

**Speech by the Chairman of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, Comrade Rezső
Nyers, at the Meeting of the PCC of the Warsaw Treaty Member-States**

Bucharest, 7-8 July 1989

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For our part, we have come to the conclusion that our previous practice in constructing socialism is not suitable for meeting the new challenges. However, we are convinced that it is not socialism but our previous practice that has come into crisis. In order to overcome the manifestations of crisis and to prevent being left behind, we must work out and implement a contemporary conception of socialism.

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The Hungarian leadership is fully resolved to find a solution on the path of democratic socialism. We are in favor of a socialism that is part of a market economy based on mixed forms of property, whereby, however, the dominating role of collective property remains; we are for pluralism, democracy and self-government. Today, our most important task is to overcome the economic crisis. This ties our hands to a large extent, and drains intellectual and material energy. At the same time we are convinced that the moral solidarity of society and the respect for national and European values are an essential prerequisite for a renewal of socialism. Realizing universal humanitarian norms brings us closer to creating a socialist state based on the rule of law.

In adopting these resolutions, we are also taking into account that the Hungarian reform that was begun over 20 years ago remains incomplete. From experience we know

that it is incomplete because it was previously restricted to economic life – indeed, only to individual elements of the same. We have learned the lesson: economic reforms cannot be successful without a reform of political structures and the development of democracy. With this in mind, we must not forget that political reform is not an end in itself. Only in close harmony with the reconstruction of the economy can it contribute to stable development and a rise in people’s standard of living. This approach alone can protect us from extremist tendencies – both from a conservative return to previous practice and from attempts to reestablish a bourgeois society.

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Of course, it is up to our countries to choose the best means and methods for their development, and they are responsible for these, above all to the peoples of their countries. However, we must acknowledge that each national solution also influences the other countries. This, in turn, does not exclude, but rather presupposes, a constructive, creative discussion and an open exchange of views between our independent and sovereign countries, which at the same time are connected by a million threads of the past, the present and – this is our hope – the future. There is no reason why any one of us should play the role of teacher or student. In our interstate relations, there is no place for admonitions and accusations. We are convinced that the era of interference in the affairs of others by military or any other means – the era of the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine – has definitively been relegated to the past.

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We are convinced that the era of the Cold War has come to an end.

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The positive developments have been mainly in Europe. Especially significant in our view are the results of the Vienna meeting of the representatives of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The concluding document of the Vienna meeting signifies the beginning of a fundamentally new stage; it has raised all-European cooperation to a qualitatively higher level. In keeping with the prolific program for the process of multilateral cooperation, Vienna will be followed by a series of new meetings.

Conditions are emerging for extending the process of détente and dialogue to other continents as well. The significance of the UN's role has grown. It is becoming possible to put the immense potential of this forum for interstate relations to ever better use and thus confirm that the democratization and humanization of the entire system of international relations have become a global necessity.

In the development of these favorable changes, the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy and the initiatives of the other Warsaw Treaty member-states have played a decisive role. This could lead to success because our partners, too, were ready and able to cooperate. The role that the neutral and non-aligned states have played and continue to play in this process is indispensable.

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The main task of our alliance is to anchor the favorable changes so that they become universal and irreversible. Building a common European house must be the determining goal of our activities. Our countries, both individually and jointly, must undertake efforts to develop all areas of all-European cooperation, to respect and follow

the norms that have been developed in the process that began in Helsinki and to elaborate new, more effective forms of cooperation. Our objective is to transform Europe into a zone of political and military security, of economic, scientific and humanitarian cooperation, through voluntary steps, based on common interests, taken by all the states of our continent.

Therefore, we must keep coming up with initiatives. At the Vienna negotiations on conventional weapons, our concrete and well-founded proposals have played a part in achieving an agreement on the goals, nature and the main areas of reduction. The proposals submitted at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in May demonstrate that the NATO member-countries could not ignore the resolve and honesty of our political efforts for disarmament. We must – possibly by developing new proposals – strengthen our resolve to maintain the pace of the negotiations and achieve the signing and entry into force of a treaty as soon as possible. These steps can have a clearly favorable influence on the political and economic situation of our countries already now, and all the more so in the future.

We share the opinion of Comrade Gorbachev: we must take advantage of the interests of the NATO member states and achieve a significant success in the realization of disarmament in the area of conventional weapons in Europe by 1992. This would accelerate the negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons and lend impetus to the CSCE process.

We welcome Comrade Gorbachev's declaration on the withdrawal of troops from abroad. Hungary is ready to enter into these negotiations.

In our opinion, the main part of our proposals can focus on developing in detail individual ideas that were previously submitted. For instance, the fact that NATO is prepared to include air forces in the negotiations on conventional armaments creates a favorable opportunity for preventing the transfer of F-16 fighter-bombers to Italy. The

ideas for establishing a European military center for threat reduction and for conducting military and particularly political negotiations between the two blocs could prove promising. We must also give concrete form to the constellation of questions concerning the development of contacts between the parliaments, social organizations and political parties of the 35 states. New areas of cooperation such as joint actions against terrorism, drug- and weapons-trafficking and the spread of missile technology also merit special attention.

We believe that the principle interests of our countries require that we pay more attention to the topics in the “second basket”. In addition to the removal of obstacles to trade and the improvement of concrete conditions, we see the most promising opportunities in the areas of increased economic and financial cooperation, capital and technology export, scientific-technical cooperation and protection of the environment. All of this does not limit – indeed, it urgently requires – an acceleration in the development of mechanisms for multilateral and bilateral cooperation between the socialist countries – in particular a fundamental reform of our cooperation within the CMEA framework. In our striving to expand our relations to the socialist countries, we want to achieve an improvement in the system of accounting and the use of funds. The expansion of our economic relations in Europe does not require the creation of alternative possibilities, but of possibilities that build upon each other, whose exploitation will require a systematic renunciation of the old approach and the development of new initiatives – as has been the case in the areas of politico-military security. We must adapt to the general order by which the world economy functions; to assume that things will develop differently would be political short-sightedness.

A similar situation can also be observed in the third area of the all-European process, whose significance is growing – the area of human rights, inter-state contacts, information, culture and education. The conferences in Vienna, London and Paris have

shown that cooperation in the humanitarian area also enormously boosts our possibilities in the other two main areas of general security – military and economic relations. We are responsible to our people and to the whole world for seeing to it that socialism’s contribution in this field is not smaller but in every respect greater, something that we cannot yet claim to be the case. We believe that we can achieve this in a whole series of fields. I invite you to recall such important matters as ensuring and expanding the rights of our citizens, including national minorities, and developing information and cultural and intellectual exchange. At the same time, this will expand the basis for European and broader international cooperation.

A fundamental condition for the success of our initiatives also consists in fulfilling the commitments that we have assumed fully and honorably. This must be expanded to include the universally-accepted principles of international law, the UN Charter, the international agreements on human rights, the Helsinki Final Act and the other documents of the all-European process, in particular all provisions of the concluding document of the Vienna meeting of the participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. If we were to act inconsistently and selectively with regard to any one of the three “baskets”, we would undermine trust in the policy of socialism and consequently endanger the interests of our alliance.

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We are of the opinion that the Warsaw Pact, besides carrying out its usual functions, needs to take steps to ensure that it can continue to play a role in these rapidly changing times. Besides maintaining the balance of power, our alliance should work actively to help create new guarantees for European security and make its contribution to the construction of the common European house. As long as two military blocs continue

to exist, the Warsaw Treaty must at the same time act as a corresponding counterweight and increasingly as a partner for cooperation. The elimination of the political blocs is only possible with the creation of new collective guarantees, which would replace the blocs. It appears that progress has been made in this direction within the European processes, but there are many factors that can affect the rate of these developments.

In view of developments in Europe as a whole, we need to develop democracy and cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization. We consider it desirable that the following issues be addressed:

We propose that meetings at all levels take on more the character of working groups with a free exchange of opinions. It would be desirable to increase transparency and reduce formalities. We suggest that the length – and as far as possible also the number – of published documents be limited. On the other hand, more internal recommendations are needed to guide the member-states' leaders with regard to important international issues.

We suggest that the bodies of political and military cooperation become more democratic and flexible. Rules of procedure should be worked out, including rules for how differences of opinion can be reflected in internal documents and referred to in materials meant for publication.

It is desirable to expand the General Secretary's sphere of activity in the areas of coordination and organization, and to provide him with opportunities to represent our common position to third countries and organizations.

In view of the large and constantly growing importance of humanitarian and human rights issues, we propose the creation of a special commission, at the level of deputy ministers, which would regularly discuss all aspects of these matters. To confirm a similar proposal already put forward by our specialists, I would like to repeat: Hungary is prepared to take on the task of coordinating activities in this area.

It is desirable that the special commission on disarmament work more regularly. Expanding participation in the commission to include the chiefs of staff in addition to the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs would heighten its level of responsibility.

It is also necessary to improve the cooperation of the political and military bodies.

The democratization of the work of the military bodies is an urgent task. We welcome the readiness of the Soviet side to look for creative solutions in this area. The Hungarian side considers that the present situation already permits the transfer of the tasks of the Military Council to the Committee of the Ministers of Defense and the officers of the Unified Armed Forces. The leading representatives of the allied armies to the Unified Armed Forces could also become more active in the areas of cooperation and the cultivation of contacts.

In view of the above, the guidelines for the Unified Armed Forces in peace- and war time need to be reformulated so that they express the new political thinking and the new doctrine of defense, and in order to better realize the interests of the member-states together with their common interests.

The specialists that have been tasked with improving cooperation should properly be given the task of developing a draft document by the member-states containing proposed changes, which could then be presented at a joint meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of Defense. The latter could then prepare a proposal for recommended changes in time for the next meeting of the PCC in Moscow.

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2005), pp. 647-48.]