

March 20, 1969

**Stenographic Transcript of the Meeting of the
Political Consultative Committee of the Member
States of the Warsaw Treaty on 17 March 1969 in
Budapest**

Citation:

"Stenographic Transcript of the Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty on 17 March 1969 in Budapest", March 20, 1969, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, DY 30 J IV 2/2A/1362. Translated by Bernd Schaefer. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/198185>

Summary:

At a meeting in Budapest, members of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact), including delegations from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Romania, and the Soviet Union, discuss and vote on principles for the Joint Forces and the Committee of the Ministers of Defense as well as other areas of military coordination.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Personal and Confidential Submissions -

Central Committee Entry Number 94

[handwritten] [discussed in SED] Politburo, 13th meeting [in 1969], 20 March 1969

Uncorrected

Stenographic Transcript

of the Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Member States
of the Warsaw Treaty on 17 March 1969 in Budapest

Beginning: 15:00 Hours

Comrade Kadar:

Dear members of the Political Consultative Committee! Esteemed Comrades! We see great value in the fact that we have another meeting of the Political Consultative Committee and thus the opportunity for an exchange of opinions between the leading representatives of our countries, as well as for taking measures serving our common interests and objectives. It is a great honor for us that this meeting of the Political Consultative Committee is held in Budapest.

All important representatives of international life and the international public are admitting that the joint force of the socialist countries, united in the Warsaw Treaty Organization, are today playing in the current world situation an especially important role. Our alliance, which stands against the aggressive forces of imperialism, and our joint presence effectively defend the security of the peoples of the socialist countries and contribute effectively towards maintaining the independence of the countries. They are preventing the outbreak of a new World War.

Please allow me at the beginning of our working meeting to cordially welcome the representatives of the fraternal parties and fraternal countries. We cordially welcome Comrade Todor Zhivkov and all the members of the Bulgarian delegation; Comrade Alexander Dubcek and all members of the Czechoslovak delegation; Comrade Wladyslaw Gomulka and all members of the Polish delegation; Comrade Walter Ulbricht and members of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic; Comrade Nicolae Ceaucescu and all the members of the Romanian delegation; Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev and all members of the Soviet delegation.

We cordially welcome the Supreme Commander, Comrade [Ivan] Yakubovsky^[1], all staff members of our organization, all our dear guests. In the name of the Central Committee of our party, the government and in the name of our Hungarian people we do wish that you will feel comfortable staying with us. We wish successful work to the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee.

Dear Comrades! Now we have to begin our work and determine the agenda. The chair of those meetings changes according to the Russian alphabet. The last time Comrade Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee [CC] of the CPSU, was chairing the meeting; the next turn is now with the Czechoslovak side. I am asking Comrade Alexander Dubcek, First Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to rise to speak and begin his job as the chairman of the

meting.

Comrade Dubcek:

Dear Comrades! Please allow me to declare the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee open.

I propose to accept the agenda, drafted and agreed in advance and now lying in front of the Political Consultative Committee. It is the following: results of the work drafted by the Ministers of Defense to prepare the principles regarding the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty - here it is proposed to receive a report by the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty, Comrade Yakubovsky; adoption of an Appeal of the Members of the Warsaw Treaty to all European Countries.

Do the Comrades have any comments or suggestions concerning this agenda? - If this is not the case, then please regard the agenda as accepted.

Let us then move to the first item: preparation of the principles regarding the Joint Forces of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty. Comrade Yakubovsky, Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces, has the floor.

Comrade Yakubovsky:

Comrades! The Central Committees of the communist and workers parties and the governments of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty are continuously concerned about the increase of the defensive readiness of our countries. Based on a thorough analysis of the international situation, according conclusions will be drawn and concrete measures implemented to further strengthen the defensive power of the member states. Taking into account the further rise in aggressiveness of world imperialism through increasing its war preparations, and the related aggravation of tensions in the world in recent times, a major effort was undertaken, following the assignment by the Central Committees and governments of the Warsaw Treaty member states, to strengthen the armed forces of the socialist fraternal countries.

On March 7, 1968 the Political Consultative Committee had commissioned the Defense Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty members and the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces to review the situation in the Joint Forces and their staff, in the Military Council and in the Technical Committee, in order to submit according proposals, respectively a draft of according proposals. The Defense Ministers and the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces did perceive this responsible order of the Political Consultative Committee as a task of utmost importance. This is about creating documents, where the main principles and the most important organizing principles of the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty states are defined. The Joint Forces are called upon to protect the achievements of socialism and the pace and security of our peoples.

In order to implement this decision by the Political Consultative Committee, the Ministers of Defense, the General Staffs and the Staff of the Joint Forces have undertaken extensive work to prepare and adjust the drafts of according documents. In April and May 1968, drafts of these principles and a basic scheme of the administration and leadership of the forces was drafted and submitted to all the Ministers of Defense of the Warsaw Treaty states. Bilateral meetings of Defense Ministers were held in order to finalize the documents.

Those drafts were submitted to the General Secretaries and First Secretaries of the communist and workers parties and to the heads of government. They agreed with these proposals and made some additions to finalize the review of the documents.

From September 3 to 17, 1968 a working meeting of the Deputies of the Main Staffs chaired by the Chief of Staff of the Joint Forces was held. After this working meeting those documents were again submitted for review to the Ministers of Defense.

In the period between September 19 and 29, 1968 meetings were held with all Ministers of Defense, where the drafts of those documents were discussed and again submitted to the General Secretaries and First Secretaries of the communist and workers parties as well as to the heads of government. The documents were overall approved, new additions and remarks were considered during final editing.

On October 29 and 30, 1968 a meeting of the Ministers of Defense was held in Moscow. There each document was again discussed in detail and approved in more detail. This meeting occurred in a fraternal atmosphere of unanimity and unity of opinions.

As a result of this work, the Ministers of Defense signed the protocol and approved the following documents:

Principles for the Committee of the Joint Forces;

Principles for the Joint Forces and their Joint Command of the States of the Warsaw Treaty;

Principles for the Military Council and the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty States;

Principles for the Uniform System of Air Defenses of the Warsaw Treaty states;

Strength and Basic Structure of the Staff and the Technical Committee.

After the Moscow meeting of the Ministers of Defense, further consultations and meetings were held up to the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee [today]. They dealt with Section A) of Article 12 of the Principles for the Joint Forces and their Joint Command, and an agreement was reached on this issue.

Please allow me, as commissioned by the Ministers of Defense, to inform the Political Consultative Committee briefly about the questions discussed on October 29 and 30, 1968 at the meeting of the Ministers of Defense.

Principles of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense

The Committee of the Ministers of Defense is a military organ of the Warsaw Treaty organization. Members of the committee are the Ministers of Defense, the Supreme Commanders and Chiefs of Staff of the Joint Forces. The Committee of Ministers of Defense is to be established in order to provide coordinated recommendations concerning the defensive abilities of the Warsaw Treaty states, as well as pertaining to the build-up and increase of combat readiness of the Joint Forces in order to solve all those questions raised by the Political Consultative Committee. The Committee of the Ministers of Defense is also dealing with issues of monitoring the forces of the adversary, preparing theaters of war, and agreeing on other military measures in need of mutual coordination. On the most important political and military issues those recommendations will be submitted to the governments, respectively the Political Consultative Committee, for approval. Decisions by the committee concerning the work of the Ministers of Defense will be implemented by the Ministers of Defense and the commanders of the Joint Forces. Meetings of the Committee of the Ministers of Defense will be held twice a year. Chairmanship will be rotating.

Principles for the Joint Forces and their Joint Command of the States of the Warsaw Treaty

The Joint Forces of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty are already existing for 13 years now. During this period they have changed significantly, both pertaining to armament as well as to overall quality. The forces of our countries have become more powerful and stronger. They are equipped with modern war material and modern technology. They are well trained and have an organizational structure corresponding to the requirements of modern warfare. Extensive, deep and versatile relations have been established between the allied armies. There is a permanent exchange of experiences in place at different levels regarding operations of staff and forces in order to achieve uniform positions on build-up and structure of forces and their battle deployment, all the while taking into consideration national traditions of the fraternal armies. The joint experiences in guiding the armed forces served as the basis for drafting new principles for the Joint Forces and the Joint Command. The draft of the principles has developed further the military matters adopted in the 1955 protocol of the Warsaw Treaty, and the decrees on the Joint Supreme Commander as confirmed in 1956. The new guidelines, which are a document of principles, determine the objectives and organizational principles of the Joint Forces, as well as the structure of the Joint Supreme Commander and its leading organs.

The new guidelines are reflective of the highest interests of each country and all MS of the Warsaw Treaty in their defense of national independence and socialist achievements. Those principles are providing a better opportunity to undertake improved measures of defense already in peacetime, concerning the Joint Forces in their increase of operative combat preparation and readiness, their technical equipment etc. All this is empowering us to more effectively deploy the means and manpower of the Joint Forces in the fight against an aggression from the side of imperialism.

Principles for the Military Council of the Joint Forces

The Military Council is an organ of the Joint Forces with the function of making recommendations. It is comprised of the Supreme Commander of the armed forces, who is also serving as chairman of the Military Council, and all the Deputies of the Supreme Commander. The Military Council is operating in the interest of comprehensively addressing all issues regarding the development of forces, combat readiness, organizational structures of individual troops, and of the military branches and their training. The Military Council is dealing with issues pertaining to preparations of theaters of war and other questions concerning the Joint Forces. Drafting of recommendations and their proposals are based on comprehensive exchanges within the Military Council. Depending on the character of issues, recommendations by the Supreme Commander are to be implemented through decisions of governments and the Ministers of Defense on order of the Supreme Commander on issues which are part of his area of responsibility.

Principles for the Uniform System of Air Defenses of the Warsaw Treaty states

The existing uniform system is uniting all troops and all air forces of the Warsaw Treaty states to resolve common tasks in the interest of defense and protection of the socialist countries against attacks from the adversary. The utilization of air force units of the Warsaw Treaty countries according to an uniform plan, the central guidance of the troops, and the coordination of operations provide us with the opportunity to better exploit the full strength of the air defenses of the Warsaw Treaty states. The uniform system of air defenses has become more perfect in the years of its existence. It has been solidified, and today it represents a strong and modern air defense. The air defense units have received new fighting equipment. Some changes were made to the organizational structure and in the build-up of the air defense system. Due to experiences learned in the past, the principle of joint utilization of the air defense

units of our alliance has become more refined.

All that has led to a need to draft new principles on the uniform system of air defenses of the Warsaw Treaty states. The principles, as outlined in the guidelines, aim at further improving this uniform system of air defenses, to increase its strength, and to enhance the training of forces in order to better conduct joint warfare operations. The new principles for the uniform system of air defense are mandating the sequence of operations of air defense units. The basis of utilization of air defense forces to solve joint tasks of protection of the Warsaw Treaty states is getting more precise. We are planning to implement more efficient forms of centralized command structures for the air defense forces, both pertaining to the Commander of the Warsaw Treaty states' air defense forces as well as to the national commands of the Warsaw Treaty countries.

About the Commanding Organs of the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty

The tasks of forces of the fraternal states are mandated by the Central Committees and the governments. Practical implementation of the tasks is delegated to the Ministers of Defense, who have full responsibility for comprehensive safeguarding of national forces. In order to command the Joint Forces, an exact system of leadership organs will be established as it has been outlined in the guidelines. Those guidelines are submitted to the Political Consultative Committee for approval. Those organs will be guided in their work by the advice and orders of the Political Consultative Committee and decisions made by the governments of the Warsaw Treaty states. Composition and main responsibilities of the command organs are defined in the principles I have reported about [today] to the Political Consultative Committee. The principles propose the establishment of a Committee of the Ministers of Defense. Its tasks and the composition of the committee are defined in the specific principles submitted to the Political Consultative Committee. Functions of the Supreme Commander and Ministers of Defense, as well as their duties and rights, are defined in the principles for the Joint Forces and the Joint Supreme Commander. The protocol of May 14, 1955 about the establishment of a Joint Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty states it is mandatory that the Ministers of Defense are serving as deputies of the Supreme Commander. We make the argument that today, since the Ministers of Defense will no longer be deputies of the Supreme Commander, the Chiefs of Staff of the national staffs must love into this responsible job. After the Ministers of Defense, it is them who have full responsibility for the armed forces of their countries. The governments of the Warsaw Treaty states have to decide whom to appoint into the positions. Those Deputies of the Supreme Commander will be operating in their own countries, this is where they perform their service. The Deputies of the Supreme Commander are the Chiefs of Staff of the Joint Forces, the Chiefs of Staff of the Air Defense Forces and the Chief for Technical Equipment.

Establishment of a Military Council of the Joint Forces is mandated in the principles submitted to the Political Consultative Committee for approval. The formation of a staff and a Technical Committee of the Joint Forces, as well as their composition and tasks, are defined in the principles of the Joint Forces and about the Joint Supreme Command. They also have been submitted to the Political Consultative Committee for approval.

The Deputies of the Supreme Commander of the armies are guided in their work by special principles. The main objective of the establishment of command organs, as well as the proposed structure and its composition, have to be workable according to the high demands for leadership of the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Treaty states. A completion of leadership organs in proportion to the contribution of member states of the Warsaw Treaty is envisaged.

I am asking you to consider and approve the drafts submitted. The collective

experiences and the collaboration of our countries on the military level testify to the inviolability of principles on which our Warsaw Treaty is based. The implementation of measures we proposed is aimed at further perfection of military mechanisms in our organization. Without doubt, it will be fruitful for the increase of defense readiness of our countries, as well as to its ability to use all its means and forces, and potential capacities, for collective defense in case of an armed attack by the imperialist forces.

I want to thank for your attention.

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

We have heard the report by the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces, Comrade Yakubovsky. Does any of the Comrades want to comment?

Comrade Brezhnev:

Dear Comrades! Our delegation cordially welcomes the esteemed participants of this meeting. The question we are now discussing is, to our mind, an extremely current and important issue. It is of high importance to the solidifying of international positions of our countries, to the defense of basic interests of socialism, to the securing of peace, and to the guarantee of security in Europe and in the world. Our delegation is of the opinion that the Ministries of Defense in the member states have achieved great and useful work in preparation of the documents now submitted to our meeting for approval. Purpose and objective of these documents are to further solidify and strengthen defense readiness of both each individual member state of the Warsaw Treaty and the organization as a whole. It is about to confront all attempts by imperialism, and all attacks it is undertaking against the security of our peoples, with our unity, our uniformity in action, and our high combat readiness. The establishment of new organs of leadership of the Joint Forces will undoubtedly increase the effectiveness of our fighting alliance and result into higher efficiency of our military coordination.

We are thinking that the approval of the submitted documents will represent a substantial contribution to the strengthening and perfection of the Warsaw Treaty organization. It is in accordance with the current situation and our joint strategic interests. Our delegation is supporting to fullest extent the documents and is voting for their approval.

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

Does somebody else want to make comments?

Comrade Kadar:

We want to use this opportunity to reiterate that we are convinced that the joint force of our countries is of special importance to the international situation as a whole. Our party and our government have noted with satisfaction the results of working efforts that have been undertaken here. The results are reflected in the protocols and in the drafts of documents submitted to our meeting.

The Hungarian delegation expresses its gratitude towards the Supreme Commander, the Ministers of Defense and all the Comrades who have been involved in drafting these proposals. We are glad that the respective proposals could have been worked out with the support of the Central Committees of the fraternal parties and the governments of the fraternal countries. The Hungarian delegation is of the opinion

that a decision by the Political Consultative Committee on the issues is now an important and necessary step forward.

The Warsaw Treaty is a military treaty. An order to guarantee the uniformity of action and to create the necessary and according working conditions must be clearly defined. The Hungarian delegation is agreeing with the report by the Supreme Commander and is in favor of adopting the decisions about the establishment of leadership organs of the Joint Forces. It is also in favor of the principal document regarding the organization of leadership organs of the Supreme Commander of the Joint Forces. The leading organs of the Hungarian People's Republic have discussed the proposals on the agenda of this Political Consultative Committee meeting, and they are in agreement with them.

Based on its delegated authority, the Hungarian delegation can adopt the proposed documents concerning the strengthening of the Warsaw Treaty states' organization in the name of the [Hungarian] government. The Hungarian delegation is recommending to all member states of the Warsaw Treaty to accept the proposals.

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

Are there other Comrades who want to speak? - If there are no further requests to speak, I want to propose to accept and approve the drafted documents submitted to us, about which Comrade Yakubovsky has reported here. Are there any votes against? - If there are no objections, I am proposing that the decision to approve the drafted documents is adopted. I do propose furthermore that we now move towards the signing of the drafted documents. I am hereby asking to submit the documents for signature. -

Please, Comrade Ceausescu.

Comrade Ceausescu:

What will we sign? Will we sign each document separately? Or what are we signing? So we will sign each document individually?

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

If I understood the question correctly - the translation did not work well - , it was asked whether both documents are signed just right away, or the military ones are signed first. - The military documents will be signed first.

Comrade Filyubin:

Those are the Four Principles on the Joint Forces and the decision of the Political Consultative Committee. It refers to those documents.

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

May we start with the signing of the military documents? - Comrade Ceausescu, do you agree?

Comrade Ceausescu:

We agree with the document, but the draft of the decision is no good because it is

saying: the decisions of the Political Consultative Committee. We are proposing the following phrase: decisions of the delegations of the Warsaw Treaty member states. Only then the document will have the correct effect, and they will be in the same spirit as we have suggested in the communique.

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

Comrade Ceausescu is proposing to phrase it exactly: member of delegations participating in the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee. We have already agreed on this in the context of the communique. There is the proposal to adopt this modification. - Any more comments on this? This means the proposal is accepted? This document shall be adopted with the modification as proposed? - Good, it will be adopted with this modification.

(this is followed by the signing of the document).

I was informed that all participants have signed the documents. Now we have another question to deal with; a text had been prepared and handed to the delegations.

Comrade Ceausescu:

I have a comment to make. In consideration of the great importance of these documents, we would like to propose that the Supreme Commander together with his deputies signs these documents, and that these documents will be sent to all states for ratification; because these documents are of great importance, and we carry great responsibility for them. Are there any objections to this?

Comrade Filyubin:

The secretariat has prepaid authentic and notarized documents, which will be sent.

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

Furthermore, the text of the Appeal of the Warsaw Treaty Member States to all European Countries has been drafted. Are there any comments on this text by participants of this meeting? Anybody who wants to speak? - No. Then allow me to propose that the drafted document will be signed. Are there objections? - No. Then we are in favor of signing the Appeal.

Comrade Kadar:

Comrades! It was talked about to invite the press representatives to the signing so they can film this act. It is just a question, there was a suggestion like that. What is the opinion of the Comrades?

Chairman Comrade Dubcek:

It was proposed to invite the correspondents to film the act of signing. But apparently the press people are not around now.

(Comrade Ceausescu: They will be around.)

Then allow us to first complete our agenda and invite the press representatives

afterwards. Let us therefore continue with our agenda, and then we will do the signing.

I still want to make a proposal about an agreement on the timing of the publication. After consultations with some delegations, it is proposed to publish the Appeal on March 18 at 0:00 hours Budapest Time.

Please allow me, Comrades, to inform that our agenda is now completed. We intend to publish a communiqué about our meeting today. The communiqué has been agreed between the delegations. Taking into consideration that we want to perform the act of signing after the completion of the agenda, I want to inform the agenda of our meeting today is completed.

Finally, please allow me to thank the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party and the Hungarian government for the organization and work on behalf of the meeting, and for the welcoming hospitality to all of us in the capital of a fraternal country. Please allow me to close the meeting with these remarks.

We will now perform the act of signing. The Comrades have told me they were anticipating that the press representatives are to be present. It is therefore proposed to have a very short break for the Comrades to arrange this.

(After a short break, the signing is done in presence of the press representatives.)

I have been informed that all delegations have signed the appeal. Please allow me at the end to again thank the Hungarian Comrades and all delegations that participated in this meeting for their work, which contributed to the unanimous agreement on the drafted documents.

Comrade Kadar:

In light of the fact that the meeting has ended earlier than expected, I want to inform in the name of the Hungarian Comrades that the dinner in honor of the delegations will take place at 19:00 hours already. - The meeting is adjourned.

(Vigorous applause.)

[\[1\]](#) 1912-1976.