have in mind those tempting promises, which the Americans give you on condition that Bulgaria gives up its principal policy. This is the old tactic of the stick and the carrot. But we all know very well what the imperialistic enticements mean.

We continue, Todor, consistently to implement a line for overcoming of the present crisis situations. Posing our suggestions, we carefully examine the suggestions of the others, as well.

[...]

Now, Todor, I would like to hear you

[...]

ZHIVKOV: Dear Comrade Brezhnev, Dear Comrade Chernenko! I would like to express my cordially gratitude for the invitation to meet here, in Crimea. Our Crimean meetings turned into a good tradition. They are very useful for our party, for our party and state leaders and personally for me...

Before I move to my statement, I want brotherly to thank for the sincere condolences of the CC CPSU and your personal condolences, comrade Brezhnev, regarding the death of Lyudmila Zhivkova. Those letters were for me both consolation and support. Following a CC BCP Politburo decision your letter of condolences was published, and it excited and affected whole our public. Thank you.

On the internal situation in Bulgaria

[...]

In the Bulgarian domestic situation, I repeat, there is nothing alarming. Do the events in Poland have repercussions in Bulgaria? Yes, they do... It is true that in Bulgaria there is a certain contingent of hostile to socialism people. Their number is approximately 20 - 30 000. The events in Poland aroused them, but they did not undertake any practical action, and we will not allow them this.

[...]

About the events in Poland. Comrade Brezhnev, the CC BCP Politburo and all our party members share your estimates and concerns. The anxiety for Poland is our common anxiety.

[...]

If the PUWP had rendered firm resistance to the counter-revolutionary forces in the very beginning, it would not have come down to such a crisis.

BREZHNEV: I told Kania that without confrontation, they would not be able to defend socialism.

ZHIVKOV: Yes, you said this as early as at the meeting in Moscow and you were absolutely right... The so-called course of "renovation" is actually a course of capitulation.

[...]

BREZHNEV: What is your opinion of Kania?

ZHIVKOV: I do not know him personally, but in my view the PUWP lacks courage - both personal and collective. Kania displays fear.

BREZHNEV: Yes, Kania turned a coward.

ZHIVKOV: There is nobody in Poland to take the lead and to initiate the struggle against the counter-revolution... Now PUWP has to act decisively and firmly.

[...]

About the issue of the policy of the USA to Bulgaria. I can assure you that there are no grounds for alarm. The USA can not do anything to change our policy as a whole and our relations with the USSR. A few years ago I met American senators and businessmen. There I made a joke. What do you want, I say, the People's Republic of Bulgaria to declare itself against the USSR? And who will lead this struggle against the USSR? Me? Why, if that happened, the party and the people would immediately oust me! I am not a fool, you know!

If some high level Soviet comrades insinuate about Bulgaria such assumptions referring the USA and in general about some tendencies that the country is being drawn to the West, then I want to declare here that these assumptions are devoid of any grounds.

[...]

One last question. Some times ago we had agreed with you, comrade Brezhnev, that Bulgaria could participate in the building of a big electric-metallurgical works in Starii Oskol. We are ready to participate in the building of this works even now. Our request is the question to be discussed actually.

BREZHNEV: Yes, we will discuss this issue.

ZHIVKOV: I would like to underline that our bilateral relations are developing further very well. We know that the USSR has its great responsibilities, and is making big sacrifices. We are mobilizing all our internal potential in order to avoid unnecessary difficulties for the Soviet Union as well.

BREZHNEV: I think, Todor, that we can be pleased with our discussion. It will serve as a basis of the competent authorities - Soviet and Bulgarian - for practical action. The most important is that we think alike and our positions coincide fully...

[Translated by Julia Cherneva; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]