

Speech by the First Secretary of the CC of the SED, Comrade Erich Honecker, at the  
Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Member-States  
on  
25 and 26 January 1972 in Prague

[EXCERPTS]

Dear Comrades!

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic heartily greets all the fraternal delegations. We are very glad that today's consultations are providing us once again with the opportunity to conduct a necessary exchange of views about the international and particularly the European issues that affect us jointly, and to agree on the further actions of our commonwealth.

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We fully share the assessment of the situation presented to us by Comrade Leonid Ilich Brezhnev and agree with his proposed suggestions for our further joint action.

[. . .]

Comrades!

Our delegation expresses its firm conviction that the "Declaration on Peace, Security and Cooperation in Europe," to be adopted at the end of our consultations, will provide a strong political impulse itself for convening and carrying out the security conference in 1972. The crucial significance of this document lies in the fact that the Warsaw Treaty states provide a clear and unequivocal explanation of the further steps necessary for guaranteeing European security as well as of the essential content and nature of the all-European conference itself

This ensures that, in the current phase of development, our socialist commonwealth will actively maintain its historic initiative in preparing and convening the all-European conference on security and cooperation and will thus fulfill its natural role as the initiator of the movement for European security.

With the "Basic Principles of European Security and of Relations between States in Europe," as formulated in Point II of the draft document, our consultations are lending a

profoundly democratic character to the movement for European security and by extension to the all-European conference itself. These principles correspond to the basic resolutions of the United Nations and, most importantly – as already mentioned – to the fundamental document on relations of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, which was agreed upon on the occasion of Comrade Brezhnev’s visit to France.

Our draft declaration rightly stresses that in our consultations, emphasis must be placed upon the collective discussion and determination of the political prerequisites and basic conditions necessary for European security. This follows clearly from the basic principles it contains regarding the inviolability of frontiers, the territorial integrity of states, renunciation of force, peaceful coexistence, cooperation, support of the UN, etc. Of particular importance to us in this regard is the affirmation of the need to establish relations between the European states on the basis of sovereign equality.

The “Basic Principles of European Security and of Relations between States in Europe,” for which the document provides clear justifications, correspond to the decisions of the Conference at Karlovy Vary and the action program contained in the main document of the International Conference of Communist and Workers’ Parties in 1969.

We are thus developing a constructive basis for discussing the all-European conference that ties into and supports positive efforts in Western Europe. In this way, we are effectively confronting the forces hostile to détente, who want either to prevent or to endlessly postpone an all-European conference. At the same time, the principles elaborated in our declaration counteract the well-known attempts by the USA, Great Britain, the FRG and other forces in NATO to distort the nature of the all-European conference by focusing primarily on issues of military policy, arms control and the so-called “overcoming of the division of Europe.” In our efforts to establish all the prerequisites for the convocation of a European Conference, we cannot overlook the fact that with the so-called expansion of the EEC, a new political grouping is developing in Western Europe that will work against the tendency of several West European countries to free themselves from the tutelage of the USA. It is clear even now that the creation of such an economic bloc will have a political impact upon our efforts to transform Europe into a continent of peace.

The next important step in our joint action is undoubtedly to begin the multilateral preparation for the security conference in Helsinki as soon as possible. Through the common efforts of all the Warsaw Treaty states, we will undoubtedly succeed in guaranteeing the equal status of all European states, including the German Democratic Republic, in all phases of the preparations and in the conduct of the conference. As you

know, the FRG, with the support of its allies – mainly the USA and Great Britain – is making great efforts to play the role of protector of the German Democratic Republic and to dictate a special status for it. In realizing the common policy line of the socialist states, the German Democratic Republic will continue to make a constructive contribution to détente and to the consolidation of peace and European security.

We will use our political and diplomatic opportunities to explain to the European capitalist states, as well as Canada, the new possibilities that have arisen for preparing a European security conference as a result of the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin, the transit agreement between the GDR and the FRG and the German Democratic Republic's agreements with the West Berlin Senate.

In doing so, we will also underline the absolute necessity of opposing all efforts to exclude the German Democratic Republic from participating on an equal basis in the preparations for the conference.

In response to the Finnish information about the status of the technical and administrative preparations for the security conference, we are planning to explain in an aide-mémoire the stance of the German Democratic Republic regarding the need to implement without delay the Finnish proposals of 25 November 1970. We will also buttress our efforts to raise the level of relations between the German Democratic Republic and Finland to a diplomatic level. This will also improve the conditions for preparing the security conference and for the German Democratic Republic's inclusion on an equal basis. In relation to France, Italy, Canada, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Cyprus, the Vatican and Spain, we plan to take the diplomatic step of presenting the German Democratic Republic's position regarding the security conference.

Either directly or through the good services of friendly states, we will transmit to the other NATO states a memorandum of the German Democratic Republic regarding this issue. Furthermore, we intend to contribute to the expansion of the democratic mass movement for European security and cooperation through appropriate societal activities – for example, by participating actively in the Peoples' Forum in Brussels.

Dear Comrades!

Of particular importance for further progress on the road to détente in Europe and the implementation of the principles of peaceful coexistence in relations between states with different social systems in Europe, we believe, are the socialist states' common assessment and coordinated action with respect to the FRG.

To the extent that we can rightly observe today that a certain realistic viewpoint has been developing among certain forces in the governments of the capitalist states, this is also true of the FRG's ruling circles. In contrast to previous governments, the current government of the FRG has been taking into account, to some extent, the real situation in its foreign policy. In the Moscow Treaty, it recognized the state border between the GDR and the FRG and conceded its inviolability. For the first time, it has signed – after prolonged negotiations – an agreement with the government of the German Democratic Republic that is binding under international law: a transit agreement regarding the movement of civilian persons and goods between the FRG and West Berlin.

We are taking into account the realistic side of the FRG government's foreign policy, which derives from the international correlation of forces, the drive for self-preservation on the part of large segments of monopoly capital in the FRG, its [the FRG's] economic interests and its drive for greater independence. It is by no means a matter of indifference to us whether the FRG is being led by the government that concluded the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties and signed the Oreanda Communiqué, or by a government that openly steers a course of revanchism and the aggravation of tensions. We are thus prepared to tie into the realistic aspects of its foreign policy and to accommodate it in those areas where it demonstrates a desire to contribute to a normalization of the situation and to détente in Europe.

Unfortunately, the constructive contribution made by the German Democratic Republic to the conclusion of the aforementioned treaties has not yet been met with a corresponding willingness to accommodate on the part of the government of the FRG. The Federal Government is pursuing now, just as before, the unmistakable goal of destabilizing the position of socialism in the German Democratic Republic and of creating the best possible conditions for carrying out this plan. To this end, the FRG has been intensifying its application of the so-called Scheel Doctrine. Recently, it has been escalating in particular the campaign in its mass media against the German Democratic Republic, against the sovereignty and independence of our state, and against the inviolability of its frontiers. The question arises: Whom does this serve, what goals are being pursued, and how, after considering all angles, should we react?

Of course, we must exploit the contradictions between the USA and the FRG and the Bonn government's striving for greater freedom of maneuver politically. But we cannot overlook the fact that with respect to the basic issues of imperialism's fight against socialism, the Brandt Government stands on the side of the USA and actively supports its policy of strengthening NATO. The FRG's arms budget under the Brandt Government is

24.2 billion a year, the largest ever approved by a German government in peacetime. At the instigation of the Bonn government, the NATO states of Western Europe have increased their offset payments for the stationing of US troops, with the FRG making the largest contribution of 6.6 billion marks.

During his meeting with Nixon in Florida, the Chancellor of the FRG publicly swung over to the line of the American President regarding a European security conference – namely, not to consider holding the conference before 1973. We consider the essential causes behind this stiffening in the FRG government’s stance to be, on the one hand, its intention of conducting the upcoming election campaign to the Bundestag under the banner of nationalism and, on the other hand, the growing hopes within the FRG’s ruling circles of profiting from the interaction between the USA and the People’s Republic of China – as was demonstrated quite clearly at the UN just recently.

[. . .]

Dear Comrades!

After the conclusion of the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin, the government of the FRG has posed two new linkages. First, it is making its readiness to participate in the multilateral preparations for the security conference dependent upon the entry into force of the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin. Second, it is linking the German Democratic Republic’s accession to the UN to a so-called General Agreement – i.e., a preliminary settlement of the relationship between the FRG and the GDR on the basis of so-called inter-German relations. It is attempting to justify this with the nationalist slogan of “Unity of the Nation,” despite the fact that even renowned specialists in international law in the FRG have come to the conclusion that such a “Unity of the Nation” does not exist.

At present, the Brandt/Scheel government is concentrating its efforts with regard to the German Democratic Republic on the following three goals:

1. It is trying by all means possible to block any further development of the German Democratic Republic’s international relations.
2. Since the German Democratic Republic’s participation in international life can no longer be prevented, the German Democratic Republic should participate in the UN and in other international organizations – if at all – only with a lesser, unequal

status, and its relations to third states should, as much as possible, be limited to the commercial level.

3. At present, the main thrust of the FRG is becoming apparent; it is striving to make the state border of the German Democratic Republic, which it was forced to recognize, “permeable.” To this end the FRG government is attempting to engage in extortion in the most diverse areas, including the two aforementioned linkages.

In our opinion, this demonstrates that the FRG, with its policy of temporarily conceding the existence of the German Democratic Republic, is still pursuing the goal of exploiting all opportunities to bring about a long-term change in the correlation of forces in the German Democratic Republic. Quite tellingly, the Brandt/Scheel government has just recently sought to claim special rights for the three Western powers with regard to the German Democratic Republic – rights that they have not possessed up until now – by appealing to the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin. Clearly, this is not just an election tactic.

Under these circumstances, we consider our next task to be to do everything possible to achieve the ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties without any further delay, and to drive back the forces that are working against this. A further indispensable task is to achieve the FRG’s recognition of the Munich Agreement’s invalidity from the very beginning. We support fully and completely the ČSSR’s efforts in this regard and consider it to be a fundamental part of our common policy.

As for the German Democratic Republic’s further dealings with the FRG, we will continue the negotiations for a general transportation agreement.

We will conduct these negotiations in such a way as to have a positive influence on the ratification process. Given our experience to date in the negotiations with the FRG and given the approach of the Brandt/Scheel government, which seeks to use the agreement to achieve an opening of the GDR’s border with the FRG, we can be sure that the negotiations will be complicated. In our opinion, the transportation agreement will provide further proof in yet another area that it is absolutely imperative to construct relations between the German Democratic Republic and the FRG in the same way as those between other sovereign, equal and independent States. We wholly and completely welcome the fact that the draft declaration before us notes that the ever-growing recognition of the German Democratic Republic constitutes an important factor in the consolidation of peace in Europe. Every step forward along this path, including the establishment of relations between the German Democratic Republic and the FRG

according to the norms of international law, will be an important contribution to guaranteeing peace, security and cooperation on our continent.

Since the Government of the FRG postponed the ratification of the Treaties of Moscow and Warsaw until May or June 1972, we view it as our common task to achieve the German Democratic Republic's admission to the World Health Organization, UNESCO and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as the German Democratic Republic's participation on an equal basis in the UN Conference on the Protection of the Environment in Stockholm. This will also make it clear to the outside world that any hope of confining the German Democratic Republic to a so-called inner-German relationship with the FRG contradicts reality and has absolutely no prospects for success.

Allow me, dear Comrades, to express our most heartfelt thanks at this point to the parties and governments of the fraternal states for their steadfast and resolute support for the German Democratic Republic's struggle for its equal international status.

Dear Comrades!

The ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties will undoubtedly result in a new, more favorable situation for our community and not least of all for the German Democratic Republic.

However, we would already like to hear your opinion today, dear Comrades, about whether the following measure, for example, could be adopted after the ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties: the initiation, immediately after the treaties' ratification, of a joint campaign by the Warsaw Treaty states and other friendly states to admit the GDR to the UN and its specialized agencies. Would it not be expedient for the Foreign Ministers to include a discussion of this campaign as a point in their next meeting's agenda? We are also keeping in mind the fact that with the ratification of the Treaties, the well-known Declarations of Intent connected with the Moscow Treaty will come into force and should be exploited for our common struggle.

Dear Comrades!

Surely we all agree that any attempt by the FRG and NATO to differentiate among the socialist states is doomed to failure. We are of the opinion that those socialist states that have not had any diplomatic relations with the FRG up to now, should establish such relations only after the Treaties of Moscow and Warsaw have been ratified, the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin has entered into force, the FRG has recognized

the invalidity of the Munich Agreement from the very beginning, and the German Democratic Republic has been admitted to the United Nations Organization as a member. We agree with Comrade Leonid Ilich Brezhnev that our actions with regard to the FRG in all matters should be carefully coordinated and agreed upon between our parties and governments.

Our most important foreign policy task is and remains, it goes without saying, to continue to firmly anchor the German Democratic Republic within the socialist commonwealth. In keeping with the resolutions of our Eighth Party Congress, we are striving to intensify our cooperation with all the fraternal countries. This will, at the same time, help promote our active policy of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist states. We are convinced that our common actions regarding these new and crucial issues will lead to further successes for the entire socialist community. This will render the mutual cooperation of the Warsaw Treaty states on international issues more effective, further strengthen our socialist commonwealth and steadily increase its influence over the development of the international situation.

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*[Translation from the German by Ursula Froese]*