

Top secret

Speech by the First Secretary of the HSWP, Comrade János Kádár,  
at the Meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee  
in Sofia

March 7, 1968

Dear Comrades!

The nuclear nonproliferation treaty on our agenda is indeed an important question in terms of the security of the peoples [of the world] and especially our countries. In the past decades, the Soviet Union has put forward concrete proposals for general and complete disarmament on several occasions; for the elimination of atomic and hydrogen weapons and their delivery vehicles; and for the reduction and eventual elimination of conventional weapons in several stages. Experience shows that our objective – general and complete disarmament – can be achieved, step by step, through incremental progress, through compromises that serve the interests of the socialist community.

Guided by this insight, the socialist countries welcomed and supported the signing of the 1963 Moscow limited nuclear test ban treaty and the signing of the 1967 agreement on the exclusively peaceful use of outer space.

These international agreements represented progress in only some areas of the plans for complete disarmament that the Soviet Union presented to the UN General Assembly. Nevertheless, their signing marked a victory for socialism, for progress and for the forces of peace.

In this sense, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic welcomes and supports the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty presented by the Soviet Union to the session of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva on January 18, 1968. The draft treaty, it is true, does not fully reflect all our wishes and ultimate aims, but for the moment, this, it seems, is what can be achieved in terms of realistic possibilities. Its acceptance would serve our common cause and the national interests of the individual socialist countries.

There has been a proliferation of nuclear weapons, and this situation can have a dangerous impact upon international politics in the future. As we know, the Federal Republic of Germany, as part of its militaristic ambitions, would like to achieve some form of control over nuclear weapons. In addition to the FRG, there are other capitalist states on various continents within reach of producing nuclear weapons, and several of them seek to become nuclear powers in order to attain their political ambitions. If left unimpeded, this process could make the international situation more unpredictable and dangerous and increase the possibility that local armed conflicts could lead to thermonuclear war. Thus, in our judgment, we must seek to cooperate with the governments of countries with other political systems, mobilize our political forces and work for an international agreement to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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Douglas Selvage, Principal Investigator.

The number one precondition for such an agreement to have any degree of effectiveness is that the United States be a party to it; for it is clear to all of us that the danger of a nuclear war stems from the nuclear weapons possessed by the imperialist powers and their aggressive, imperialistic policies. For this reason we welcome the fact that, after a protracted period of negotiations, the Soviet Union was able to reach agreement with the United States on a draft treaty.

True, one of the authors of this agreement is the United States, which has endangered world peace through a series of aggressions and provocations. Still, the draft treaty and even the series of talks regarding the draft treaty demonstrates that the aggressive policies of the United States have been restricted and curbed to some extent. At the same time, the agreement makes it clear to a wide circle of non-socialist governments that the Soviet Union and the socialist countries are striving constructively and sincerely to improve international relations.

An opinion exists regarding the draft [treaty] – namely, if the treaty is signed and implemented, it would cement the disparity of power between nuclear and non-nuclear states and would divide the countries of the world into two categories based on this principle. We do not classify the nations of the world based on their possession or non-possession of nuclear weapons; instead, what is decisive is whether we are talking about a socialist or an imperialist state. Accordingly, in this situation, the main task, we believe, is to curtail the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to proceed consistently down the road to realizing our political objectives, embodied in the slogan of general and complete disarmament. In our view, both the preamble and the effective articles of the draft treaty point in this direction.

In the current situation, we believe that the signing of the nuclear nonproliferation by the largest possible number of countries in the simplest and quickest way possible is in the highest interest of socialism, peace, and progress. Delays, it seems, could cause serious damage; the provisions of the current draft will provide significant protection against the danger of further nuclear proliferation.

The comrades are aware that the Hungarian People's Republic is not represented at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva; thus, we cannot deal with the details of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in the same way as the socialist countries that are represented there. Nevertheless, given the great importance of this issue, the responsible Hungarian party and state organs have closely scrutinized the basic issues regarding the draft treaty.

We appreciate the strenuous efforts exerted by the Soviet Union's experts regarding this question in their lengthy talks with the United States' experts. We consider it significant that the text tabled in Geneva has been coordinated with the United States; it seems that it can enter into force. The treaty should be implemented as soon as possible; postponing its implementation runs contrary to our interests. So much for the draft treaty.

Now, in preparing for the meeting, we carefully studied the proposed amendments prepared by the Romanian comrades. The Romanian comrades' proposals contain elements and wishes that are correct and correspond to our interests. The main problem with the proposals is that, for known reasons, they are currently impossible to achieve. At the same time, their introduction may serve as a pretext to postpone the treaty's conclusion on the part of those imperialist states that

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oppose us and are interested in acquiring nuclear weapons and thus in the proliferation of nuclear arms. The prompt conclusion of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, we believe, will serve the interests of peace and security. Our efforts, we believe, should now be directed toward concluding a realistically attainable nonproliferation treaty. Then, under better conditions, we can pursue our struggle for general and complete disarmament, including the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee will report to the UN General Assembly after March 15, and the subsequent talks to finalize the text will be conducted within the framework of the UN General Assembly. The representatives of the Hungarian People's Republic will work to remove impediments to the agreement as quickly as possible, and the other UN member-states should do so as well for the sake of their own peace and security.

*[Translation by László Borhi]*