

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

11 December 1980

Cde. M. A. SUSLOV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, V. V. Grishin, A. P. Kirilenko, A. Ya. Pel'she, N. A. Tikhonov, D. F. Ustinov, P. N. Demichev, V. V. Kuznetsov, B. N. Ponomarev, M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov, V. I. Dolgikh, M. V. Zimyanin, K. V. Rusakov.

I. On the Results of a Meeting Among Leading Officials of the Warsaw Pact Member-States, in Moscow, 5 December 1980

SUSLOV.¹ All the comrades have read the communiqué that was published in the press.² I must say that the decision to hold a meeting among leading officials from the Warsaw Pact member-states was extremely timely. The meeting featured a very thorough exchange of views. Representatives of the states — that is, the first secretaries

¹ Translator's Note: Suslov was chairing this session because Brezhnev at the time had been on an official visit to India, accompanied by foreign minister Gromyko and two other members of the Suslov Commission, Leonid Zamyatin and Ivan Arkhipov. The delegation returned to Moscow late on the 11th, and Gromyko evidently arrived at the Politburo session in time to make a brief comment. (He is not listed among the participants in the meeting, but he is recorded toward the end as having made a quick comment. If that comment is recorded accurately, it suggests he must have stopped in briefly at the end. It is also possible, of course, that the transcript incorrectly attributes the remark to Gromyko.)

² Translator's Note: See "Spotkanie przywódców państw członkowskich Układu Warszawskiego," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 6-7 December 1980, pp. 1-2. This communiqué from the 5 December meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee was also published in Moscow *Pravda* and other major newspapers in the Warsaw Pact countries. Soviet leaders prepared the text of the communiqué in advance of the meeting, and the Pact's seven member-states endorsed its publication. That was the only decision actually approved at the session on 5 December. A full, declassified transcript of the formal part of the meeting is available in "Stenografische Niederschrift des Treffens führender Repräsentanten der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 5. Dezember 1980 in Moskau" (cited in annotation no. 9 *supra*), pp. 140-196. It consists mainly of speeches by all seven leaders, beginning with Kania and ending with Brezhnev. These speeches were intended as a form of collective pressure on the Polish authorities, letting them know that they must resolve the crisis as soon as possible. Kania's and Jaruzelski's memoirs reveal that important talks with Soviet leaders also occurred outside the formal proceedings. Jaruzelski met with the Soviet defense minister, Marshal Dmitrii Ustinov, and Kania met with Brezhnev. The Polish leader emphasized to his Soviet counterpart that the Poles could defuse the crisis on their own, and that outside intervention would have disastrous consequences. Brezhnev evidently was willing to accept these assurances, at least for the time being. See Stanislaw Kania, *Zatrzymac konfrontacje* (Warsaw: BGW, 1992), pp. 82-97; and Wojciech Jaruzelski, *Les Chaines et le Refuge* (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattes, 1992), pp. 239-242.

of the Communist and workers' parties — offered thorough presentations. I should say that the speech by Cde. Kania was impressive overall. Of course he might have dealt with certain matters a bit more pointedly. However, if you generally compare the speech by Cde. Kania with the statement he made to his Politburo and at the plenum back in Poland, he was more self-critical, more vibrant, and more incisive. The most important thing is that the Polish comrades understand the great danger hanging over Poland, and that they are aware of the great damage done by antisocialist elements and the grave threat posed to the socialist gains of the Polish people.³ Cde. Kania is offering a more sober evaluation now of the economic situation in Poland, of the country's indebtedness to capitalist countries, and of the possibilities for assistance.⁴

It is worth noting that Cde. Kania indicated in his speech that he would be carrying out a more resolute offensive against the antisocialist elements, and he noted that there will be no sorts of concessions to or accommodation with the antisocialist elements. Along with this, he noted that the Polish United Workers' Party, the Polish people, and the nation's healthy forces, armed forces, and state security organs and police, who support the PZPR, are able to use their own forces to rectify the situation and normalize it.

The speeches of all the other comrades contained advice for the Polish friends on what to do and how to launch a decisive attack against the antisocialist elements. Cde. Husak, for example, cited numerous examples from the experience of 1968, when the KSCC had to launch a fierce struggle against rightist elements.⁵ Cde. Kadar likewise spoke about the activities of counterrevolutionary elements in 1956 in Hungary, when he had to use harsh administrative measures to crush the counterrevolution.⁶ Cde. Ceausescu, true to his own tradition, spoke more about independence, sovereignty, non-

³ Translator's Note: For Kania's own brief assessment of the formal part of the Warsaw Pact meeting, as presented to the PZPR Politburo on 6 December, see "Protokol Nr. 53 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 6 grudnia 1980 r.," 6 December 1980 (Secret), reprinted in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*, esp. pp. 188-189. Kania told his Polish colleagues that he did not always agree with what the other Warsaw Pact leaders had said at the meeting, but that "our situation is affecting things in the other fraternal countries, and therefore they have a right to view the situation in Poland very critically." Kania added that the allied states ultimately had approved of the Polish regime's efforts to resolve the crisis. The implication of his comments was that the meeting had been largely routine. His retrospective account of the meeting, in *Zatrzymac konfrontacje*, pp. 82-97, is much more jaundiced.

⁴ Translator's Note: Kania dealt with all these matters in both his formal speech and his informal conversation with Brezhnev. See "Stenografische Niederschrift des Treffens fuhrender Repräsentanten der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 5. Dezember 1980 in Moskau," pp. 141-152.

⁵ Translator's Note: Gustav Husak was the last of the East European leaders to speak, coming just before Brezhnev's concluding speech. As expected, he likened the situation in Poland to the "crisis of 1968/69 in Czechoslovakia," when "imperialist forces, internal reactionaries, and anti-socialist forces had conspired to undermine the socialist order." Husak called for "extraordinary measures" to be implemented to "crush the opportunist, counterrevolutionary, and revanchist forces." See *ibid.*, pp. 178-187.

⁶ Translator's Note: Janos Kadar spoke third at the meeting, having been preceded by Kania and the Bulgarian leader, Todor Zhivkov. Kadar was not as vitriolic as Husak and Honecker were, but he spoke harshly about recent events in Poland and affirmed that outside (i.e., Soviet and Warsaw Pact) assistance might be necessary if certain "dangers" in Poland could not be removed by "peaceful means." In 1956, he recalled, "our foreign comrades helped us; above all, the Soviet comrades helped us." See *ibid.*, pp. 158-166.

interference in internal affairs, etc.⁷

The keynote speech by L. I. Brezhnev was received with great interest and attention.⁸ It was very well thought-out, with all the necessary instructions for the PZPR and the Polish comrades; and, as the Polish comrades themselves said, Leonid Il'ich's speech was an inspiration for them. The leaders and representatives of the other parties also offered high praise for the speech by Cde. Brezhnev.

In a word, I believe we should approve the results of the meeting among leading officials of the Warsaw Pact member-states, as well as the activity of the delegation from the Soviet Union headed by L. I. Brezhnev.

ANDROPOV. This meeting was held at a very high level. Of course the most important thing was the speech by Leonid Il'ich, which set the tone for the whole meeting.

USTINOV. The speech by Leonid Il'ich covered every issue. On each question it was clear what should be done and how the Polish comrades should act.

GROMYKO. In my view, both the Polish comrades and the other participants in the meeting left feeling very satisfied with the results. They received a necessary infusion of energy and instructions on all matters connected with the situation in Poland.

This same matter was addressed by other Politburo members — Cdes. Grishin, Kirilenko, and Pel'she — and by a CPSU CC Secretary, Cde. Rusakov.

They agreed to approve the activity of the delegation from the USSR at the meeting of leading officials and Warsaw Pact member-states headed by the CPSU CC General Secretary and Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, Cde. L. I. Brezhnev.

SUSLOV. I believe we should publish the decree in the press endorsing the results of the meeting.

Cde. Suslov reads a draft of the decree: to endorse the results of the meeting among leading officials of the Warsaw Pact member-states and also the activity at this meeting of the delegation from the Soviet Union headed by Cde. L. I. Brezhnev.

EVERYONE. Correct, we agree.

⁷ Translator's Note: Ceausescu spoke forcefully against Solidarity, but he also warned that "intervention [in Poland] from outside would pose a great danger to socialism in general and to the policy of detente and the policy of peace." As Suslov indicates, Ceausescu was considerably more guarded than the other speakers. See *ibid.*, pp.171-178.

⁸ Translator's Note: Suslov does not mention the speeches by Erich Honecker and Todor Zhivkov, both of whom (especially the former) urged that the Warsaw Pact take all necessary steps "to help the Polish comrades win out over the counterrevolution." See *ibid.*, pp. 153-157 and 166-171.

SUSLOV. Then I recommend we publish this decree tomorrow in the press.⁹

[*Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 59*]

⁹ Translator's Note: The brief "Central Committee decree" (actually a Politburo decree) was published exactly as Suslov phrased it here. See "V Tsentral'nom Komitete KPSS: Ob itogakh vstrechi rukovodyashchikh deyatelei gosudarstv-uchastnikov Varshavskogo Dogovora, sostoyavsheisya v Moskve 5 dekabrya 1980 g.," *Pravda* (Moscow), 12 December 1980, p. 1