

## Document No. 64: Report by Ceaușescu to the Romanian Politburo on the PCC Meeting in Budapest, March 18, 1969

*Despite the main import of the March 1969 PCC session (see Documents Nos. 62 and 63), Nicolae Ceaușescu in this very colorful report to the Romanian Politburo chooses to focus on areas where disagreements took place, and on which the Romanian delegation managed to have an impact. One example was an appeal for holding a conference on European security (later known as the CSCE), which the Soviet Union wanted the PCC to issue. But Ceaușescu objected, complaining that the appeal's tone toward the West was far too harsh. In another example, Romanian opposition blocked a Polish proposal to reject West Germany's claim to West Berlin. The Romanian leader again got his way when he insisted that the ongoing Sino-Soviet border clashes should be discussed bilaterally with China and not within the framework of the PCC. Politburo member Emil Bodnăraș, duly complimenting his boss's performance at the PCC, makes the interesting observation that if Soviets are faced with a tough position they tend to back down.*

Stenographic Record of the Meeting of the Executive Committee  
of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party  
March 18, 1969

[...]

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* Let me inform you in a nutshell, comrades, about what happened in Budapest. In fact, you have read the communiqué and the appeal, so this is the whole result.

The discussions were held within the framework of the committee, especially with the comrades who were there before, and—to some extent—in the evening; then Monday morning with some of the delegations.

The main concern was that of the Soviet [delegates], and also of some of the other [delegates], who wanted to include as a first issue in the communiqué the incidents with China and reach solidarity against China. Besides other expressions in the communiqué, which referred to the increase in the aggressiveness of imperialism, in the number of aggressive actions, and the imminent danger of war, there was also the necessity of strengthening the fighting force of the Warsaw Treaty so that it can crush any oppressor on any frontier. Isn't that so? The last formulation was something to that effect.

The appeal was somewhat better but again with many such tendencies. Let us call for the achievement of security, but if you don't come they'll beat the living daylights out of you. The meaning of the appeal was something like this: you'll get into hot water whether you come or not! [Smiling]

Those persons who were more active in the committee, in the sense of having adopted harsh positions, were the Poles, who really had the harshest positions.

The comrades said nice words to one another at about two o'clock in the morning but it seems that these words also eventually did some good.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* Afterwards they entered into the zoological field.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* You see, [Mircea] Malița [...] [said] this in the following way: if people don't help one another in all respects, then what kind of an alliance is it if you don't act in both the East and the West, the South and the North?

Naturally, something was obtained, especially due to the appeal in the commission, but practically speaking nothing was obtained until the delegations came, and an understanding was reached.

We arrived there the day before yesterday. The reception was correct, as it was with all the others; nobody was received differently. We went to the hotel on Margaret Island, where all the delegations—except for the Soviet one—were accommodated. The Hungarians told us that no program had been envisaged for Sunday evening, that each delegation was free to do as it wished. We set about playing chess, and agreed to pay a visit to the embassy.

[Ion Gheorghe] Maurer went downstairs to go for a short walk, and in the meantime the Soviets came and the discussions began. We went downstairs, too, and stopped. Among other general topics of discussion, [the Soviets] raised the main issue. Let's discuss serious things to see what we have to do. They said they wished the meeting to yield good results, and achieve unity [of opinion]. We told them that we wanted the same thing. But, as they surely knew, it was difficult to reach a result regarding the communiqué.

Dear gentlemen, to our knowledge the appeal is in a more advanced form and maybe a short communiqué would be good, but it should reflect all of the points of view.

They said: Vietnam should be [included].

We answered: we agree that it should be.

They said: European security?

We answered: we agree.

They said: what about the Middle East?

We answered: we agree, but let's not start making history.

At any rate, the first discussion went something like that.

They said: then let's talk with the other delegations and issue a communiqué, where all of these issues would be raised. We'll go and talk with the other delegations as well, and then will come back again and talk with you.

We went to the embassy and at about 12 o'clock at night they finished the discussions with the others and came to us—Brezhnev and Kosygin—and told us: we held discussions with all the others. Of course, everybody has his own opinion, and everybody wants a more comprehensive communiqué. We have to take a stand. The main point, however, is that we cannot help taking a stand and include in the communiqué the issue of border incidents with China, that this is the main issue. [They added] that it would be inconceivable for us to meet and discuss other things and not discuss the most serious issue.

After they repeated their story again, that we have to raise the issue of European security, that we have to raise the issue of the Middle East—things that they had repeated the day before—they told us: look what Nixon did, he demanded the strength-

ening of NATO, of course, in one form or another; he declared that Germany could not remain divided forever, and that it would have to be united [in the long run], and then he spoke in favor of the peaceful solution of issues, but only in general terms. [They added] that [the Western countries] were strengthening NATO, and we have to factor in this fact.

[Later] they spoke about Vietnam again, the Middle East, and the FRG; and the last outstanding issue was China.

We listened in silence, and did not interrupt them at all.

The main issue is China and we have to discuss it.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* This was a result of their consultation with the others.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* I listened to them in silence, I did not interrupt them at all. I let them finish what they had to say, and I briefly told them all the issues, and it was also with the European security issue that I began.

It is just. We must speak about European security, and we take the view that we must include it [on our agenda], and we commit ourselves to act for strengthening European security. It is true that Nixon paid this visit but we must not forget that Nixon's partners in NATO spoke in favor of emphasizing ways of understanding our socialist countries, and of taking the road of peace not of tension—especially France and even other partners—and we must take this into account when we collaborate in our policy.

Regarding the FRG, I said we agreed that there were revanchist and neo-Nazi forces, but it was also true that there were progressive forces wanting a different policy, that there were the trade unions, and the youth. Consequently the working class is getting stronger. [I also told them] that nevertheless, the communist party was created and it was functioning legally, which means that these forces have their say in the FRG. In addition, one has to take into account the outcome of the elections, the fact that Gustav Heinemann was elected president and that after the elections he declared that [the possibility of the] FRG leaving NATO had to be considered. We must take all these facts into account and encourage these forces to act for the purpose of dissolving this aggressive bloc, as we have always agreed.

Concerning Vietnam, we told them we agree.

Concerning the Middle East, we agree. Obviously, there is no point in our making history in the Middle East, but concerning ourselves with what we have to do now.

As far as China is concerned, of course, we told them that we were worried by these events but we did not think they could be discussed within the framework of their Political Consultative Committee, and that we had not gathered there for that purpose. Moreover, we told them that if they wished—outside the meeting and on a bilateral basis—we were ready to listen to them. We were willing to let them know our considerations if they were interested in them.

They said: OK.

[We said]: we are in full agreement with everything, except [the China issue]. All the outstanding issues are OK with us.

They said: how can we go home and tell our Politburo that we came here and did not speak about this issue, that we get information every two hours that the situation is changing that so-and-so took over command of the troops, that [the Chinese]

are mobilizing their agricultural communes, etc. Why do we keep discussing the FRG [...] I can spit on the FRG, but China is the main danger.

I was about to tell him, my dear Sir, you are smart, it is true, but you cannot spit on the FRG anytime you feel like. But I did not.

I told them: we do not agree to discuss [the China issue].

[They said]: what? Are we not going to discuss anything? Is this issue so...?

Here Maurer cut in to clarify things: however, we agree to discuss—we can discuss anything but let it be clear to you, we will not sign any communiqué and will not tackle this issue!

Whereupon we parted company.

[...]

This is how we parted; then we went to bed without a worry in the world.

We did not sleep very well, it is true... [Laughs]

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș*: What time did you leave?

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu*: It was 2:00 a.m.

I also called them (the comrades who had participated in the meeting), and told them not to waste their time there any longer. Then they said that they would see the following day [what should be done.]

Meanwhile, Kirpichenko<sup>2</sup> came, too. [He said]: you see, we did not understand, we do not want to include this issue in the communiqué at any price. However, we want to discuss this issue about China because Kosygin made a mistake when he said he did not mean to touch on the issue other than in the communiqué. Naturally, this would create a bad impression (he told the boys), it would be detrimental to bilateral and multilateral relationships.

They conversed all morning long, to all appearances with the Poles and the Germans; they also had discussions with the Czechs for a short while.

In the meantime, the comrades worked on this appeal.

Eventually, only the discussion of an amendment of ours and of one of the Poles' remained outstanding, and the Poles asked us for a meeting. We went downstairs, into a hall there, and they raised the issue of their amendment. It was an amendment dealing with the recognition of boundaries. We had something clearer but ultimately they proposed a formulation/wording which we accepted—however without West Berlin, because they wanted to put down in writing in the amendment that the FRG's claim on Berlin should be rejected, a formulation we could not accept since this would have meant that we were the ones to decide who Berlin belonged to. But this was something we could not decide there. We could only say that Berlin had a special status and it was not part of the FRG. With that we agreed. The rest ... more ... we should decide who Berlin belonged to ... this would be established when we arrived at peace.

And there was also our proposal, whereby we requested—in the interests of peace—that an end be put to demonstrations of force and military maneuvers. [The Soviets] did not agree with this. We did not cherish any illusions that they would accept it but they had the Poles reject it on their behalf. Then we proposed an acceptable formula: one should act to increase trust or one should abstain from undertaking any

<sup>2</sup> Soviet Politburo member Aleksei I. Kirpichenko.

actions that could poison interstate relationships. We added to the interpretation: no maneuvers are to be performed any longer. With this, the communiqué was ready.

In the meantime, the Soviets worked on a shorter communiqué which they did not show to anyone, and proposed to us to meet at 2:00 a.m., Budapest time. But only the first secretaries and the chairmen of the Councils of Ministers [met], before the official meeting began, because [that meeting] was postponed until 15:00.

We met, they showed us the communiqué, and we had only one observation to make: that it was not the Political Consultative Committee that decided whether to adopt documents but the participating states. We agreed with the appeal and went to the conference.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* The Chinese issue did not appear any more.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* It did not appear in any way whatsoever, although Kosygin had said that if we gave up, others would raise the issue because they were very upset. The Soviets said that no one was to take the floor at the conference; we gathered together and listened for about 20 minutes to the supreme commander who gave us an account of the documents that had been drawn up for the past year, and told us how good the work of the defense ministers was, and then we moved on to the signing of the documents.

I asked: my dear Sir, we have not clarified things in the draft decision yet (because they had maintained the old formulation, where it was stipulated that it was the Political Consultative Committee that decided on the adoption of documents, not the participating states). I said that we did not agree with the old formulation, and instead we should say: the participating states.

We all agreed but since the documents had already been typed [we proposed] to sign them in that form and afterwards to have the respective page retyped. (They had had the document laced up with string and showed up with it all prepared.) When they brought the document for us to sign, in order to be sure that that page would be retyped, I crossed it out by pen to cancel it. [Laughter] Well, what was I to do if they acted like that?

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* That is why you were laughing when you signed?

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* We had decided in advance that the respective page would be retyped, but to be sure that they would not forget to do so, I crossed it out.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* Well done, very fine.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* Then I signed. Afterwards, in the end we remembered that in fact the pages should have been initialed so that none of them could be changed. That is why I requested that the documents be initialed.

We all agreed and this operation was performed right away.

Then this appeal was brought in, and I signed it, but as there were no photographers around I waited until the photographers came.

With this, we finished. We congratulated one another for having done a good job. Brezhnev thanked us. When I went out with Brezhnev, he said he thanked me because we had succeeded in reaching a very good result, and this was a very important thing.

He said we should find the right moment to sign the Treaty since they did not have more amendments. I told him we did not have any amendments either.

With this, all was finished.

We had dinner there, without problems.

[János] Kádár made a speech, a general one, and proposed a toast.

There were no other problems and we said goodbye and came home. We parted company last night in a fairly good atmosphere.

That was about all.

*Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer:* And a conclusion: when people face a firmly supported position, they cave in.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* This is a just conclusion.

*Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer:* They have no other choice, so they give in. They did not give in because they are wise but because this is what the situation requires. This is an especially important thing to remember.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* We discussed things with the Czechs a little longer. Over dinner, we held discussions to some extent with János Kádár, and we arranged to have a meeting. We discussed matters with Todor Zhivkov, too. He remembered that work at the hydroelectric power station on the Danube was behind schedule, and that we had to meet.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* How glad all the others were the morning after!

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* It seems that the Hungarians were a little concerned. The Czechs told us that they did not see either, but I do not know whether they told this to the Soviets. We did not discuss this issue with the others. During the discussions last night, when the conversation inadvertently digressed to Yugoslavia, [Jenő] Fock said we had to start getting rid of it.

We think that both the communiqué and the appeal are good.

[...]

*Cde. Paul Niculescu-Mizil:* Everything is good.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* It is good that we did not agree to discuss the issue of China because this would not have been of any help and would have contributed, in a way, to the aggravation of the situation.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* We cannot but express our admiration for the way our delegation presented itself, including the crossing out of that page. It was a formidable initiative.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* It was Maurer's initiative.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* This is something we must remember: that if [the Soviets] come to face a just and firm position, they are compelled to cave in; they have no other options. This is also valid for Cde. Niculescu-Mizil, who is about to leave for Moscow.

As regards the communiqué, we have to see.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* We can at most make recommendations regarding the state of readiness, and take measures for the equipment [of the armed forces].

*Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer:* The only trouble you can have here is the fact that it forces you to make expenses.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* I think that this fact, that it is the participating states not the Political Consultative Committee, has a qualitative aspect. This is valid as it extends to any relationships.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* They said: the states participating in the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee. We proposed a different formulation, but afterwards we agreed.

*Cde. Paul Niculescu-Mizil:* In 1956, after an hour-and-a-half of discussions, [the Soviets] said they did not understand what this issue was all about.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* Now they understand. They said they have nothing against it, and the others said the same thing.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* And we saved the other socialist states from having to commit themselves.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* I do not know whether we saved them because they can commit themselves.

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* I am sure that as in our country the Executive Committee was informed beforehand about the issues to be discussed. And so, with certitude, given the scope of the issues, all of the Central Committees or the central organs were informed that the communiqué was to be signed, and what the position on the Chinese issue was. Now they will go back home and have to explain why they did not sign.

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* Brezhnev said: how can I go home and say that I did not discuss this issue?

*Cde. Emil Bodnăraș:* And when they arrive home, many will breathe easily. Here the adventurous spirit was stopped, [as were] the formulations about Europe that were very bellicose, and the spirit of European security built on the spirit of August 21.<sup>3</sup>

*Cde. Nicolae Ceaușescu:* With this we can end the meeting, comrades.

[Source: 40/1969, f. 2, 4–13, PCR-Cancelarie, ANIC. Translated by Viorel Nicolae Buta for the PHP.]

<sup>3</sup> A reference to the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia whose purpose was to crush the Prague Spring.