

February 4, 1982

Talks between Todor Zhivkov and John Whitehead, US Under Secretary of State, Sofia

Citation:

"Talks between Todor Zhivkov and John Whitehead, US Under Secretary of State, Sofia", February 4, 1982, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Central State Archives, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Record 60, File 392. Translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Dr. Jordan Baev, Momchil Metodiev, and Nancy L. Meyers, and obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112029>

Summary:

Discussion of US-Bulgarian relations and ideological/political/economic differences between US Under Secretary of State, John Whitehead and CC BCP Secretary General Todor Zhivkov.

Original Language:

Bulgarian

Contents:

Translation - English

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

Mr. Whitehead, may I take the liberty to welcome you and those accompanying you; I would like to express the government's satisfaction, as well as my own personal satisfaction, with such a top-level visit of the Under Secretary of State of the USA and note that it is the first of its kind in the whole history of relations between our countries and our peoples. We do appreciate it. I am deeply convinced that your visit, the talks and negotiations we've had will be a decisive step forward in the future development of the relations between our countries and our peoples. Our relations have not been burdened so far, there are no problems between us, apart from problems of a political nature. I think the latter are clear enough and there is no reason for them being tense in the future. Moreover, we have no common border. All problems that seem to burden our relations are of such a nature that can be settled adequately.

Thus, I do not see any problems relating to our bilateral relations that could not be settled, apart from the fact that we cannot transform your social order; and I do hope that you will not achieve such a transformation in Bulgaria. We haven't even considered such a task.

JOHN WHITEHEAD:

We do not mind accepting your country as part of our system; moreover we now notice certain signs indicating that your country is undergoing transformations, particularly in the economic sphere; these transformations seem to be directing your economic development towards our economic model and system. We understand that the economic enterprises in your country are assuming greater independence. Yet taking into consideration the fact that this is a matter of domestic affairs, we would not like to interfere.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

Since you already touched upon this issue, let me say a few words in this respect. Every aspect of your economic and social life suits us: the organization of production, etc. We are ready to implement your achievements in Bulgaria, except for the so-called profit centers. Under our economic system the entire profit goes into the state budget, whereas in your country it goes to the private owner. There is a different mechanism of distributing wealth in your country. Distribution is the only difference between us. All other aspects suit us. In my opinion any Bulgarian functionary that would not adopt your experience, with this minor exception, is stupid. The sooner we get rid of such fools, the better-developed the economy will be.

In terms of our political structure, and the top-level posts in particular, we do not need Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of the State Council; these should be combined in a single post.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

Noteworthy transformations are obviously under way.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

They are noteworthy indeed. It's a pity I do not have much time. I'm fighting time at present.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

I do not agree with you. As far as time is concerned, I think that there are many years before you. You have already set a record in terms of the length of your term of office. I hope you will achieve greater results in this respect in the future.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

I am the doyen among the first and general secretaries of the communist parties in the socialist countries. I dare say that I am the vice-doyen head of state in the world. It is only the Japanese emperor that has a lengthier term of office than I do. I'll paraphrase a Latin American writer so that I can explain to you the nature of my struggle against time:

Time is a river that keeps undermining me,
yet I am a river as well.

Time is a tiger that tears me apart,
yet I am a tiger as well.

Time is a fire that burns me
yet I am a fire as well.

Unfortunately time is a reality and I am Todor Zhivkov--a servant of God.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

These words were so beautiful. I hope that despite your position of vice-doyen after Hirohito,[2] you will become doyen in terms of your impact on public opinion, since Hirohito is much older than you.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

From the point of view that his power is different in nature from mine. There is a difference, a small one, but yet a difference. Even more so since our church tower is a smaller one. Fortunately or unfortunately we are a small country in the center of the Balkan peninsula. Now we are having the chance to meet a representative of a country with a high church tower; I therefore have the pleasure to give you the floor.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

I thank you for giving me the floor. Let me start with a comment on our first issue, namely the economic transformations in your country. These obviously tend towards the economic model of our world.

You mentioned that the major difference between the economic systems lays in the mechanism for profit distribution. Allow me briefly to explain to you how this mechanism works in our country. First, any profit is distributed by the corporation, which is obliged to give 50% of it to the state and is allowed to keep 50% for itself. The latter goes to the shareholders. Then they are obliged to pay 50% of their part to the state as income tax. Indeed 75% out of the whole profit go to the state and only 25% remain with the shareholders. Therefore I would like to conclude that the difference between the two economic systems is not that major in fact.

Please allow me to tell you something about the goal of my visit. I was empowered by President Reagan and State Secretary Schultz to deal with the Eastern European countries. The two visits to this part of the world are part of my job. I visited Yugoslavia, Romania and Hungary in November. Bulgaria was the last country I had left to visit during my recent tour of Eastern Europe, after Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The goal of my visit is to listen to these countries' official positions, and understand them and get to know them; moreover I bear in mind the fact that US relations with these countries have not been very good recently. My government would like to improve and further develop these relations. It is true that essential differences between our countries and our systems exist; these are differences in the economic, political and social systems. We do not share a common view of what human rights are. Yet these differences should not hinder maintaining civilized relations, with Bulgaria in particular. The latter have been somewhat cold recently.

Thus the major goal of my visit is to contribute to breaking the ice in our relations. I

hope that my visit will set the stage for a process of improving our relations.

We have already made certain progress in this respect. The talks that I had yesterday with your vice foreign minister and your foreign minister specified other measures that may be taken relating to the improvement of our bilateral relations. Each party in these talks laid down its expectations in terms of what the other should undertake with a view towards taking a step forward in the development of our relations. We call it a "step-by-step" process; we believe that it would eventually result in improving relations between our countries.

During our talks with Mr. Mladenov,[3] your foreign minister, we discussed a number of issues relating to international affairs, including the bilateral relations between each of our countries and the Soviet Union; we also discussed the issue of arms control and regional conflicts. We discussed the problems in certain parts of the world such as Afghanistan, Angola, Central America, Vietnam. We provided information to each other on each party's position regarding these international issues. I listened with great interest to your foreign minister's statement, which actually presented Bulgaria's official position.

I must admit that we are deeply impressed with the processes under way in your country. The transformations you are effecting, and their growing potential, provide favorable grounds for the further development of relations between Bulgaria and the USA.

I would also like to hear your evaluation of the processes taking place in the Soviet Union; what is the essence of the changes there and their relevance for the respective countries and the world in general.

How do you view the world within the next 5 or 10 years?

TODOR ZHIVKOV

Thank you, Mr. Under State Secretary, for what you said.

I would like to start with the relations between our two countries. First, I would like to point out that these relations should not be considered in the light of their development so far. Their development up to now is not relevant; we should put an end to the past and view the problems from a new perspective and thus to find their adequate solution.

Would we be able to change this perspective and solve the problems relating to both bilateral and international affairs from a different position? That is the major question.

This means that the reasons for the different positions are in both parties--I mean on a global scale. Such are certain sectarian stances on various issues and the stereotypes on your part.

Will we be able to overcome our old stereotypes and lay the grounds for the development of a new type of relations based on today's realities in the world?

Which is the dominant reality? The major reality is the following: taking into consideration today's nuclear arms stock, neither our system can do away with yours, nor can your system do away with ours. This is a brand new reality that neither Marx, Engels, nor Lenin had confronted, not to mention any of your presidents.

We are therefore confronting a totally different reality that has not been present in the history of mankind so far. And we must bear this in mind. What is the future road to take, what alternatives are there for further development in the context of this new reality and the coexistence of the socialist community, on the one hand, and the capitalist system, on the other? Should the relations between the socialist and the Western countries be considered in light of antagonistic regularities, on the basis of antagonism? Our relations should be reformed on the basis of the present realities; they should assume a new character, they should assume a human face. There is no reason why we should not develop the mechanisms to foster these relations, to set up the rules of the game, and impose these rules and observe them. We have no alternative. This will not be achieved quickly; it will be a gradual process, but we must carry it out.

As for the militarism I would like to say that the militarism does not have to be considered as compulsory part of capitalism. It could not be said that it would exist constantly within modern capitalism. We should create a situation that will make militarism impossible. Moreover, the ideological ground for militarism is undermined. It is in ruins. This should be taken into consideration.

All of you are younger than I am. I am telling you - in no more than 10 years, perhaps I will not be alive at that time, militarism will be significantly undermined. It has no place to exist in the modern realities. I am not going into details, I wanted only to mention this. Why should we transform our ideological differences into militarism? Do we need this? This could cause only a catastrophe.

Therefore all statements saying that we are acting out of fear are mistaken. Our point of view is that we must save mankind from thermo-nuclear catastrophe. I am saying this sincerely. We have to save mankind at any price. We have to use all possible means to save it from the thermo-nuclear war. We have to develop a certain mechanism for cooperation between the countries of both communities, certain rules of the game, that will block the road to militarism and that will put it aside. I am talking in general.

This is the major task now: to prevent militarism and to develop a certain mechanism and to set certain rules of the game for joint co-existence between the two social systems. The peoples will understand better and better that our every inclination toward militarism is antihuman and may cause a catastrophe. We can develop such a mechanism and set such rules of the game that will cause the fewest possible open confrontations and will prevent the transformation of ideological confrontations into military ones, into militarism and into the danger of nuclear war, of war in general.

As for our bilateral relations, the only obstacles to their development are of a political nature. Certain measures taken in Bulgaria, including measures during my term of office should be exposed to severe criticism, because they were at variance with normal inter-state relations. I have in mind Bulgaria at the time when I have been head of the state and the party. You are aware that many things have undergone changes.

After your visit is over, we will once again look into these issues. We can assure you that a solution will be found to the questions you raised. Yet, I would request that the Americans for their part undertake the same exercise. For we cannot be sure what the USA will blame us for in the near future. Therefore, every day we anxiously await something new to be blamed on us. That occurs every single day. I will not start a debate on this problem; I am simply analyzing the situation.

Every morning when I get up I pick up the phone to see what your authoritative bodies have blamed on us. We have been assigned all mortal sins so far. We have not been charged with Christ's crucifix yet. The CIA and your propaganda have assigned

all mortal sins to us. We have even been charged with the attempt to assassinate Christ's deputy--the Pope, that we have been making a profit from drug trafficking. We have had trade with the developing countries totaling six or seven billion US dollars and you claim that we have been making a profit from drug trafficking. Good gracious!

Send my best regards to Mr. Reagan and Mr. Schultz.[4] I am of the same age as Mr. Reagan, and as we say there's not much time left for us. We have to undertake measures so as to improve relations between the USA and Bulgaria.

How would history assess Mr. Reagan's role and my role? I am not going to make any judgment, this is your business and the mission of history; I do hope, though, that he will be given merit for establishing normal relations with Bulgaria and assisting in the development of the socialist order in Bulgaria. This will suffice for his historical mission. So I am asking him to help us, to assist us on our way to socialism. Our achievements in building up socialism will not have a negative impact on US policy or on the world politics, nor will they adversely affect your country, since Bulgaria is a small country and our church tower is a small one.

As far as our propaganda is concerned, we do not maintain that it is independent. Nothing of the kind. Neither your propaganda is independent, nor is ours. There is no such thing as independent propaganda.

I failed to mention another problem when I was talking about our bilateral relations. Today we are facing the problem of a qualitatively new development of our society, both in the economic and social fields. At the forthcoming Plenum of the Central Committee we will tackle this problem from a new perspective, keeping in mind the current development. We need technologies for our economic development. We have to get some of them, even the major part of them, from the US since the US is the leading country in the field of technology. We are ready to acquire the technologies that are not under embargo. The question has been raised about these technologies not being passed on to other third countries. Speaking of this, we always underline that your country shall have the opportunity to control whether a certain technology, granted to us by your side, is to be given to another country. As for the products, we are free to sell them wherever we want. As for the technology, your experts are welcome to visit our country every year and to control whether it has been introduced here or has been given to another country.

As for the so-called embargo, I do not think that it will last very long, but I do not want to go into details. Nowadays the situation is different and it is impossible for an embargo to exist for a long period of time. As is well-known using a historical perspective, during this period of modern scientific revolution any lag in the introduction of technology can last no more than five or six years, then it is made up. I am talking about the developed socialist and capitalist countries. Therefore every item under embargo today, will be on the free market in two years, keeping in mind especially the enormous scientific potential of the Soviet Union. It is another problem that they are not making use of it. Oh, if Bulgaria had even a hundredth part of this potential, we would have gone straight to communism. They have already realized this problem. Let us hope they will sort it out.

Several years ago I went to Ukraine, where I visited four leading scientific institutes. I was amazed. Do not think that I am talking about something unreal. What amazed me that much? The workers there were modest and very well educated. Scherbitsky, [5] trying to provoke them, told them: "What are you doing and what are the Americans doing?" And they answered: "There is no difference between us and the Americans. The Americans implement the innovations, here no one is implementing them".

Thank you. I am sorry. I have talked more than necessary.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

As a representative of my country I fully agree with that. I have been informed that Zhivkov was one of the most conservative leaders of the Eastern bloc. However, the comments you made make me think that you are a proponent of the new thinking. Talking about militarism you formulated a common goal we should all target. And it would be wonderful if you really manage to persuade your Moscow friends that armaments should be cut and completely destroyed. I would like to assure you that the USA would immediately adopt such a policy of doing away with militarism.

Now I would like to say a few words about your everyday concerns about America's negative statements about Bulgaria. I must point out that we do not have a negative attitude towards Bulgaria. It is true that there is not much information on Bulgaria available in the USA; therefore many statements are made in an environment of an information deficit. Millions of readers have the opportunity to send articles and letters to the US print media, to newspapers and magazines; they have the freedom to speak their minds. There are 90,000 newspapers and magazines in the USA; there are some 535 members of Congress that have to chance to give interviews and express hostile attitudes towards Bulgaria. But that does not mean that the American people and the US government have a negative attitude towards Bulgaria. Therefore you should instead consider such acts of hostility a result of the freedom of press and the freedom of speech. We will try to curb the negative comments about Bulgaria in the US press and the US media in general with a view to lowering the rhetoric and the heated debates against Bulgaria. We do hope that you will do your best to curb the negative comments on the USA in your press. Since it is diplomacy and good relations that suffer when there is a hostile campaign in the press against either party.

Now I would like to tell you something you will find interesting. You mentioned that Bulgaria often is perceived as an agricultural country. Many perceive Bulgaria in this way indeed. Despite the fact that many people in the US think that Bulgaria is an agricultural country still fewer are those who think that it is an exporter of machinery and other products. If we take a look at the export figures from Bulgaria to the US and vice-versa, we will see that Bulgarian exports to the US on the whole consist of machinery whereas American exports to Bulgaria is consists primarily agricultural products.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

It is true, we import different kinds of groats and proteins. For many years we have not been able to resolve the problem with proteins for the breeding of livestock. We currently appointed a new manager for the agriculture and we hope he will solve this problem.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

Please let me express my view on one issue; I regard it as the most essential message to bring home to you, the Bulgarian State. This is the issue of human rights and human freedoms. I think it is from this issue that all major differences stem; it is in this sphere that mutual understanding is most difficult to reach.

Allow me to briefly remind you of the history of the US. Our state was established some 200 years ago. It was created after a revolution because people living in this territory did not want to be a British colony. They fought against Great Britain and succeeded in gaining independence.

After the revolution a constitution was adopted. The main characteristic of this constitution is that it protects the rights of the people vis-à-vis the government, not vice-versa. The constitution protects freedom of speech and of the media. Thus the

owner of the respective company, TV station, newspaper, the freedom of religious affiliation is also protected. Everyone is free to visit the church of his choice. All the churches enjoy the freedom to exist. The constitution also protects the freedom of the movement in the country, freedom to leave the country, freedom to take and to change jobs and even the freedom not to work. In general our constitution protects the freedom of every person to enjoy the life he wants.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

You could criticize some of the policies of our country, we could criticize your policies; however we disagree when the criticism is of those problems is adopted as state policy and their solution is set as a condition.

As for the PR of Bulgaria, you know very well that all issues concerning the freedom of citizens, their obligations to the socialist state and their attitude toward socialism in Bulgaria and in general, are solved in our constitution. According to our constitution everyone is free to confess any religion. We do not have statistics of the religious affiliation of the population. We assume that most of the people are atheists, 80% of believers are Eastern Orthodox Christians, 10% are Muslims, and there are also Catholics, Protestants, and some minor religious cults. The state provides financial support to all of those religious organizations, including the Muslims. As a percentage Muslims receive even more support than the Eastern Orthodox.

The question of our killing imams and closing down mosques was raised. We asked for more facts. We even showed alive the imams who were allegedly killed to the public. So that means that they have been killed and then they were resurrected. No imam in Bulgaria has been mistreated, neither has any mosque been closed down; all mosques are open to the public instead.

Therefore such an accusation is irrelevant. Another question that has been put forth is the ethnic minority of Turks in Bulgaria. A lot of nationalities have been flowing into the USA and Europe, whereas none have come to Bulgaria. Bulgaria had never conquered anyone else's territory. On the contrary--Bulgarian territories have been conquered.

All of the Bulgarian borders have been trimmed, everybody has cut off Bulgarian territories. There is a definite situation in the USA, and the situation in Bulgaria is completely different. Turks have never flowed into Bulgaria, Turkish troops have invaded our country instead. We deported those that regarded themselves Turks--more than 200,000 people.[6] When Mr. Evren[7] came on an official visit to our country, he insisted that the communique (official statement) explicitly state that any deportation whatsoever be ceased, except for 100 cases of separated families. That is how we put it down in writing. I tried to persuade him not to put this text down; I thought there might be more people willing to settle in Turkey and therefore we needn't shut the doors. However we did include such a clause. It is well known. When I made my return visit to Turkey later, he raised the same question about 3000 additional people. I agreed to this number. Now they are raising the question about 1,000,000 and 500,000.

We cannot understand why a problem that should be the concern of Turkey and Bulgaria, has become part of US state policy? You should leave us alone to settle it; you can consult Turkey on this issue since they are your friends, so that we may sit at the table and reach an agreement.

Therefore all Bulgarian citizens, irrespective of whether they are atheists or believers, are equal before the law, we do not differentiate. On the contrary, we want to elevate the cultural and educational level of this population, which was deprived by the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, because it has to adjust to the new life; it cannot develop this way anymore. We should create intelligentsia among them, they have to study, to be

educated. Our major task is to provide education for them and through that to make them equal to the other population and to prepare them to work in the factories. Nowadays they are working in the agricultural or in the construction sector or doing another rough work.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

I can see that this is an emotional topic for you. I have not come to your country to conduct any campaign, nor have I put the blame on you for anything; my goal is not to place any accusations.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

I understand you quite well. Thank you. But I had to tell you what the situation actually was.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

The information you provided was very interesting indeed, since it helped us understand your position. Dialogue is an important tool, since it facilitates mutual understanding.

Despite my respect for you, Mr. Zhivkov, I must admit that Bulgaria does not seem ready to discuss human rights issues with us yet.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

We are ready, we are completely ready to discuss all problems. We have no differences with anyone, neither the Pope, nor anybody else. We have absolutely no different views on anything, including the religious issue of Islam. There are no other contradictions.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

We are completely ready to discuss all problems important to your side. We expect that you would respond and discuss the issue of prime importance to us--that of human rights. We had a dialogue with your minister about human rights. We found out about the documents on re-uniting separated families. We are glad they have been given the chance to go to their relatives.

I think that we should thus be having a dialogue on all aspects of the human rights issue. We cannot agree to this issue being removed from the agenda. Why can we discuss our economic, political and ideological differences and at the same time ignore the differences between the two countries in terms of the human rights issue? We would not agree to this issue being removed from our discussions.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

I think you did not understand me well. I wanted to clarify the disputed question of the so-called Islam population in Bulgaria. We are ready to discuss all other problems. Let us resolve the problem of the tourist contacts in the way we have already solved it with almost every European country. Let us exchange tourists. I hope 100,000 American tourists can visit Bulgaria. We cannot send 100,000 because we do not have enough dollars but 10 or 20,000 could go to the US. If some of our tourists decide to stay in America we will let them stay. What do we have to fear? 1000 out of 20,000 will decide to stay in the US. We do not mind since they believe they will live better there. There is no Western country, that has not been visited by Bulgarian tourists. However we do not have the opportunity to send that many tourists because we do not possess enough currency. Unlike them we are a small country.

We are ready to exchange tourists, we are ready to accept 100,000 American tourists

annually and we will send 20,000. More than 100,000 tourists from Germany visit Bulgaria every year, there are a lot of tourists from Great Britain. Several hundred thousands tourists come here every year from the Western countries. There are no limitations. Moreover, the control in Bulgaria was not tight enough; some adventurers came here. We introduced tougher control a year or two ago and 190 people with fake passports were refused at the border.

If you think that there are American citizens living in Bulgaria, 10, 20 or 30 people, we are ready to return them immediately, if they want, certainly. Give us their names and we will return them immediately.

The question today is that the US has to open itself to Bulgaria, not vice-versa. We are ready to develop contacts between the parliaments or to exchange tourists. We are ready to make this step. We can build special tourist villages for the Americans; we have already developed such contacts with France and other western countries. We can establish contacts between the churches. If you want, our church delegation will visit the US and a delegation from your country can come here. We can exchange delegations from any field you wish-religious, youth, tourist, trade unions, culture, and sports. Sporting competition could be organized. We take third place in the world sports competitions, when Americans are not present. If the US were to be present, we would take fourth place. We can organize competitions in Bulgaria and in the US.

The problem is that the US does not want to open itself to Bulgaria. We will not open our country one-sidedly. Reciprocity is needed.

What else do you want? We cannot change our social order. If we were to change it, I would be fired immediately.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

We do not want this from you.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

As you see we are ready to exchange delegations from any field. If there are Muslims in the US, they are welcome to visit Bulgaria and we are ready to send a delegation; we disagree, however, when representatives of your country come here prejudiced because they can only poison our relationship. If we start looking for the negative sides of the life in the US we will find as many as we want to; certainly, you can also find many problems in Bulgaria. No other country in the world is so willing to develop relations with the US as Bulgaria is. Bulgaria in this respect is the only one. It is so because we are not afraid that socialism here could be undermined. Your information about Bulgaria is mistaken. We are not afraid of the fact that some of the tourists will not return back to Bulgaria. This cannot hinder the socialism. Socialism in our country is strong and stable, we are not afraid of Western influence. As you know, we ceased jamming your radio stations. We even need them. We have an invention that will catch the signal from the satellite. We will start to sell them in one or two years. This device is better than yours. At least that is the opinion of our experts. We will sell them absolutely free, so that anyone will have the opportunity to buy it and to watch satellite TV.

Please, understand me. We are not worried for socialism in Bulgaria. Socialism has won here forever. No one can change this. We are not Poland, not to mention other countries. We are not in debt. Actually, we do not have any debts. We are staying steadily on the ground.

We are ready to start exchange on a reciprocal basis. We have to be polite to each other, we do not have to insult the other side, you understand what I am talking about. We have to bear in mind certain things, you should respect our country, as we

respect yours. All of us have to bear this in mind. What I have said about the general and the specific is relevant here too. Each country has its own infrastructure, own spirit and traditions. If someone wants to destroy those traditions you will react, we will do the same.

You know that Bulgaria has the broadest cultural contacts among all socialist countries as a result of the activities of the late Lyudmila Zhivkova.[8] Now we are broadening those contacts. We have active cultural contacts with most of the European countries. Only we do not have contacts with the US. We do indeed have contacts but they are not active.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

I would like to assure you that we deeply respect the national dignity of your country as well as your traditions, history, national confidence, and everything you have achieved in the period of the existence of your country. I have visited your History Museum and there I saw items 4000 years old, this is an illustration of the rich history of your great country. Please, do not misunderstand me. We do not want to humiliate you. We respect everything achieved by Bulgaria so far. It is true, however, that we have different social orders. Neither side wants to change the social order of the other. We do not want to impose anything on you. We want to have contacts, respecting the rules of the other side's system.

You have mentioned the possibilities for exchange in the field of culture, sport, tourism, etc. We welcome any kind of cooperation. I think the two parties have to prepare a detailed plan for a broader exchange in all those fields.

As for the tourism, we cannot decide where our citizens will spend their vacations. The population of our country is 240 million. All of them have the freedom to choose the country in which they take vacation. If they want to visit your country, they are free to do so. What can really help in this respect is more information about your country, which has to be provided by your tourist representatives. If the people are interested they will visit Bulgaria. Those contacts will be useful for better understanding of our nations.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

Thank you. I am satisfied with our talks and I hope they would be only the first of a longer series of talks of the kind, talks between Bulgaria and the USA. I am deeply convinced that these talks would further stimulate the development of our relations. There is no reason for our relations not to improve. The USA is a powerful country, with a mighty scientific potential, with a vital economy. Bulgaria is a small country; as a Bulgarian saying goes, even smaller stones matter sometimes, for they can overturn a car. I don't have in mind the USA. I am talking in general. The historical period we are living in, attaches an increasingly greater importance to the role of smaller countries.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

Thank you.

TODOR ZHIVKOV

I once again thank you. Send my best regards to your leaders, and Mr. Reagan in particular. Make sure you tell him what I said: I don't know how history will judge his mission; I do know, though, that if he helps Bulgaria build up socialism, he will no doubt have had a mission of historical importance.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

That will be a challenge for him.

Footnotes

[1] Whitehead, John - US Deputy Secretary of State (1985-1992).

[2] Hirohito, Michinoniya [Showa] - (1901 - 1989), the 124th Emperor of Japan (1926 - 1989)

[3] Mladenov, Petar (1936 - 2000) - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria (1971-1989); Member of Politburo (1974-1989), Secretary General of Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party from April 1990 Supreme Council of the Bulgarian Socialist Party/ (Nov 1989 - June 1990), President of Bulgaria (Nov 1989 - June 1990).

[4] Shultz, George (B. 1920) - US Secretary of State (1982-1989).

[5] Shcherbitsky, Vladimir (B. 1918) - First Secretary, Communist Party of Ukraine, member of CC CPSU Politburo (1972 - 1989), Prime minister of Ukraine (1961-1963, 1965-1971).

[6] The so-called "Revival process" started in 1984. The government wanted to assimilate the Turkish minority in Bulgaria forcing them to take Slavic names. Despite the harsh international condemnation the repression escalated and by the fall of Todor Zhivkov (November 1989) a total of more than 300,000 ethnic Turks were expelled from Bulgaria or emigrated voluntarily to Turkey.

[7] Evren, Gen. Kenan - Chief of General Staff (1977-1980) and President (1980-1989) of Turkey.

[8] Zhivkova, Lyudmila (1942 - 1981) - Todor Zhivkov's daughter, Minister of culture (1975-1981), and member of CC BCP Politburo (1979-1981).