

ANNEX III

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Speech Delivered by Comrade N.S. Khrushchev at the Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty

Dear Comrades,

Only a short time has elapsed since the meeting of the communist and workers' parties in Moscow in November 1960, but we have nonetheless been able to see the tremendous importance of the principles and conclusions adopted at that meeting. Every day, life continues to present new evidence that the correlation of forces in the world arena is continuously evolving in favor of socialism and peace; while the forces of war and reaction are in retreat, the socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in global development. Everyday life shows us that there are new, much more favorable opportunities to resolve today's crucial issues in the interests of peace, democracy and socialism.

The meeting prepared a basic strategic and tactical concept for the world communist movement by which all socialist countries must abide in their domestic and foreign policies. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that we must comprehensively analyze the specifics of the international situation in a given period, take into account the forces emerging in the world arena, and make use of all reserves and motive[?] forces in the interest of the socialist camp and peace.

The policy of the socialist countries, of the entire socialist camp, will determine whether we will be able to exploit the existing opportunities in every direction, in every corner of the globe, to tame the aggressive imperialist powers and strengthen the influence of socialism, to unite the forces of peace around the communists, who raise the banner of peace on behalf of the broad masses of people.

Lenin taught us that victory is possible only if "one makes a necessary, most careful, diligent, cautious and skillful use of every crack and cranny between enemies, every conflict of interests between the bourgeois classes of the various countries, different groups or segments of the bourgeoisie within a country, as well as every, even the smallest, opportunity to win a mass ally, no matter how temporary, vacillating, weak, unreliable and conditional the ally may be."

In today's situation, Lenin's aforementioned tenet is particularly important. To this end, a flexible, proactive foreign policy that takes the initiative is required.

The facts clearly show that the consistent struggle of the socialist countries to avert a world war, for the freedom and independence of all nations, has substantially strengthened the international position of the socialist countries and increased their influence on the thinking of hundreds of millions of people all around the world. All the nations of the world view socialism as an ardent advocate of peace and freedom, as a force that can protect mankind against the horrors of a thermonuclear war. This has made socialism overwhelmingly attractive, and contributed to the rallying of broad masses of people all over the world behind the communists.

Under these circumstances, the ruling circles of some capitalist countries are compelled to make major changes in their foreign-policy course. Willy-nilly, leading representatives of the capitalist world must take into account objective facts; they cannot ignore the new correlation of forces in the international arena or the further strengthening of the might of the socialist camp and global communist and national liberation movement.

It goes without saying that the objectives of the foreign policy of imperialist states have not changed. Just like before, the imperialists are striving to “roll back” socialism, stop the growing national liberation movement in the world and retain their rule over underdeveloped countries, using all available means. More and more often the imperialist representatives of the West are forced to admit that the hard and inflexible “foreign policy of strength”, the most prominent display of which was the Dulles-Eisenhower course, has reached a dead end and is making the peoples of underdeveloped countries, including capitalist ones, rise against imperialist states.

At the moment, the imperialists are not risking a world war against the socialist camp; however, they continue their feverish armament efforts and attempt to mobilize all their capabilities for the fight with the world socialist camp, particularly in economic, political and ideological areas. In objective terms, this means that we are forcing the imperialists, whether they like it or not, to follow the path of a peaceful competition of two systems, we are forcing them to fight on the peaceful competition platform, which is advantageous for us.

Of course, we do not believe the imperialists will abandon their “policy of strength”. They are continuously strengthening their military power, particularly in the field of nuclear missiles, trying to keep up with the Soviet Union.

The specific feature of the present course of capitalist powers consists in the fact that the United States and other imperialist states attempt to use much more flexible and covert

methods in their foreign policy. These methods are manifested in their relations to both socialist countries and underdeveloped states of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Leaders of the imperialist states attempt to draw certain conclusions from the fact that the Dulles line to “roll back” socialism by military means has failed and does not offer any perspective, particularly in the light of the new ratio of power in the international arena. Using a flexible and differentiated policy in relations with socialist countries, especially in economic contacts, they plan to increase their influence on individual socialist countries and gradually make them dependent. We have every reason to believe that the ruling circles of the West will step up their activity in this respect.

It is symptomatic that the Kennedy government has recently appointed Kennan, one of the authors of the notorious policy of “containment of communism”, the US ambassador to Belgrade. Kennan has recently presented a new doctrine of a “flexible” policy vis-à-vis socialist states, urging to make use of political and economic means to break individual countries away from the socialist camp.

Imperialist states also try to elaborate new forms of penetration into and strengthening their influence in Asian, African and Latin American countries. They assign an ever-greater priority to underdeveloped countries, and try to make their development follow the road of capitalism, of alliance with imperialist powers. At the same time, they believe the new approach will help them infuse some fresh blood into rotting capitalism.

There’s no doubt we have to watch the new tactical line of imperialists very closely. The Dulles- Eisenhower policy was naturally much easier to reveal to popular masses, as it was an open policy of provocations and preparations for a new war. The Kennedy government presents itself as disavowing from the foreign policy course of its predecessors and prepared to implement a much more realistic policy. To some extent, the tactical approach outlined above naturally makes foreign policy tasks of socialist countries more difficult, but it also opens up new opportunities for us. If we handle the situation correctly, we will be able to use it to further strengthen the foreign policy position of socialist countries, to obtain real concessions with respect to a number of issues from Western powers, to isolate the most aggressive imperialist circles and to make new steps toward international détente.

Having said this, I would now like to dwell on Soviet-American relations, which greatly influence the global international situation.

When Kennedy assumed power, we faced the following question: how should we react to his promises of a more flexible foreign policy and improved relations with the Soviet Union?

We understand very well that the Kennedy government, just like its predecessors, is an imperialist government defending interests of monopolies. The easiest thing to do would be to say that both Eisenhower and Kennedy are imperialists and leave it there. However, identifying differences in policies of different imperialist groups and making use of them to further interests of socialism is much harder.

I recall that, shortly after the October revolution, some speakers in the Soviet Union used to say: "Fatty bourgeois! They live off the sweat and labor of the working class."

That was of course a naïve expression of class feelings. If we wanted to emulate those speakers now, claiming that all bourgeois are imperialists, that they are all made of the same stuff and should be treated without any differentiation, it would be a wrong thing to do. Capitalists are different. We have, for example, awarded the International Lenin Prize for the Strengthening of Peace among Nations to one of them, namely Cyrus Eaton, one of the biggest capitalists in the United States. I think there is some difference between Eaton and, say, Rockefeller or Dupont.

The same applies to the US president. No matter who he is, he serves monopolistic capitalism. However, each president can have a different approach to various issues, a different perception of ongoing events. This is why we cannot put all of them in the same bag solely on the basis of the fact that they are all representatives of monopolistic capitalism. No, we must differentiate. We must be well versed in these matters, we must have a correct approach to the evaluation of events and people.

The Soviet government has taken the new trends in the US policy and shown some initiative to demonstrate its determination to improve relations between our countries to the new government and American people. Without waiting for any actions from Kennedy, we declared we were determined to put the Soviet-American relations back on the track where they used to be at the time of Roosevelt. We have also made some tangible steps: we have released the pilot of the RB-47 plane, which was shot down over our territory, we declared our intention to withdraw the issue of the aggressive actions of the Eisenhower government from the agenda of the United Nations.

Kennedy was forced to react to our actions. As is well known, he publicly declared that the release of the pilot removed a major obstacle on the road toward improved Soviet-US

relations. He also declared that he had forbidden any flights of US military aircraft over our territory. This was, in a way, our success. The American imperialists received a blow, disgraced themselves in front of the whole world, and now they will be less arrogant in their deeds.

Now Kennedy has suggested that we meet in May, either in Vienna, or in Stockholm, to exchange opinions. I must say I have been asked not to publicly disclose the proposal for some time. I would therefore like to ask all comrades present here to bear this in mind. At the moment, it is hard to say what the meeting may lead to. The Americans have not proposed any specific agenda. US State Secretary Dean Rusk has tried to persuade Comrade Gromyko that the Khrushchev-Kennedy meeting may be just an “unofficial exchange of opinions”.

In all probability, the American proposal is a “general reconnaissance” of sorts, which aims to test us in various issues. At the same time, its purpose is to demonstrate Kennedy’s goodwill. In pursuit of our general strategy of developing contacts between state officials in the interest of strengthening peace, we have sent Kennedy a reply to the effect that his proposal is acceptable for us. We too will attempt to see through Kennedy’s plans.

For our part, we will attempt to force the US President to discuss fundamental issues, such as the question of Germany, disarmament, elimination of discrimination in international trade etc. If Kennedy shows a desire to reach an agreement in any of the issues, we will attempt to strengthen the agreement. If we fail to reach tangible results this time, we may agree to another meeting or continuation of discussions. All in all, as the meeting date gets closer, the American attitude and nature of the discussions will be clearer and we will have an opportunity to inform the fraternal parties.

Now it is perhaps too early to draw any conclusions as to the “new approach” of the Kennedy administration to foreign policy issues. It is possible that the time for a radical change of the US foreign policy course has not come yet. We cannot ignore the attitude of Kennedy’s government to, for example, Congo and Cuba, as well as some statements of Kennedy and Rusk on West Berlin.

If it becomes obvious that leading US representatives have not yet grasped the necessity of normal relations with socialist countries, we can of course wait. Our roof is not leaking – the fulfillment of our national economic plans does not depend on deliveries from the United States, our defense is strong and reliable. However, we will continue doing our best to make the United States and other Western countries understand that reaching an

agreement with the Soviet Union and other socialist states is necessary and possible, that the peaceful coexistence is the only way to avoid a catastrophic nuclear war.

The policy of the Soviet government vis-à-vis the United States is based on our desire to achieve better relations with that country; we believe the improvement would be the basis of the peaceful coexistence of the two blocs, and benefit the socialist camp. This is why we cannot miss any opportunity to further this objective, although we cannot take for granted it will be successful.

If the Kennedy government does not oblige us, it will only undermine its own political positions. We will not be harmed. We will not needle them unnecessarily, but we will, just as in the past, decisively reveal and condemn all aggressive manifestations of the US policy, which threaten peace, and, at the same time, persistently demand that essential issues – disarmament, liquidation of colonialism, German question, reorganization of the United Nations etc. – be solved.

The fate of mankind depends on finding solutions to the above issues. Let leading US representatives be responsible for the collapse of hopes of their nation for détente, which they themselves have raised by their criticism of Eisenhower's policy and their statements proclaiming a new foreign policy course.

Comrades, this is why we believe that we should continue to follow a flexible course in our relations with the United States, not make any concessions with respect to fundamental issues, but not to tear bridges to negotiations on our own initiative.

Allow me now to dwell for a while on the struggle for disarmament, which is presently one of the key factors of the foreign policy of the entire socialist camp. Just how do things look like here?

I think everybody agrees that the presentation and active defense of a general and complete disarmament program implemented under strict international control would be politically very correct. The idea of the general and complete disarmament has already got much sympathy of masses all around the world. The pressure of masses and concrete and fair proposals of socialist countries for disarmament force imperialists into vacillation and sometimes place them in a very difficult political situation, as speaking openly against disarmament is no longer possible.

We believe the socialist countries achieved great political successes at the 15th Meeting of the UN General Assembly last autumn. In their joint draft resolution concerning

guidelines for negotiations concerning the general and complete disarmament, non-aligned countries – India, Indonesia, United Arab Republic, Morocco, Ghana and others – were in fact of the same opinion (insofar as fundamental issues were concerned) as the socialist states. The United States and their allies faced a political isolation in this most important matter for mankind.

Now the United States give up disarmament discussions at the UN General Assembly meeting. The Americans claim they need time to prepare their new position.

Many countries, not just in the West, but also non-aligned states in Asia and Africa, harbor hopes that the Kennedy government will make some steps toward disarmament. We must be prepared for that. We must not give our opponents any reason to shout that socialist countries willfully increase the tension and create obstacles on the way toward implementing mutual disarmament agreements. This is why we believed it would be advisable to accommodate US requirements and agree with a few months' postponement of discussions of disarmament issues. In the light of the fact that disarmament negotiations have been going on for some 15 years, it will not do us any harm, but it will help us dispel illusions of non-aligned countries and nations of Western states, when it becomes obvious this autumn that the United States and their allies are unable to propose anything meaningful insofar as disarmament is concerned, although we accepted their request for a postponement. And it is likely this will really happen.

Negotiations of the governments of the Soviet Union, United States and United Kingdom concerning one of the disarmament issues, namely the cessation of the tests of nuclear weapons, have recently been resumed in Geneva. What are our impressions? Some changes for the better can be seen in the American attitude. The near future will show whether the Americans are willing to accept an honorable agreement in this respect.

For our part, we have done our best to reach such an agreement. We have achieved some success. We are determined to continue doing our utmost to bring the negotiations in Geneva to a successful conclusion, i.e. the signature of an agreement banning the tests of nuclear weapons.

However, the crucial task of today is to reach a solution of the general and complete disarmament. Only then will nations not face a nuclear war threat.

Comrades, I believe we all agree that we must continue fighting for the general and complete disarmament, both on the UN platform and outside it, making use of all mass organizations open to our influence. If we succeed in mobilizing broad popular masses in

all countries so that they actively support the general and full disarmament, we will be able to exert a considerable pressure on opponents of disarmament in the imperialist camp. We can do it vigorously, enthusiastically, comprehensively and convincingly, as the general and complete disarmament is not just a propaganda slogan for us, but rather a realistic program in the implementation of which all socialist countries, all peace-loving states, all nations, are extremely interested in. This is where the strength of our position lies.

Practice shows that a common struggle for a common cause offers enough opportunities for both collective initiatives and efforts of different members of our camp, which present specific disarmament proposals.

Comrades! Allow me now to present to you the Soviet government's position concerning the peace treaty with Germany, which will be crucially important for the strengthening of peace in Europe.

The Soviet Union's position is clear and understandable. Just like other socialist countries, the Soviet Union too supports a peace treaty to be signed with both German states and a transformation of West Berlin into a demilitarized free city on the basis of the peace treaty. In order to be able to find a common language with Western states faster, we agreed to an interim solution in the form of a temporary agreement on West Berlin. What we had in mind was that the issue of the peace treaty with Germany would be reopened after a definite period of time, subject to appropriate negotiations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic having taken place.

Practice has shown how timely and appropriate it was tackling the issue of a peace settlement with Germany as fast as possible. The issue gave us strong leverage, allowing us to affect the position of Western powers in many areas of our relations. We forced the capitalist world to acknowledge the de facto existence of the German Democratic Republic. The Western powers were forced to tear down the "iron curtain" they had created, and to sit with us and discuss the most pressing international problems. To a considerable extent, our peace treaty proposals strengthened the position of those forces in Germany which oppose the militarization of the Federal Republic of Germany and support negotiations between the two German states.

All this undoubtedly speaks in our favor. Now we must consider further steps, in order to bring a peaceful settlement of the German question to a successful end. First and foremost, there is the question of whether we should rush things forward and set the date of the peace conference right now. It would probably be rather premature.

We are all united in believing that a peace treaty with both German states, i.e. the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, would be a solution best suited to the peace-strengthening tasks and interests of all countries. We should probably insist on the treaty when dealing with Western powers. However, counting on their consent is rather difficult at the moment. The United States and their allies, which have hitherto based their policy on extended war preparations along NATO lines, understand that the signing of the peace treaty would create an obstacle to the further militarization of West Germany. And the United States view the Federal Republic of Germany as the main pillar of the NATO military system in Europe.

At the same time, we believe that the possibility that the Western powers will accept an interim solution of the German issue cannot be ruled out. An approach to such an interim solution was outlined at the conference of foreign ministers in Geneva in the summer of 1959. If the Western powers showed some common sense, they would have to accept such a solution in their own interest.

Why do we think such an approach is possible? Let us take, for example, West Berlin. The Western powers must be well aware of the vulnerability of their position in the city. They cannot help but understand that claims of the Federal Republic of Germany for West Berlin will never be accommodated and, moreover, they themselves do not believe, deep in their souls, that these claims are justified. It is not easy for them to defend the occupation regime in West Berlin over and over again, to oppose the idea of bringing the city's status into line with peacetime conditions.

However, the Western powers will have to be under some pressure if they are to accept the interim solution of the German issue. The Americans and their allies must at all times feel they do not really have any other option, that the issue of the peace treaty and West Berlin will be ultimately resolved, whether they like it or not. The inevitability of this fact must hang over Kennedy when he meets his allies or us.

Comrades, it is very important that the socialist countries demonstrate a united, tight-ranked front also with respect to the peaceful settlement of the German issue. Each of us has made a contribution to the task. The initiative is fully in our hands. The socialist countries will choose the time and direction of decisive actions, and it is obvious that it is important for us to be well prepared for them in every respect.

The Soviet government has already informed socialist countries of its steps along diplomatic and other lines, the purpose of which is to make the governments of Western powers to discuss our peace treaty proposals in a matter-of-fact fashion. We reminded the

Western powers they had had enough time to study the proposals submitted by us, as well as to thoroughly consider all the consequences they would face in the event they were unwilling to participate in a peaceful settlement of the German problem.

In mid-February, the Soviet government presented a memorandum to the Adenauer government. However, it was not meant just for the Federal Republic of Germany. The document calmly and firmly explained our position vis-à-vis the peace agreement with Germany, including the issue of West Berlin. We did our best to leave the Western powers without any doubts about our resolve to reach a peaceful settlement, with or without them. Several discussions with Western ambassadors to Moscow followed similar lines.

Initial contacts with the present US government have not fully clarified its attitude to the issue of Germany. The new American president and his cronies keep telling us they have been studying the matter, but have not drawn any specific conclusions yet. We do not harbor any false hopes about the United States making any substantial changes in its attitude. Yet it would be premature and unjustified to run ahead of events. We must bear in mind that broad circles of the world community would hardly understand our actions correctly, if we started rushing the peace treaty with Germany without waiting for the outcome of my meeting with Kennedy, which is scheduled to take place this May.

If the planned meeting with Kennedy and other contacts with Western powers show no indications of their willingness to approach the issue of the peace agreement with the two German states realistically, then our countries will naturally have to start full-scale preparations for the conclusion of a peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic. The Soviet government continues to be of the opinion that the issue of the German peace agreement needs to be solved. However, our governments will probably have to exchange opinions, taking into account the current situation and circumstances, before the final decision is made and appropriate actions are coordinated.

I do not think it is necessary to dwell in detail on advantages our countries stand to gain by signing the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic. It is enough to say that it would allow the socialist countries to regard West Berlin as a demilitarized free city and treat it accordingly. By the way, it would be advisable for all of us to lay the groundwork for such a scenario even now, in particular by establishing contacts and developing economic, cultural, and other relations with West Berlin as an independent political entity.

The peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic will help block the way for revanchist efforts of the West German government and dispel its hopes for any revision of the outcome of World War II in its favor. Our actions will be a logical response to the policy of the Bonn militarists, who consistently strive for nuclear arms. They appoint former war criminals to high positions in the armed forces and state administration and are building up military activities close to our borders even as I speak.

One of the tangible and substantial results of the signature of the peace agreement with the German Democratic Republic will be a strengthening of the post-war eastern border of Germany, not just *de facto*, but also *de jure*. No less important will be a stronger international position of the German Democratic Republic.

We have already made some progress toward signing the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic. The Soviet and German Democratic Republic's governments have prepared a working draft of the peace treaty. It will probably be necessary to proceed with this work quite soon, but on a broader basis. The second important task consists in determining and selecting the participants in the next peace conference and in organizing, in a preliminary way, an exchange of their opinions concerning issues arising in connection with the conference.

It is understandable that the signing of the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic will initially result in the international situation becoming more tense. We must be prepared for that. The Western powers have been deeply involved in efforts aimed at the non-recognition of the German Democratic Republic and retention of their occupation rights in West Berlin.

The signing of the peace treaty and its consequences for West Berlin will hurt their ego. And they will probably keep shouting for some time. It is also not possible to rule out potential provocations by the Federal Republic of Germany and other Western powers. However, I believe the Americans and their allies value their security and realize that any provocation on their part will meet resolute resistance. At the end of the day, the Western powers will have to understand that the only way out is an honorable agreement with the government of the German Democratic Republic.

If we view the issue from a future perspective, we can see the signing of the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic can initially bring about a more tense international situation. It would be naïve to think that imperialists will voluntarily agree to our solution of the German question, because our proposals reflect interests of the socialist camp.

Nevertheless, we believe such a step is necessary. Signing the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic is tantamount to extracting a piece of shrapnel out of a living organism, where it has been embedded since World War II. Initially, the patient's condition may get worse, but then the wound will heal and the organism will get stronger.

Similarly, once the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic has been signed, the imperialists will first shout, but at the end of the day they will have to put up with it. The situation in the world, and especially in Europe, will get better and healthier.

We must also be prepared for the signing of the peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic from the economic point of view. It is particularly in this area that a vehement reaction of Western powers can be expected. The CMEA will probably have to have appropriate firm plans and be prepared to provide assistance to the German Democratic Republic.

Comrades! Although the People's Republic of China, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and People's Republic of Mongolia are not members of the Warsaw Treaty, we, as its signatories, feel obliged to constantly consult with them on the most important foreign policy issues and coordinate our efforts for the benefit of a stronger defense of the whole socialist camp. Indeed, the socialist countries are united not just by alliance treaties and agreements. They are united by much more than that – unity of goals, political interests, the great Marxist-Leninist teaching.

It is a well-known fact that the People's Republic of China, although not a member of the Warsaw Treaty, has signed a treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, under which both parties are obliged to provide each other military assistance if one of them is attacked. We have the same agreement with the People's Republic of Mongolia. For the time being, we have not signed similar agreements with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but let no one doubt that we will not leave our Korean and Vietnamese friends alone in the event of an imperialist aggression.

Our great alliance of socialist countries plays an important role in the struggle for maintaining and strengthening peace not only in Europe, but also in Asia. Asia has presently become an important part of the world, which has recently seen the fiercest clashes of nations with imperialism. In a relatively short period of history, the national liberation movement has achieved important victories there. Nations of many Asian countries are now facing a historical choice; either they will follow the path of strengthening of their national independence and developing closer relations with

socialist countries, or allow themselves to be dragged under the yoke of the new imperialist slavery.

Socialist countries cannot afford not to care which way the multi-million nations such as India, Indonesia or Burma will follow. We must do everything we can to make forces of peace and socialism prevail in Asia, to make Asian nations increasingly convinced that they can win real independence and achieve a happy life only with us and following the socialist path.

We must take into account the inconsistency of the present governments of India, Indonesia or Burma and other non-aligned Asian countries. However, they support us in many foreign policy issues, which is advantageous for us. We know they are our temporary allies and can leave us. Nevertheless, we will continue to do our best to influence them. And the more successful we are in keeping them in the position of cooperation with socialist states, the better it will be for the cause of peace and socialism.

Any weakening of our efforts, of our common actions in this part of the globe, would help the imperialists facilitate the implementation of their aggressive plans.

The United States and their allies use all conceivable means to subdue this most populated part of the world to their influence, taking into account the changes taking place there. They try to make use of the strategically favorable setting of the vast Asian territory in order to be able to build strongholds and military bases there, which would be poised against the socialist camp. This is why they follow the course of militarizing Japan; this is why they have converted the southern parts of Korea and Vietnam and the occupied Taiwan into their military bridgeheads.

In addition, it is increasingly obvious that imperialists do all they can to subdue neutral Asian countries in a "peaceful" manner, to make them economically and politically dependent. They use all means to penetrate the economies of these countries and wage a broad ideological campaign aimed at various population groups.

To promote and further their interests, the United States and other imperialist powers not only make use of reactionary and unpopular regimes, such as Chiang-Kai-Shek's, but they are striving to bring to their side the ruling national bourgeoisie, whose influential circles are willing to join forces with monopolies in a number of countries. To maintain some Asian countries under their influence and isolated from the socialist camp, the imperialists are initially willing to put up with the fact that they will not, because of their neutrality, accept membership in aggressive blocs.

Under the circumstances, socialist countries see their most important mission in thwarting the imperialists' plans through an active foreign policy, to help nations of Asian countries strengthen their hard-won independence and embark upon the road to peace, progress and national democracy.

In recent years, the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Rumania and other socialist countries have been exerting a lot of efforts to strengthen the influence of the socialist camp in the region. The assistance of the socialist camp to underdeveloped Asian countries has a major effect on the development of national production capabilities, helps them strengthen their economic independence and cope with the pressure exerted by imperialists.

Hand in hand with the development of national industries, the working class of Asian countries – the leading force of development - is also growing, and our ideological influence on popular masses is increasing and growing stronger.

It is with a great deal of satisfaction that we can state that our joint efforts have earned us warm sympathies of the Indian, Indonesian, Burmese, Afghan and other people. It is by no means accidental that the imperialists have not succeeded in making even a single new Asian country join military blocs lately.

We must continue to fight to reinforce the neutral positions now held by India, Indonesia, Burma and other Asian countries, and we must do our best to bring them, more and more strongly, into the sphere of influence of the socialist camp, and to win the minds and hearts of many hundreds of millions of workers in these countries. In the years to come, it is necessary to closely cooperate with all socialist countries in the struggle for the strengthening of peace in Asia in the interest of the socialist camp. Experience shows that if socialist countries act in a pre-agreed and coordinated fashion, they achieve good results and successfully thwart aggressive plans and intentions of imperialist powers.

An example of good results achieved by an agreed and coordinated approach of socialist countries is Laos.

It is a well-known fact that ruling circles of the United States spared no effort to set a foothold in Laos and converted the country into a stronghold for their aggressive objectives in South East Asia. They organized a mutiny against the legitimate Laotian government, which declared it would implement an independent policy of peace and neutrality.

When the Americans unleashed a fratricidal war in Laos, they probably planned a quick victory. However, the American aggressors forgot that the nations of the East now had loyal and strong friends in the socialist countries. We can conclude with satisfaction that agreed actions of the socialist countries, in particular the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, People's Republic of China and Soviet Union, were a crucial factor in the Laotian patriotic forces standing their ground and successfully crushing the renegades.

The socialist countries based their stance on the assumption that it was necessary to prevent the conflict from growing and expanding and turning into a threat of peace in the whole East Asian region. While providing material assistance and political support to the legitimate Laotian government, we also spoke strongly for an international conference that would settle the Laotian issue and restore the operation of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos.

Events have shown that a combination of our efforts for a peaceful settlement of the Laotian problem and measures aimed at providing effective assistance to patriotic forces within the country is the only correct policy. It helped unite all national and patriotic forces in Laos and strengthen the authority of Pathet Lao among the Laotian people.

The above policy has made a number of neutral Asian countries, which are seriously concerned about the aggressive plans of imperialists in Laos, support our proposals related to the Laotian problem, and led to aggravated disputes between the United States and their SEATO allies.

The imperialists ran against a firm front of socialist countries and were forced to retreat from their initial positions. The Americans have now started talking about the necessity of declaring Laos a non-aligned country with a guaranteed neutral status, and establishing a coalition government in the country.

A typical example indicating changes in the attitude of Western powers to the Laotian question is the response of the British government to our proposal relating to Laos and dated March 23rd, which was submitted after a month of "consideration". The reply was undoubtedly prepared together with the US government.

The Western powers advocate an immediate end of hostilities in Laos. They agree with the proposed resumption of the operation of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos, which is something that socialist countries have always demanded. The Western powers now agree with the international conference that would settle the Laotian issue, again something that we have been asking for a long time.

As the present situation favors settling the issue of Laos in a peaceful way, it would be advantageous for socialist countries to make the international conference on Laos convened fairly soon, say in the beginning of April. It would help strengthen and further develop successes achieved by Laotian patriotic forces. In addition, it would also emphasize our efforts to settle the Laotian problem as fast as possible and make attempts of Western powers to delay the conference more difficult.

We believe it would be necessary to declare now that we in principle agree that the two chairmen of the Geneva Conference address the fighting parties in Laos and urge them to cease fire. Under present circumstances, the ceasefire by combatants would result in substantial political and military advantages for the patriotic forces in Laos and peace-loving countries supporting them; at the same time, it would deny the Americans a possibility of expanding military actions in the region.

As a matter of fact, it is not possible to rule that imperialist, and particularly American, circles, which are seriously concerned about successes of patriotic forces in Laos, may resort to an adventure, which may in turn result in a broad international conflict. Such developments would not be in the best interest of the socialist camp or the strengthening of peace in the whole world.

[Translation by Jiří Mareš]