

N A T O C O N F I D E N T I A L

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ISD/213(Revised)

To: Members of the Political Committee

From: Acting Chairman

MEETING OF THE WARSAW PACT
POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Following its meeting on 22nd and 23rd November, the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee issued a "unanimous" statement which was couched in fairly temperate language and which, at first sight, seemed to reflect the existence of a certain modus vivendi between Romania and its partners. The appearance of unanimity was, however, shattered on 25th November by the publication of a statement on the Middle East approved by party and government leaders of all the Warsaw Pact states except Romania and by the broadcast on the same day of a speech by Ceausescu revealing his differences with Moscow.

1. THE DECLARATION OF THE POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

2. The statement focuses primarily on the concepts of détente and disarmament, particularly in Europe. It includes an appeal to nations and their peoples to pursue a policy of peace, détente and disarmament and calls for an early start to negotiations between the five nuclear powers which would lead to their discarding nuclear weapons and to their using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only. Not surprisingly, but for the first time in such a document, the signatory countries criticize the attempts made by "imperialist circles" to exploit the human rights issue as a way of interfering in the internal affairs of Socialist countries and reaffirm their support for national liberation movements. The impression gained from this document, however, is one of deliberate restraint. In the speech which he read at the official dinner for delegations, Mr. Brezhnev himself said that "despite the activities of the various forces which are opposed to détente, we do not regard the situation with pessimism or anything like it". As at their previous meeting in Bucharest in November 1976, the members of the Warsaw Pact were at pains to appear as a decisive factor for peace in Europe, and they called on Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and religious leaders and organizations to join them in "a constructive dialogue".

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3. The declaration hinges on the basic concept that the continuation of the arms race is the main threat to international peace and security. The main task, therefore, is to put an end to this arms race. In this connection, the declaration condemns the activities of the "imperialistic and reactionary forces" which are creating obstacles to détente and co-operation, and it fiercely attacks the decision taken at the NATO Ministerial meeting in Washington to increase military spending. The signatories to the declaration assert that they for their part are not striving to achieve military superiority but are concerned exclusively with preserving a defensive capability. This assurance was already given in the German-Soviet declaration of 7th May, 1978. Furthermore, if military détente in Europe can only be achieved by reducing the degree of armed confrontation on the continent, then the principle of "equal security" for all European countries must be preserved.

4. The signatories earnestly advocate the speedy conclusion of a SALT II agreement which could be followed by the implementation of new disarmament measures, particularly in the nuclear field. It is the responsibility of countries which, by reason of their economic and military strength, carry some weight in world affairs, and in the first instance the permanent members of the Security Council, to agree immediately on a reduction in military budgets (in absolute terms or in roughly equal percentages) over the next three years.

5. For the first time in a Warsaw Pact document, the declaration contains an indirect reference to the "grey" areas. The signatories express willingness to hold negotiations on those elements of each side's military capability which could elicit apprehension on the other side. Furthermore, Warsaw Pact countries seem prepared to tackle disarmament questions in a new forum which would include all the countries participating in the CSCE - an idea launched before at the Belgrade Meeting in the Soviet proposal on the platform of action - without elaborating further, however. This ambiguity could have been deliberate and be intended to give Moscow some degree of flexibility when confronted with certain Western suggestions.

6. Apart from that, the declaration goes over familiar ground and in the main simply reiterates the proposals put forward at Bucharest two years ago at the Belgrade Meeting or at the United Nations Special Disarmament Conference in 1978. The member states of the Warsaw Pact are in favour of early talks designed to put a stop to the production of nuclear weapons of all kinds as well as the gradual reduction in

existing stocks. They advocate the conclusion of a treaty on the non-use of force, an undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, a reduction in the scale of military manoeuvres and the extension of confidence-building measures to the Mediterranean area. They are in favour of the simultaneous disbanding of the two Alliances and, in the first instance, the liquidation of their military organizations starting with a mutual reduction of their military activity. They urge all states to refrain from action which could lead to the broadening of existing alliances. They also recall the proposals they made on 8th June, 1978 in the context of the Vienna negotiations with the aim of achieving equality between the armed forces of the two sides at a lower level of forces.

7. In so far as the CSCE is concerned, the Declaration, unlike the 1978 Bucharest Declaration, does not reaffirm the ten principles that should govern relations between States, and the positive changes that have taken place in Europe are attributed to the recognition of frontiers and their inviolability. The passages relating to human contacts, mentioned explicitly for the first time, as well as the priority given to disarmament, may be an indication of the line Moscow intends to pursue at Madrid.

8. On the whole, however, the Declaration simply holds out possibilities which are theoretically attractive, but it refrains from going into detail or from referring to the indispensable verification and control measures. While the Eastern countries evince a certain interest in dialogue, their primary aim is to impress public opinion in the West for propaganda purposes, and to hamper a rapprochement between China and the West. None the less, the signatories attach great importance to the Declaration. In the course of various diplomatic moves, they have clearly indicated that it would provide the basis for their disarmament policy. At all events, there seems to be little doubt that military détente will be the East's main concern in the forthcoming negotiations with the West.

II. THE SOVIET-ROMANIAN DIFFERENCES

9. This meeting was apparently preceded by intensive consultation between Bucharest and Moscow in an attempt to smooth away divergencies on a whole range of problems. The Declaration does not subscribe to Soviet views on Chinese policy, on the Camp David Agreements or on the EEC-CEMA relations; nor does it make any mention of the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. There is no reference to the Soviet proposals for the strengthening

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of the Warsaw Pact's military capability. On the other hand, Romania gives its first public endorsement of a Soviet move - made on 8th June - in the MBFR negotiations. In exchange, it obtains the inclusion of a formula concerning the introduction of a "new world economic order". Romanian influence may also be responsible for the reiteration of the principles which must govern relations between Socialist countries.

10. In the days which followed the publication of this Declaration, however, there were growing rumours of crisis, with the news of Mr. Ceaucescu's resistance to the Soviet Union both on a political issue (he refused to sign a joint declaration on the Middle East) and over military matters. One way of gauging the extent of this tension is to assess the nature of the differences separating Bucharest on the one hand and Moscow and the Eastern capitals on the other.

11. Basically, the Romanians reject whatever they regard as an encroachment on national sovereignty, both at international level and within the COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. It is hard to see what could prevent Moscow and its closest allies, excluding Romania, from working out a number of combined measures in the military sphere as well as in others. As far back as 1968, Moscow dispensed with Romanian aid for the invasion of Czechoslovakia. For a number of years now, Bucharest has barred the organization on its territory of Warsaw Pact manoeuvres other than staff exercises. The Romanian problem is, however, political rather than military: divergencies with Romania affect the cohesion of the Socialist camp and Soviet domination of it.

12. Tension has built up steadily since Hua Kuo-feng's visit to the Balkans at the end of August, which Moscow must have regarded as a deliberate provocation, especially in the wake of Mr. Ceaucescu's speech of 3rd August, in which he reaffirmed the salient features of his policy of independence. At the end of the year, the climate of relations between Romania and its allies worsened still further with respect to two separate issues, namely the preparation of the meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee and the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of Romania's unification. The clearly expressed intention of the Bucharest leadership to pull out all the stops for this last-mentioned event seems to have caused a certain amount of irritation particularly in Moscow, Budapest and Sofia, which lost part of their territory at the time.

13. The question which arises is whether there is anything sufficiently new about the dispute which broke out at the Moscow summit to warrant a dramatization of the situation. In the absence of details of what really happened, it is difficult to say. According to Mr. Ceaucescu's version of the

events, Romania was against three proposals put forward by the Soviet Union, viz the creation of an integrated military body at a very high level which would be responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the allied armies and which would have far wider powers than those currently held by the Pact unified command; it was against any increase in the military expenditures of member countries, and it was against the co-ordination of military budgets.

14. The revelations from Romanian sources were borne out on 29th November by the joint Soviet party and government document endorsing the statement by the Political Consultative Committee. The latter referred to "the preservation and strengthening of the Warsaw Pact's defensive capability". This theme was taken up with varying enthusiasm into similar documents adopted by the parties and governments of Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary (the last published after some delay). The German Democratic Republic, which was initially silent on this subject, has since echoed this theme.

15. On his return to Bucharest, Mr. Ceaucescu set about obtaining public backing for his policy. Romania's refusal to kowtow was presented to the various party and government bodies as something to be proud of; in a speech given on 1st December to mark the anniversary of the founding of the unified state of Romania, Mr. Ceaucescu once again explained the main planks of his foreign policy. On each occasion, the Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party emphasized that there was no question of reconsidering the country's membership of the Warsaw Pact, adding, however, that the area of the latter's activity had been defined long ago and that it could not be extended indefinitely. "The Pact, the whole Pact, nothing but the Pact". It is, of course, true that Mr. Ceaucescu is sticking unswervingly to the decisions taken in August 1968, on the morrow of the occupation of Czechoslovakia. At that time, he placed on the statute book a constitutional amendment to the effect that the entry into Romania of foreign troops would have to be subject to parliamentary approval. He has now gone a step further in proclaiming that no Romanian unit or Romanian soldier could be permitted to take orders from abroad. He has also stated that Romania will, in any case, remain on good terms with China.

16. It is this last statement which throws light on his underlying motives. There is little doubt that it was the Chinese question which took pride of place at the Moscow talks: the Soviet leaders have made it plain that their allies must in future make a substantial contribution to the defence of the Socialist world. The independent stance adopted by Bucharest currently represents an obstacle to the unity of their side in its confrontation with the "Imperialist-Maoist bloc".

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17. Mr. Ceaucescu's attitude has also been forced upon him by economic constraints. There have recently been signs of a downturn in growth and of a delay in the investment programme. A significant increase in military expenditure would jeopardize an improvement in the standard of living, and, at the same time, is unnecessary in the present situation.

18. The Soviet Union has replied publicly and officially to Mr. Ceaucescu's arguments in a long article published by Pravda on 16th December. This article was unsigned, an indication that it was approved at the highest level, in all likelihood by the Politburo itself. Its interest is twofold. On the one hand, the Russians provide confirmation of what was already known about the proposals put forward at the Moscow meeting for increases in the military budgets of the Warsaw Pact countries and the strengthening of the powers of the unified command. On the other hand, it is admitted that the Romanians have broken the unanimity and the confidentiality by which the Russians set so much store. By and large, they seem to be on the defensive and to feel obliged to justify their position both to the outside world and to their own public.

19. The results of the Moscow meeting are, in the final analysis, not very encouraging for the Soviet Union, which can see larger and larger cracks appearing in the ramparts of its camp and which is currently not in a position to enforce a uniform policy vis-à-vis the West, China and the question of military expenditure. There is no evidence for claiming, however, that its grip on Eastern Europe has lessened or that we are witnessing the beginning of more serious centrifugal tendencies within the Warsaw Pact. However, the fact that Romania succeeded in getting its way should normally serve to encourage those in the other Eastern countries who want greater independence vis-à-vis Moscow. A noteworthy feature in this connection is that the Romanian attitude does not appear to have elicited any Soviet retaliation. The meeting between the two countries' Foreign Ministers in Moscow from 29th January to 2nd February, 1979, does not seem to have resolved any of their differences, even although certain passages of the Communiqué suggest that there is a measure of harmony in the Pact.

20. In the weeks after the meeting, the Soviet press carried a series of articles which amount to much more than a mere rejection of the Romanian position. When these are taken in conjunction with the Soviet invectives against the Chinese threat, there can be no doubt that Moscow's aim is to put the other Pact countries on notice that it expects unreserved support from them. This attitude shows how important it is in the USSR's view to respond to the open challenge to Soviet bloc unity.

21. It is difficult to assess the limits of Soviet tolerance vis-à-vis Romania. These are basically dependent on circumstances, and on a host of changing and unpredictable factors. However, it should be noted that despite their aspirations to independence, the Romanian leaders are strictly orthodox on the domestic front. Moreover, they have always taken care to proclaim their allegiance to the Warsaw Pact. While Romania is a disruptive factor within the Soviet camp, it will not necessarily become a destabilizing factor for the Soviet Union, at least in the immediate future. The Head of the Romanian party is far too wily a tactician not to be aware of just how far he can go.

(Signed) L. HEICHLER

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