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Conversations between Delegations of the Romanian Workers Party and the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing, 3-10 March 1964 (excerpts)

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Summary:

Ion Gheorghe Maurer and Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania meet with Liu Shaoq, Deng Xiaoping, and other Chinese Communist officials. The Romanians discuss the Sino-Soviet Split, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and the organizing structure of the Warsaw Pact. Maurer expresses frustration with the Soviet Union, referencing the Cuban Missile Crisis and similar "circumstances in which decisions were taken unilaterally, expressing only the Soviet point of view."

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Transcript of Conversations between Delegations of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party

Beijing, 3-10 March 1964

(Excerpts)

[Ion Gheorghe Maurer and Nicolae Ceausescu in conversation with Liu Shaoqi, Vice President of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee; Deng Xiaoping, Politburo member and Secretary General of the CCP CC; Peng Zhen, Poliburo member of the CCP CC; and Kang Sheng, candidate Politburo Member of the CCP CC]

Meeting of 3 March 1964

[...]

Cde. Li Shaoqi: In the presentation of Comrade Maurer, he explained that there were some divergences between the RWP and the leadership of the CPSU. At the current moment are these divergences resolved or unresolved?

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer: In one sense they are resolved through postponement. The CMEA issue, for example. We have absolutely no reason for believing that the issue of constituting the CMEA as a supra-state organ is resolved. We have militated for the CMEA to become an organization according mutual economic assistance for the entire socialist camp, thus constituting a material basis for the unity of the socialist countries, for otherwise it is shorn of its ideological and moral content.

A second problem where it is possible to have divergences is that of creating an organization of all socialist countries, because the response to our proposal in this regard has been very evasive.

There exist divergences regarding the methods of work between parties, divergences that very probably also involve different perspectives regarding the nature of relations between parties. Let me give you an example. There is the organization of the Warsaw Pact. You know this. From its founding, the organization provided for [mandatory] consultations between participating states for the coordination of their attitudes and political action regarding international problems.[1] Very recently, when we received a proposal to agree with the creation, alongside the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, of a new organ for the coordination of actions on foreign policy issues, we were not in agreement with this approach, explaining that such consultations can and must be carried out within the existing framework. Unfortunately, up until now such consultations have not been held. We presented a series of circumstances in which the decisions were taken unilaterally, expressing only the Soviet point of view or, when there were consultations, we did not participate [and] we were not even aware of them. Thus, for example, we presented the case of the deployment of nuclear weapons in Cuba and elsewhere, which confronted us with the possibility of war without even knowing what it was all about. Certainly, these are just some of the problems.

There are others that we analyze, evaluate, and [about which] we seek to deepen our understanding, which can lead to different views, or not. In any case, our decision is that whenever, on the basis of profound judgment, we have arrived at a point of view, and this point of view is ours, a product of our own thinking, it should be expressed clearly.

Meeting of 5 March 1964

[...]

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: ... I listened with interest what Comrade Liu Shaoqi has said about the divergences with Stalin over the Chinese Revolution, over [Soviet] intervention - with no justification whatsoever - for ousting Comrades Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi from the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

Cde. Den Xiaoping: I was also removed from work.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: Unfortunately, such practices were employed against other parties as well. The entire leadership of some parties were dissolved and even arrested. In our party such practices were felt under other forms, and not only felt, they also had very serious repercussions for our party. I only need refer to the fact that two of the general secretaries of our party were foreigners - one was a Ukrainian and the other a Pole - who not only did not know the Romanian language, they had never even been to Romania, and they were imposed to lead the Romanian Communist Party. Through them it was much easier to impress an erroneous political line on the national issue, on the issue of the alliance of the working class with the working peasantry, on the issue of the character of the revolution in our country, and on many other issues. And this brought serious damage regarding the party's ties with the masses, with the Romanian people.

Such practices were continued, unfortunately, after the victory of the socialist revolutions in other countries as well and they are mirrored also in the relations between socialist states. Although the Comintern was formally dissolved, as you know, in practice the Central Committee of the CPSU continued to posture itself as the leading center and to give indications regarding who should be in the leadership of a party, and who should not, supporting those elements that were the most servile.

I would draw your attention to one example from our country, when after the liberation from under the fascist yoke Pauker and [Vasile] Luca, persons who had for many years lived in the Soviet Union and who, in general, knew little about the life and struggle of the Romanian people, were imposed upon the leadership, and through them a policy was impressed which, if I were to characterize it, could be called nothing other than one of servility before the Soviet Union along economic, scientific, [and] cultural lines, to say nothing of party life. Starting off from a deep mistrust of the internal force of our country and of other countries, so-called advisers were sent, who led the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We understood that there was need for specialists in industry, in the problems of specialization, but in the struggle against the internal enemy those who in the past have fought against them knew better how to conduct the struggle.

Moreover, in fact, these advisers were also the organizers of intelligence agent networks with the party and the state apparatus. We recognized this problem and confronted the Soviet comrades with it. Many of the repressions that took place within a series of communist parties in Eastern Europe were the achievement of exactly this interference. They also tried to incite repressions among us. I don't believe there is a single member of our Political Bureau who was not labeled as anti-Soviet, nationalist, etc. during that period. And only because they were not in agreement with certain measures and practices which did not correspond to our

situation.

If the same sort of arrests that happened in Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and even in Poland did not happen to us, that is due to the fact that the basic active of our party led by Gheorghiu-Dej was too well-connected with the working class and the people, and they did not have the courage, in fact, to attempt such repressions. For example, in 1948, when the conflict with Yugoslavia took place, rumors were launched, and one of the members of the Political Bureau at the time – Chişinevschi – affirmed publicly that Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej was a Titoist and must be arrested. This was an attempt to gauge the reaction of the working class, however the reaction of the party active, of the working class, was negative.

Certainly, comrades, we have liquidated this state of affairs at the beginning of 1952 when we ousted the Pauker and Luca group from the leadership of the party, and, from that date, we can say that we began to clarify many problems, including the strengthening of our party work, for ourselves.

As you know, the Soviet army was here for a long time, although it had ceased to be necessary a long time ago it continued to remain in the country. In August 1954 [sic], when we raised the issue that the time had come for their withdrawal – and, having been given this charge by the Political Bureau, the topic was raised by Comrade Bodnăraş, profiting from the visit of Khrushchev in our country – Comrade Khrushchev hit the roof, he did not even want to discuss this problem and he qualified the raising of it as a nationalist manifestation. That was in 1954 [sic].[2] Molotov, some time earlier, had expressed the belief that if the Soviet army would leave our country, our democratic-popular regime would not even resist three days. We told them that they should leave and then they would be convinced of the close ties of our party with the people. Nevertheless, in 1958, the Soviet army was withdrawn. Since that time the three days have passed and as the whole world knows our democratic – popular regime has not only not fallen, it has become more powerful.

From the very first years there was a direct interference in our internal affairs from the point of view of economic development. The so-called SOVROMs – Soviet-Romanian joint ventures – were created. In fact, the principle branches of the economy were of those so-called joint enterprises, including the uranium SOVROM [Rom-Kvart], which, in fact, had only a formal “joint” character because, basically, the entire leadership was held by the Soviet Union, and serious effort, one step at a time, was necessary for them to give up [that control]. Although the uranium was found in Romania, our specialists were not permitted to seek how even the prime material was processed. And that’s aside from the economic aspect, the prices. When in 1955-1956 we again raised the question of dissolving these SOVROMs with Comrade Khrushchev, he again hit the roof and, using expressions that were rather insulting, he told us: Then you can go ahead and sell it to the Americans. We were raising the issue that we might also be capable of leading this enterprise.

And, finally, we have faced opposition on a series of important issues of the country’s industrialization regarding a series of measures foreseen by our party and government as, for example, with the production of tractors and trucks. We have the letter through which we addressed the Central Committee of the CPSU asked for help to organize the production of trucks and the response was that they did not consider it necessary for us to make trucks. Certainly, we made the trucks and the tractors, as well as other vehicles, even though they told us that the tractor would cost its weight in gold, but we have seen that it did not cost so much.

I have allowed myself to relate several aspects in order to give you the possibility of better understanding how relations between Romania and the Soviet Union have evolved and how it [Moscow] arrived at the proposal to create a single planning organ. Probably they saw that only through their current path would not succeed in

assuring the introduction of their point of view and they believed that they could create such an organ in order to direct the economies of the socialist countries, without needing [to negotiate through] letters and correspondence, but only to circulate their instructions that others should execute. Certainly this was clothed in beautiful theory, [and] they also found theoreticians who discovered new objective laws and all of that was portrayed as the most genuine Marxism-Leninism.

Cde. Kang Sheng: True Communism.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: The leadership of our party reflected long and hard over these problems and it was not easy for us to arrive at this understanding and decide to oppose these tendencies. We analyzed them very broadly and we saw the consequences for the construction of socialism in our country, but also the negative influence that they would have for the other countries that struggle for their liberation from under the capitalist and imperialist yoke, because the realization of economic integration as they conceive it was accompanied by the renunciation of national sovereignty. They also found theoreticians here who say that the notion of national sovereignty is outmoded; that this notion is obsolete. In their opinion, the passage to socialism means the renunciation of national sovereignty, [and] the economic integration of the socialist countries.

Certainly, they also manifested certain tendencies here, from the beginning, when first Andropov came with a letter and said that we would meet with Nikita Sergeevich for only one hour and all problems would be resolved. They wanted in fact to obscure things and protect themselves. Then came Comrade Podgorny leading a party delegation with a letter from the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU. And here it is interesting to see the manner in which they proceeded, their attitude towards our party's leadership. Although Podgorny was received at the party by [First Secretary] Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej and another 3-4 members of our Political Bureau, he did not handover the letter and he said that he wanted to read the letter before the entire Political Bureau. We knew that he had certain illusions and we called him to the Political Bureau so that he could experience the unity of the Political Bureau and understand he should renounce such procedures.

At the beginning of the month of June we sent the letter from the Central Committee of our party to the Central Committee of the CPSU. I myself was given the task of going with this letter and handing it to Comrade Khrushchev. In the discussions with Comrade Khrushchev, he in fact, related that he had the impression that all of these problems were due to the fact that Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej was sick and the other members of the Political Bureau had succeeded to influence the rejection of this proposal. Basically, he hoped for a rupture within the Political Bureau. I explained to him that he was deluding himself because that position was not only of the Political Bureau, and not only of the Central Committee, but of our entire party. This manner of proceeding is characteristic for a certain type of mentality. Among others, probably also with a "political argument," he referred to the fact that we should not forget (referring to Romania) that the Romanian Army fought for a certain time alongside Hitler's Germany against the Soviet Union and that this could lead once again to the birth of some resentment among the ranks of the Soviet people, who had not forgotten what it suffered during the occupation. In fact, it was a threat. I reminded Comrade Khrushchev that in the Soviet Union were also people who know that the Romanian Army fought for 8 months alongside the Soviet Army against Fascism and that in the order of the day of the Soviet Supreme Command the divisions of the Romanian Army are cited innumerable times for their efforts in battle. He said: Yes, yes, that is so.

Cde. Chivu Stoica: And he forgot that the Romanian Communist Party led the armed insurrection in Romania before the Soviet Army came into the country.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: We expressed our opinion, in broad terms, in the discussions with the CPSU leadership, in a letter and in discussions with the CPSU delegation led by Comrade Khrushchev, which was in Bucharest in June 1963. The delegation was formed by Comrades Khrushchev, Podgorny, Brezhnev, Kosygin, Andropov and, over the course of two days, with the participation of our entire Political Bureau, we discussed the problems related to the CMEA. We did not manage to convince them that they are following the wrong path, nor did they manage to convince us that they are right to go ahead with integration, and so we accepted the proposal of Comrade Khrushchev who said: C'mon, let's end this, we should not make our differences public. He told us that from the scientific perspective that should happen, but let's end the dispute. He gave us as example Comrade Zhivkov, as being a true communist, that he is ready even [for Bulgaria] to enter as a component of the Soviet Union, but that, certainly, this difficult at present, especially since Romania is in the middle [blocking it].

Cde. Liu Shaoqi: That is their objective. They hope that all the countries will enter into the Soviet Union.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer: With your permission Comrade Ceausescu, I want to add something. We agreed not to expose the differences, but we said that in the CMEA, no measure modifying the structure of the CMEA could be taken without the accord of all the participating countries. Thus, even if the other countries were in agreement, no decision could be advertised as a CMEA agreement if a single member opposed it, on the basis of the principle of unanimity. Comrade Khrushchev agreed.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: [At the 26 June 1963 meeting with Soviet leaders in Moscow] we also made a proposal that the CMEA should be reorganized in the sense that it would comprise all of the countries in the socialist camp. To this proposal, half in jest but even more seriously, Comrade Khrushchev said: but why do you want to bring your allies into the CMEA, do you want to have the majority?

At the same meeting, we again raised the problem of intelligence networks organized by the Soviet Union in Romania. We had information that the networks continued to operate in 1963 as well, and we knew some of them and we raised the issue of ending this practice, which has nothing whatsoever to do with healthy relations between socialist states. I should note that, in fact, Comrade Khrushchev declared his agreement with us, in a certain manner, he recognized the existence of the networks, claiming that they were connected more with our recent positions and that their members had "activated" themselves.

And that, comrades, is how a series of issues evolved which have permitted the leadership of our party to understand better many things.

We are completely in agreement with you that the relations between socialist countries must be based on the principles of equality and non-interference in domestic affairs. Likewise, we agree with what you said that there are many wrongs to be righted in order to set things on a correct, equitable path. As you know we are part of the Warsaw Pact, in essence it is a formal [membership]. Regarding the participation of the member countries in the debate of fundamental questions as provided for in the statute of this organization, there have been many problems. I will refer to only one: the problem of general disarmament, which directly interests all of the socialist countries, but especially those who are united in the Warsaw Pact. This problem was not discussed and no agreement in the position of the participating states reached before it was presented to the UN. Another example, regarding the placement of missiles in Cuba, as members of a military alliance, we were directly interested in the problem, but no consultation took place on that occasion either. At the beginning of January, Comrade Khrushchev came up with his proposal for resolving border conflicts through peaceful means. This is an issue that raises many

problems. Yet we were not consulted in that regard either. We don't know, perhaps you were consulted, however, we didn't know [about it].

We raised these problems before the CPSU leadership in January [1964], through a letter responding to a prior letter from the CPSU consisting of a proposal to create a new organ for coordinating the foreign policies of the countries that make up the Warsaw Pact, something with which we were not in agreement. On the contrary, we raised the problem of putting the relations between socialist states in order and we explained that it is necessary that all of the countries of the socialist camp participate in the elaboration of international political positions. It is not admissible that a single country should decide on this or that problem that interests all of the socialist countries, such positions must be decided by all of the socialist countries. We have not yet received a response to this letter, but we believe that things cannot be allowed to proceed in this manner any longer.

[...]

[1] This is stipulated in article 3 of the May 1955 Warsaw Treaty.

[2] In fact, Khrushchev's visit and the first discussion of Soviet troop withdrawal from Romania occurred in August 1955.