

STATEMENT BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION

Comrade Yu.V. Andropov

Dear Comrades!

Meetings of the Political Consultative Committee are meaningful events not only in the life of our alliance, but also in European and world politics. The activities of the PCC reflect the most important foreign policy initiatives for peace and détente that result from the collective thought of the leadership of fraternal socialist countries.

Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev, to whom we just paid tribute, valued highly the practice of jointly developing the strategic directions of our actions. The CPSU and the Soviet state will remain faithful to this tradition. We will continue to do everything to ensure solid trust and deep harmony among our countries.

The PCC is meeting under complicated, and, I would say, disturbing circumstances that have made it particularly necessary for us to consult with each other.

All of us, of course, are wondering what has caused the sharp turn in U.S. and NATO policy that has produced the current flare-up of tensions and how long this aggravation will last.

The crux of the matter lies, in our opinion, above all else in the changes in the world to the detriment of imperialism.

The 1970s were a time of further growth in the power and influence of the socialist commonwealth. We were able to attain military-strategic parity with the West. This allowed us to conduct business with it on equal terms. Our dynamic policy of détente produced major, positive shifts in international relations.

Imperialism suffered notable losses in the broad zone of the so-called Third World, upon control of whose resources the West's well-being continues to depend. Revolutionary changes in Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and other countries – brought about by objective factors – were perceived by Washington, and not without good reason, as a defeat for American policy.

The phenomenon of Reagan and his policies, however, was brought about by not only external but also internal causes. Symptoms of profound crisis-- a fall in production, inflation, mass unemployment--have affected practically all the capitalist countries. And

the bourgeoisie, as a rule, seeks to escape such conditions by embarking on foreign political adventures.

But this is only one side of the coin. The other side is that the USA and NATO have seen an opportunity in the difficulties that all of us, to some degree, have been facing in the realm of economic development. I am speaking about the growth in foreign debt, the food-supply situation, our technological lag in some branches of industry and a number of other bottlenecks. Domestic political difficulties in some socialist countries have been perceived in a similar fashion. Let's not look the other way: as long as these problems exist, our class enemies will try to turn them to their benefit; that is why they are our class enemies.

The policy of Reagan and those who support him is nothing less than an attempt to combat the laws of historical development and to limit, at all costs, any further losses to the capitalist system. The sharp edge of this policy is directed against the Soviet Union and the entire socialist commonwealth. Washington's so-called policy of differentiation toward individual socialist countries has a tactical purpose but does not alter anything in substance. The struggle is unfolding in practically every direction.

The shamelessness with which the United States has been trying to complicate the economic conditions of the socialist countries truly stands out. Just think of their actions against Poland! Or the notorious story of the "gas pipeline" deal, in which the USA was willing to sacrifice the interests of even its closest allies. It appears that Americans want to continue to use trade as a weapon for applying political pressure. I am talking about their drastically limiting our access to advanced technology, reducing the amount of available credit and tightening the conditions for its issuance, adopting measures to reduce the hard-currency earnings of the socialist countries from exports, etc.

We have all sensed the increased activity of the ideological centers of imperialism. And this is not simply the revival of the propaganda war with which we are familiar from the past. A high-stakes bet has been placed on creating a political opposition in our countries and manipulating it to undermine the socialist order of our societies.

Especially dangerous is the challenge being posed to us in the military arena. Having set the goal of destroying the balance in this area, Washington is inciting – and, as the December session of the NATO Council has shown, not without results – a relentless militarization of the entire NATO bloc and all its members.

This new round of the arms race imposed by the USA has major, qualitative differences. Whereas before, the Americans, in speaking about their nuclear weapons, preferred to emphasize that they were above all else a means of “intimidation” and “deterrence,” now, as they create advanced missile systems, they do not hide the fact that they are actually intended for future wars. Hence, the doctrines of “rational” and “limited” nuclear war; hence, the assertions about the possibility of surviving and winning a protracted nuclear conflict.

It is difficult to distinguish between what constitutes blackmail and what constitutes a genuine readiness to take the fatal step. In any case, we cannot and shall not permit the USA to have military superiority. The balance will not be upset. However, one must take into account that the escalation of the arms race can make the military-political situation unstable and uncertain. It will be difficult or perhaps utterly impossible to monitor some of the newly-developed weapons by national means.

Overall, it is no exaggeration to say that we are facing one of imperialism’s most massive attempts to apply the brakes to social change in the world and to stop socialism’s advance or even to push it back in some areas.

One should naturally treat with all seriousness the current change in U.S. policy. But one should see that they are far from being entirely successful. The weaknesses and the miscalculations in their policies are manifesting themselves ever more clearly. Having planned to frighten us, the politicians in Washington have also sowed fear in their own country and among their own allies and have irritated them. Fears are growing in the West that the people in power in the United States are capable of provoking a nuclear disaster.

Is it not indicative that, independent of the World Peace Council, a mass antinuclear movement has arisen and is gaining strength in Western Europe and the USA itself? This is already creating something of a political climate. The idea of freezing nuclear arsenals enjoys broad support in the Democratic Party in the USA. Members of the Labour Party in England are speaking out for nuclear disarmament. This is far from trivial.

Of course, the NATO countries have been following the lead of the United States and – some to a greater, some to a lesser extent – have been playing along with the attacks on our policy. The European allies, Canada, and it may even be said of Japan, are far from completely sharing the American orientation toward harsh confrontation with the socialist commonwealth. Arguments and clashes regarding various questions – not only economic, but also political--are not subsiding within the Western camp. Reagan’s

pushiness in no way lessens the contradictions between imperialists; on the contrary, it aggravates them.

U.S. relations with many Third World countries have encountered significant difficulties. How else could it be in light of the events in the Southern Atlantic, Lebanon, parts of Central America and the Caribbean, and southern Africa? Providing support to terrorist regimes and rejecting fair demands for the establishment of a new international economic order, the Americans are siding against the Non-Aligned Movement on many current issues.

Let's take, for example, the U.S. president's recent statement regarding his intentions to create an American military command for a large part of the Indian Ocean, located thousands of miles from the USA. This is nothing other than an encroachment upon the independence of the states of Southwest Asia. There are almost two dozen in this area. Naturally, such a typical colonialist act, characteristic of gendarmes, cannot but arouse suspicion and vigilance in the Third World. Reagan's two-year hold on power has exacted great political costs for the United States. The global outlook, with all its contradictions, is by no means rosy for imperialism, whatever its ideologues may proclaim. Socialism has withstood the pressure of its class enemies, we have certainly been able to oppose their aggression, and we can ultimately expect to return international relations to a more normal condition.

I would like to discuss a number of focal points of our foreign policy activity in greater detail.

First of all, regarding our relations with the U.S. Through the fault of the current administration, a kind of top soil erosion has taken place in Soviet-American relations. When Reagan entered the White House, he said something in the vein that he, you see, had nothing at all to discuss with the Soviet Union until the USA attained military superiority.

How did we respond to this? We could have also said that we do not want to talk to a political boor, even if he does head the most powerful capitalist country. But the Soviet leadership acted differently. It confirmed its readiness to conduct a serious, extensive dialogue with the United States – but, of course, a dialogue of equals.

Today, one hears words in Washington about the benefits of more constructive relations with the Soviet Union. But we still have no reason to speak of a change for the better in American policy. Recent contacts, including my conversation with U.S. Vice President

Bush and Secretary of State Shultz in Moscow, have been marked by a change in tone, but nothing more. The course of Soviet-American negotiations in Geneva on nuclear weapons is not encouraging, either.

I can responsibly confirm that the total power of the armaments of the USSR and the USA is approximately the same. No matter how many times our specialists have carried out the necessary comparisons, they consistently come to the same conclusion: a more or less stable parity is in place. By the way, many serious people in the USA do not believe Reagan and his team when they insist on the contrary.

What is different is the structure of the strategic armaments of the USSR and the USA. The Americans are now trying to exploit this.

The main backbone of our strategic forces consists of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. One might call them the bulwark of the security of the entire socialist commonwealth. But the Americans have a considerable superiority in strategic bombers. In addition, they have placed great emphasis on submarine-based nuclear weapons. This disproportion can be explained to a large extent by differences in the geographical situation of the two powers. The USA, situated between two oceans, is one thing; our country is another. In the north we have permanent ice, and in the west and the east our outlets to the world's oceans pass through narrow, easily-controllable straits.

It would seem that to try to fool or outsmart someone during negotiations on such a sensitive matter as defense is simply unfathomable. But up to now, the Americans have been trying to conduct business exactly in this way.

What do they propose? To limit and cut back on missile systems mainly, meaning our land-based ICBMs in particular. Technically speaking this would entail the reduction of the submarine-based launchers. But they want to do it so as not to touch the work that is done to create a new submarine fleet equipped with more powerful and more precise "Trident-2" missiles. And they plan to leave aside for the time being or not even to touch at all such strategic weapons as long-range cruise missiles, whose numbers the USA plans to increase by many thousands. By hook or by crook, the Americans are trying to retain their superiority in strategic aviation as well.

Our point of view is that limitations and cuts in strategic armaments should be carried out as a comprehensive package, encompassing land-, sea- and air-based weapons without any exceptions. It is critical to maintain the principles of parity and equal security at every stage of reductions so that neither side obtains an advantage.

Let's suppose for a minute that we accepted the American proposals. Then we would have to begin immediately the dismantlement of our land-based missiles, which comprise the main part of our strategic potential and, as you know, was built up over decades. At the same time, the United States would have room to implement all the military programs announced by Reagan.

The American administration's plan to deploy a hundred strategic MX missiles, equipped with 10 warheads each, seriously complicates the matter. As you understand, it is impossible for us not to react to the emergence of a new generation of missiles. We have deemed it necessary to openly declare that we will be forced to deploy our own analogous system.

Although we are facing a frankly destructive position on the part of the United States, we do not plan to slam the door shut; we will continue to seek ways to encourage the Americans to change their approach. At the talks and outside the talks we are proposing a realistic alternative to the arms race: freezing strategic armaments now and agreeing on large-scale cuts. The opportunities here are vast. It is only important that both countries have an equal number of delivery systems for strategic weapons and that this parity not be undermined by other nuclear arms – for example, forward-based systems.

The question of these systems has figured in the talks on intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe. Here, unfortunately, there has been no progress either. One cannot escape the impression that, using these talks as a cover, the Americans intend to present us with the *fait accompli* of the deployment of their new missiles in Western Europe. Construction of the launch pads for these missiles is already in full swing.

The American administration apparently hopes that the seeming appeal of its “zero-sum option” will continue to mislead the public. However, after a year of talks in Geneva, the essence of both parties' positions is becoming ever more obvious.

We are countering the U.S. line with considered, balanced proposals. They were publicly mentioned during the 60th anniversary celebrations of the USSR. Our readiness to cut back on intermediate-range nuclear weapons and after that not to have a single missile or a single airplane more than the countries of the North Atlantic alliance has evoked a cacophony of opinions in the West. The disparity of positions among official circles is incredibly wide: from the icy, emphatically negative position of the USA and England to the more or less reasonable stance of the other NATO members.

I think we have reason to believe that the new Soviet proposals have developed into a strong source of pressure on Washington.

During the negotiations, we must continue to appeal to the statesmen and public opinion in Western Europe so that they have no illusions about the true position of the USA. Undoubtedly, as the date draws near for the deployment of the American missiles, the unrest and protests in the NATO countries will grow.

If the Americans, despite everything, begin to deploy their missiles in Western Europe, the Soviet Union will know how to respond. Apparently, we will have to come back to this question later.

The other talks in Vienna, regarding reductions in armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, are also deadlocked. Here, too, the USA is primarily to blame. We are thinking seriously about how we can steer these talks away from fruitless debates about the number of forces and finally make our [negotiating] partners get down to business. This could perhaps help us move forward not only in Vienna but also in Geneva.

It is in our common interest to influence the American administration to hold back from extreme measures. Time will tell whether or not their policies can be changed. The Soviet Union favors constructive relations with the USA, but it will not beg for them. Such relations can be built only through mutual effort on both sides.

That is the current state of affairs with America.

One of the new and, undoubtedly, important developments is some headway in relations with China. The CPSU has expressed itself regarding its principled plan regarding the China issue at its congresses. We have always left the door open to restoring friendship between the Soviet and the Chinese peoples. As you know, Soviet-Chinese political consultations have begun on our initiative.

The first talks in Peking have shown that the Chinese leadership, although it says it supports the normalization of relations, has nonetheless set forth a number of conditions that affect the interests of third countries – Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Mongolia. We explained the inadequacy of such an approach both at the consultations and afterwards. The policies of the CPSU are dictated not by tactical considerations, but by our common interests and Leninist political principles. We do not intend to pay for normalization with concessions that would harm our friends, just as we do not intend to demand payment

from China. Of course, this does not preclude taking steps that will confirm the Soviet Union's goodwill.

The Chinese representatives have been constantly harping on the question of troops in border regions. During the next round of consultations, which will take place in Moscow, we are considering possible steps in this direction. If normalization is truly occurring with at least a minimal level of trust, then the prospects of mutual troop reductions in the border region will become more realistic. Nevertheless, Soviet troops, I want to note, are stationed in the Far East not least because of the growing military preparations of the United States and Japan near our Pacific Ocean frontiers.

Comrades! Once, when the problem of overcoming the "cold war" was at stake, we began to intensify our relations with Western Europe. Right now, the situation is somewhat similar. Engaging in a broad, meaningful dialogue with the West European countries and strengthening cooperation with them could give détente a second wind.

Certain prerequisites are in place for this.

All our countries have traditionally had broad ties to France. Clearly, we must strive more actively to develop them, especially since this further reinforces the independent elements in its policies. Of course, Mitterrand behaves erratically frequently curtsies to the Americans. But lately, one notices a French interest in reviving contacts with us not only in the economic but also in the political sphere. Several French ministers have already visited the Soviet Union. A visit by [Foreign Minister Claude] Cheysson has been scheduled for the near future.

We do not consider the position of the new FRG government to be completely negative. Of course, it is coordinating its actions more closely with Washington. And it will clearly take considerable political skill and well-considered measures in diplomacy, propaganda and elsewhere to preserve most of the positive aspects of our relations with this country over the past decade and to prevent its complete alignment with the policies of the Reagan Administration. As always, much will depend upon the coordination of our efforts.

Overall, we have been able to strike the proper tone in dealing with Kohl's cabinet. That is, to provide considered support for the realistic elements of Bonn's policy and, at the same time, principled, reasoned criticism of everything that departs from the recognition of postwar European realities and leads to a violation of treaty commitments.

Here, in general, opportunities for active work remain. That is what we had in mind when we decided in favor of a visit by Comrade A.A. Gromyko¹ to the FRG.

The Socialists' victories in Spain and Sweden represent noteworthy events in the life of Europe. The number of countries where power lies in the hands of the parties of the Socialist International has increased. Our relations with them, of course, have their own peculiarities. But as a rule, it is preferable to deal with Social Democrats, especially regarding the struggle for peace, since in almost all of these countries the communists are either providing parliamentary support to the ruling party or are participating directly in the government.

It would be wise, it seems, to devote more attention to such European countries as Finland, Austria and Greece. Their positions on a range of questions are similar to ours, and we can reach agreement with them on many issues.

This has been demonstrated in particular by the meeting in Madrid.² By proceeding in a fraternal and coordinated fashion, we have managed to steer this meeting's activity into a more productive channel. The USA clearly wanted to turn Madrid into a forum of, so to speak, pure confrontation. They were unable to do so. But it will also be very, very difficult to achieve positive decisions to deepen the all-European process begun in Helsinki, especially in terms of convening a conference on confidence-building measures and disarmament in Europe. Nevertheless, we have jointly put forward this goal, and we must strive to attain it.

The issue of Afghanistan is being actively exploited in the struggle against détente. The Afghan revolution needed assistance and obtained it. But so far, the situation in Afghanistan and around it remains unstable. The initiation of talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan has created certain opportunities. During my meeting in November with President Zia ul-Haq,³ I tried to get across to him that a political settlement of the Afghanistan problem and the consequent possibility of a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan will depend largely on Pakistan's stance. The president of Pakistan voiced an understanding of the Afghan problem and even assured me that this problem is already half-resolved. But there is every indication that the Americans have tied Islamabad's hands.

¹ Soviet foreign minister.

² The Madrid Follow-Up Conference of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1980-1983.

³ President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan.

Such are our thoughts on certain trends in the international arena, which we thought it necessary to share with you. At the same time, it is appropriate to draw broader conclusions.

Evidently, even under aggravated circumstances, there is no need to change the strategic direction of our policy. A policy directed towards peace and the elimination of the nuclear threat – this represents the greatest political capital for socialism. We must continue to implement this policy consistently and purposefully. We seek to avoid confrontations. Peaceful coexistence, disarmament, and mutually-beneficial cooperation – these are not propaganda slogans. They are the very essence of our policy.

We will not spare any effort in mobilizing the nations of the world in resisting the arms race, in unmasking the very ideology of militarism, in denying room to thoughts about the fatal inevitability of nuclear catastrophe, and in convincing them that the future lies with détente.

We must intensify our initiatives regarding the key questions of war and peace. This is an important task if for no other reason than that such initiatives force people to compare the two policy stances – those of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty – and to draw conclusions. And they do so, as a rule, in our favor.

A convincing example of this is the Soviet Union's commitment to the no-first-use of nuclear weapons. Western public opinion, including even seasoned politicians, appreciate its significance. The impact of this decision has turned out to be strong and enduring.

The further expansion of the struggle against the militarization of space and in favor of its exclusively peaceful use could yield significant political gains. This is a task of truly global significance. The socialist countries have resolutely insisted upon a ban on the deployment of any sort of weapon in outer space. Clearly, we must continue to further expand these efforts, along with concepts in support of such efforts, including in the area of inspections.

Comrades! Recently, attempts have been made to equate our defensive military and political alliance with the aggressive NATO bloc. This is a strange view, particularly under current conditions. Comparing the behavior of the Warsaw Pact and NATO in various situations should suffice to convince anyone that our alliance has always been a reliable counterweight to the forces of aggression and expansion. It has been playing a

progressive role in European and world affairs and will continue to do so. And if NATO has anything to brag about, it is their skill in raising tensions.

Even as we undertake our efforts for peace, we have not considered it and do not consider it necessary to permit a violation in the balance of forces between the two military blocs. It would be a mistake not to respond to the strengthening of NATO and its growing military preparations with the necessary concern for our common defensive capability. We do not support ongoing confrontation and competition between the two military blocs. Our countries have voiced their willingness more than once to simultaneously disband their organization along with the North Atlantic alliance. In our view, one should not even speak about a unilateral disbandment of the Warsaw Treaty. To seriously insist upon the unilateral liquidation of our defensive alliance would mean intentionally putting the socialist countries in a dire situation, where they would have to act alone in the face of a well-organized enemy who is armed to the teeth. There is no doubt that the imperialists would view this as a sign of weakness and would respond with even greater pressure on the socialist countries.

The Soviet Union probably experiences the burden of the arms race that it has been dragged into more than anyone else. It is not easy for anyone to allocate additional funds to strengthen their armed forces. Of course, Reagan has no problem with taking tens of billions appropriated for social needs and passing them on to the military-industrial complex. Yet we cannot help but think about the welfare of our workers.

But today, unfortunately, there is no other way except to respond to the provocative actions of NATO with counter-actions that are convincing to today's politicians in America. Our peoples would not understand it if we displayed carelessness regarding NATO's threats. In these dire times, it is by no means excessive to maintain the greatest possible vigilance. Joint defensive efforts are necessary to provide for our countries' security. Certain steps may have to be taken within the framework of our alliance by each of its members. We can decide exactly which measures after we listen to Marshal V.G. Kulikov's report.

Probably everyone would agree today, as in the past, that our unity and mutual support are decisive. This is particularly important right now for the Polish comrades. Washington is indignant at any actions that the Polish leadership takes to preserve the socialist system. The Americans have been constantly pressuring Poland in order to encourage the counter-revolutionary forces. This policy is supported by some of the other Western countries, albeit with lesser zeal.

The Soviet Union considers it to be its international duty to continue providing all possible assistance to fraternal Poland. I am sure we all share this opinion. We must remind the West, over and over again, that the PRP⁴ has loyal friends and allies and that any intervention in its internal affairs will complicate the situation in Europe and meet with decisive joint resistance on the part of all the Warsaw Treaty's members.

Every socialist country handles its internal affairs independently and maintains its own profile in foreign relations. This is the most important feature of our commonwealth. The active involvement of all alliance members makes it a collective force. And, it is in our mutual interest not to provide our opponent with any opportunity to engage in political intrigue aimed at dividing the socialist community and sewing discord into our activities.

There are a number of problems that require our collective thinking. The Soviet delegation would encourage the PCC to work both actively and systematically. We should probably meet more frequently, at least once a year.

I would like to touch upon one organizational question. Isn't now a good time to implement the decision from the Bucharest meeting to create a joint secretariat for the Warsaw Pact and to consider its tasks and method of operation? There may be further proposals regarding the mechanisms for our work and cooperation. If everybody is in agreement, we can grant the necessary powers to the ministers of foreign affairs.

And, one other thing. The U.S. policy of growing confrontation not only holds dangers for the states of the Warsaw Pact; it also threatens the vital interests of other socialist countries. Our cooperation with Cuba, Mongolia, Vietnam and Laos assumes a significant place in our policy. Despite the well-known peculiarities of Yugoslavia's stance, as well as that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we are paying due attention to the development of relations with these countries. In the forthcoming period, I think we need to intensify our efforts at improving cooperation with the socialist states that are not parties to our treaty. We already pursue parallel policies when crises emerge, such as Israel's aggression against Lebanon.

It would probably be justified if, for a start, our dear Czechoslovak comrades would inform the countries of the world socialist system, including China, in a general way about this meeting's work. This may facilitate to some extent greater mutual understanding with them. In the future we can consider additional steps along these lines.

⁴ People's Republic of Poland.

The course of events has shown once again how vitally important it is to strengthen our ability to resist the imperialist policy of economic pressure. Obviously, we will use the differences between the positions of the United States and, say, the countries of the Common Market. But, if we do not want to end up with a dangerous dependency on the West, we must promote socialist economic integration more aggressively, share our experiences, and start down the path of intensive development without delay. We will discuss this more intensively at the economic summit. The secretaries of our parties' central committees will assemble in the near future to finalize the documents and to schedule a specific date for the meeting.

Comrades! Drafts of the summary documents from this meeting – the political declaration and the communiqué – were drafted and approved at the preparatory stage of this meeting. In the opinion of our delegation, they are good documents. Hopefully, they will play their role in the struggle for peace and international security.

We attach considerable significance to the proposal to conclude a treaty on the mutual renunciation of force and the preservation of peaceful relations between the member-states of the Warsaw Treaty and the member-states of the North Atlantic alliance. As we understand it, promoting this proposal will assume a prominent role in our common foreign policy efforts in the near future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that our military alliance will continue to succeed in its historic role as a reliable bulwark for peace and for the security of our peoples.

Please permit me to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Czechoslovak comrades for their hospitality and the excellent organization of this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

[Translation from the Russian by Julia Nossova. Translation based in part on excerpts previously translated by Sergey Radchenko for Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds., A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991 (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), pp. 472-79.]