
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, experienced and trustworthy people left the leadership, and their place was taken by others who are either badly prepared or 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 don't have to guess - the situation would have been a lot 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. Valensa 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 put off until 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 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 what blind faith in the extensive connections with the West leads to - 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 of our own and Poland just 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 there is a certain difference between the position of the Europeans and that of the USA. The Europeans are worried by the tendency of Washington for indiscriminate confrontation with the Soviet Union; they do not want to follow the Americans blindly. It is worthy to note also that the different European countries are beginning to talk more actively about 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 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 a 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, although extension of the cooperation can be noticed now on a series of projects. 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 south-eastern Asia, and the Afghanistan issue, as well. I will frankly say that during the conversation I even had to scold him. He speaks disoriented about Poland, too, although you can say that the situation there worries him. He became tense and said that he was ready to go to Poland and to advise the Poles how to introduce order. But in all his reasoning, there's a great deal of ranting.

[...]

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, to consistently 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 cordial gratitude for the invitation to meet here, in Crimea. Our Crimean meetings have turned into a good tradition. They are very useful for our party, our 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 moved our whole nation. 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 to do so.

[...]

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 out to be 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 with some American senators and businessmen. There I made a joke. What do you want, I said, 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 to 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]