

ANNEX III
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**Report on the Meeting of the Political
Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty in Sofia,
March 6–7, 1968**

The present report on the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty in Sofia is submitted pursuant to the resolution of the 61st meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, held on March 8, 1968 (P/61-68), which tasked Comrade V. David to prepare and submit to the Politburo a report on the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, including accepted documents.

On March 6 and 7, 1968, a summit meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty was held in Sofia. It was attended by delegations from the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the People's Republic of Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Poland, the Socialist Republic of Romania and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (a detailed list of members of all delegations is included in the final communiqué of the meeting, which is attached).

The meeting was opened by Comrade Zhivkov, head of the Bulgarian delegation. It was then chaired, in line with common practice, by the heads of delegation in alphabetical order. The first, second and third (closing) meetings were chaired by Comrades Gomułka, Ceaușescu, and Brezhnev, respectively.

In accordance with a preliminary agreement, the meeting approved the following agenda:

1. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons
2. Vietnam
3. The establishment of a Staff and Military Council for the Unified Command of the Warsaw Treaty

Comrade Ceaușescu voiced reservations about the wording of the third item on the agenda. He demanded that it not be called "military issues" and refused any agreement on the name of the item during preparations for the meeting. The Romanian objection was motivated by the reservations Romania had about the name of the agenda item. After an

exchange of opinions, the formulation of the third item remained unchanged while [the participants] proceeded to deal with the issue of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The exchange of opinions regarding this particular issue was the main (and in fact the only) discussion to which all the delegations contributed. The Declaration on the Threat to Peace Resulting from the Expansion of the American Aggression in Vietnam was drafted by a team of experts. (The Foreign Ministers took part in the final stage of the preparations). The meeting also heard a report delivered by Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Treaty countries, Marshal of the Soviet Union Comrade Iakubovskii, and adopted a resolution concerning further steps and actions with respect to the third item of the agenda.

I. Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

This issue was the focus of attention of all the delegations, since the meeting had been convened on the basis of a Romanian request to discuss the position of the Warsaw Treaty member countries on the proposed nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The meeting in Sofia was preceded by a meeting of the Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty member countries, held on February 26 and 27 in Berlin. In the opinion of most participants in the Berlin meeting, the Deputy Foreign Ministers were expected to draft an agenda for the meeting in Sofia, and also make a preliminary assessment of the opinions and positions of the individual member countries on the draft non-proliferation treaty. They were to find a common solution that could help the Political Consultative Committee contribute to the success of the Sofia meeting -- that is, in the interest of the unity of the Warsaw Treaty member countries. However, the meeting in Berlin was unable to accomplish this task because the Romanian delegation merely presented its well-known reservations concerning the draft treaty, claiming that discussion of the matter should take place at the highest level, i.e., at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia. Under the circumstances, the delegations of the other six countries attending the Berlin meeting could do nothing but present their views and positions regarding the draft non-proliferation treaty and Romania's particular reservations and comments. The Berlin meeting confirmed an identical positive attitude of the six European socialist countries toward the proposed nuclear non-proliferation treaty and showed that the Socialist Republic of Romania continued to harbor reservations about the draft.

The first part of the meeting in Sofia, which dealt with the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus began in a situation in which the differences of opinion and attitude between the Romanian delegation and the remaining six delegations regarding the non-

proliferation treaty were not eliminated, but confirmed. Moreover, the Romanian delegation added yet another proposal to its previous comments and reservations with respect to Article III of the treaty (controls), which had been delivered to the parties attending the meeting only a few days before it began.

The meeting of the Political Consultative Committee began at the time when the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva was in the final stage of discussions concerning the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. At that time, meeting the deadline set by the resolution of the 22nd UN General Assembly meeting of March 15, by which time the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference was expected to successfully complete its work, was at stake. These circumstances affected the discussion in Sofia very much because most of the participants realized that the meeting in Sofia should not jeopardize in any way the work of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference and the timely submission of a report on the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty to the UN General Assembly, which was to consider the draft shortly thereafter.

This was the reason why head of the Soviet delegation, Comrade Brezhnev, emphasized the time aspect in his opening address; he argued that missing the right moment for signing the treaty could waste the opportunity at hand and would have unfavorable consequences for the future, both in Europe and throughout the world. He appealed to all the socialist countries to join forces and stand united in their support of a speedy negotiation and conclusion of the treaty. All the other delegations, except Romania's, voiced similar sentiments.

However, the speech by the head of the Romanian delegation confirmed that Romania was not considering any change in its critical attitude toward the draft nuclear non-proliferation treaty and was disregarding the urgent reasons that made the other socialist states strongly support an early conclusion to the treaty-- in particular, the threat of the Federal Republic of Germany's nuclear armament. Furthermore, Ceaușescu's speech showed that Romania's maximalist requirements were based on unrealistic assumptions-- namely, that the United States and its allies could be forced to make additional substantial concessions. At the same time, Comrade Ceaușescu told the Political Consultative Committee that he had instructed the Romanian delegation at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference to submit comments on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as an official document. Comrade Ceaușescu's speech also indicated that Romania was not willing and prepared to change its attitude toward the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in the nearest future; moreover, it was prepared to voice its reservations and objections during further negotiations at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference and, in particular, at the UN General Assembly meeting (the Romanian delegation at the

Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference officially submitted its comments on March 11, 1968).

It is true that the Romanian delegation in Sofia admitted that the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was important, but its stubborn and unrealistic attitude objectively helps the opponents to the treaty, who persistently present their reservations and objections in order to delay the conclusion of the treaty and ultimately render it impossible. These concerns were confirmed on March 6, when the government of the Federal Republic of Germany submitted a memorandum to the participants in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference that attempted to influence them. It contained reservations similar to Romania's and referred to "other countries" allegedly interested in "significant changes to the treaty."

In contrast to Romania, the other countries attending the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee based their evaluation of the treaty's importance and the need to sign it as soon as possible on a realistic assessment of the international situation, including the dangerous possibility of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the militaristic and revanchist circles in the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as by reactionaries in some other capitalist states. This is why the time aspect has been emphasized so much; an early conclusion of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty would undoubtedly be a major success of the socialist countries in their struggle to reduce the risk of a nuclear conflict and would make it impossible for its opponents to organize resistance against the treaty's acceptance.

These were the main standpoints that the parties at the Sofia meeting used in assessing the Romanian comments concerning the draft treaty. The participants agreed that:

- (a) Some of the proposals [presented by the Romanian delegation] require the nuclear nonproliferation treaty to deal with the complex issue of nuclear disarmament in its entirety and thus extend beyond the framework of the treaty; they are unrealistic and may ultimately make the conclusion of the treaty impossible;
- (b) The Romanian proposal concerning security guarantees for non-nuclear states does not have any chance of being accepted by the United States; it would therefore create an insurmountable obstacle to the treaty's conclusion. At the same time, the [other] socialist countries emphasized that they believe a solution of the aforementioned issue outside the framework of the treaty would be sufficient and that the security of the European socialist countries is adequately guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty and the Soviet nuclear capability;

(c) Additional comments by Romania concerning control mechanisms in the treaty and [potential] withdrawal from it would weaken the stability of the treaty, rather than the opposite, and might be exploited at the expense and to the detriment of the socialist states.

The Romanian representative did not react to any of the arguments above, and the Romanian delegation kept insisting on its comments and reservations.

Due to the impending conclusion of the negotiations in Geneva, as well as in light of the Romanian decision to announce its separate position publicly, and given that the final communiqué from the Sofia meeting does not indicate a position different from Romania's, the delegations of the remaining six socialist states decided to formulate a common position on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to advance their peace objectives. A meeting of the six delegations (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union) took place on March 7. It formulated and approved the text of a declaration in which the six states clearly voiced their support in favor of a speedy conclusion to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and in favor of the Soviet proposal of January 16, 1968, urging other countries to accept a positive solution to the issue. The document, which was signed by the First Secretaries of the communist and workers' parties and the prime ministers after reaching mutual consensus, was published on March 9. Comrade Zhivkov notified Comrade Ceaușescu (the head of the Romanian delegation) of the six states' intended statement.

The discussions concerning the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which took place at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia, did not bring any change in the initial positions of the participants. During the discussion, the Romanian delegation did not do anything that could be interpreted as a willingness, no matter how small, to find a common standpoint with the [other] socialist countries regarding the treaty. It is therefore appropriate to expect that Romania will not act in unison with the other socialist states at the UN General Assembly either.

II. The Question of Vietnam

The meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia unanimously adopted the "Declaration on the Threat to Peace Resulting from the Escalation of the American Aggression in Vietnam."

A group of experts representing all the states attending the meeting had been discussing the draft declaration since March 5. The expert group's work was based on a proposal prepared by Bulgaria, the Soviet Union and Poland, pursuant to a decision adopted at a meeting of deputy foreign ministers in Berlin. The drafting of the declaration took into account comments and issues submitted by Vietnamese comrades shortly before the meeting. Upon their request, the initial text of the Declaration was expanded, adding to it parts expressing support for the four points proposed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the [South Vietnam] National Liberation Front program, condemning US maneuvers with respect to so-called peace negotiations, and dealing with the issue of volunteers, etc. In the course of the discussion about the text of the declaration, the delegations presented many comments, most of which were dealt with by the adoption of formulations reconciling the differences. Most of the comments by the Czechoslovak experts, the purpose of which was to improve the text and make it more accurate, were accepted. The final wording was approved at the final meeting of the foreign ministers, and the declaration was signed by all the participants in the Political Consultative Committee meeting during its final session on March 7.

The declaration strongly condemns the American aggression in Vietnam, highly praises the heroic struggle of the people of Vietnam both in the northern and the southern parts of the country, gives a stern warning to the US government and supports the positions of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front regarding the solution of the Vietnam problem. The declaration voices strong support for the people of Vietnam in their fight against US aggression and presents a commitment of full support with all the necessary assistance to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and its people as long as it is needed, until the imperialist aggression is victoriously repelled (see the attached annex for the full text of the declaration).

III. The Establishment of the Staff and Military Council of the Unified Command of the Warsaw Treaty

The third item on the agenda of the meeting was supposed to be discussion of the issue of the strengthening of the military structures of the Warsaw Treaty by establishing a Military Council, a Staff and Committee on Technology of the organization.

Noting the particular attitude of the Romanian representatives toward the documents pertaining to the military structures of the Warsaw Treaty, which had been agreed upon earlier, and wishing not to unnecessarily dwell on controversial issues during the meeting in Sofia, the heads of delegation decided to hear a report by the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces,

Marshal of the Soviet Union Iakubovskii, not to have any discussion, and to postpone the issue until the next meeting of the Political Consultative Committee.

The following resolution was adopted with respect to this item of the agenda:

“The Political Consultative Committee heard the report by the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces regarding the establishment of the Military Council, Staff and Committee on Technology of the Unified Armed Forces.

The Political Consultative Committee takes note of the outcome of the work of the defense ministers, and tasks them and the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces to proceed with the evaluation of the issues related to the Military Council, Staff and Committee on Technology, to discuss them and submit, within six months, their proposals for discussion to the Political Consultative Committee of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty.”

The resolution was adopted unanimously. The parties agreed not to publish it in the media and to treat the document as secret.

The Czechoslovak delegation at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee proceeded in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia [...].

The meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia concluded on the evening of March 7 with the adoption of a final communiqué, the text of which is attached.

[Translation by Jiří Mareš]