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THE POSITION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA ON DETENTE AND DISARMAMENT AT THE PRESENT STAGE

(Excerpts from a speech made by TODOR ZHIVKOV,
First Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Bulgarian Communist Party and President of the
State Council of the People's Republic of
Bulgaria, at the meeting of the National Council
of the Fatherland Front, held at Sofia on
11 February 1980)

The world has entered the penultimate decade of the twentieth century. In terms of intensity of political dynamism and social changes, the times we live in have no parallel in the history of mankind.

In this respect, the main achievement has undoubtedly been the preservation of peace, the end of the "cold war", the establishment of a climate and policy of détente in international relations, and the consolidation of peaceful coexistence and co-operation between peoples. For 35 years now, since the end of the Second World War, we have been living in peace, and almost a decade has passed since the implementation of the programme of peace of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union paved the way for détente. This is an invaluable achievement, a priceless achievement, equally important and beneficial for all nations and all peace-loving peoples in the world.

Some Western leaders have been quick to proclaim loudly that one can no longer talk of détente. They are obviously trying to persuade the world as well as themselves that their old dream has been realized. In this way they are making every effort to bolster the courage of their followers and to lead their enemies astray and get them to drop their guard. It appears that among these leaders there are politicians and statesmen who hope that, by threatening to "apply the brakes" to détente, they will manage to dictate to us their own ideas and conditions for peaceful co-existence.

We are, of course, fully aware that the cause of détente has suffered a very severe setback. The world is entering a new, more complicated and crucial stage in the development of international relations, during which it is to be expected that the struggle between various tendencies on the questions of peace and war will become even more bitter.

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We are anxious for détente, we want détente, and we are endeavouring to supplement political détente by military détente and to turn détente into an irreversible process; this is the way it is, and it is all true.

But it is just as true that détente has come about not as a "favour" granted by the imperialist countries but as an objective necessity for them as well - or in any event a necessity no less compelling for them than for us.

Our policy of principle remains one of consolidating and deepening détente, and is a policy of peaceful coexistence and co-operation between countries with different social systems. To irresponsible actions leading to new tension and increasing the danger of a nuclear holocaust we oppose the policy of realism and common sense. This political platform is embodied in the replies given by Comrade L.I. Brezhnev to the Pravda correspondent on 13 January 1980.

The socialist countries, like the People's Republic of Bulgaria, believe that, in the present serious situation, talks on the limitation of armaments are not only possible but of vital importance. However, if they are to yield results, the dialogue must take place having regard to the approximate military parity that has been achieved objectively over the span of several decades. Disarmament, like détente, is a two-way process. It is possible only given honest intentions and an active and positive attitude on the part of all partners. If NATO intends to negotiate with us from a position of strength and present us with a fait accompli, it is clear that it will not find an interlocutor for such talks.

Security in Europe cannot be guaranteed by increasing the number of nuclear weapons and by stockpiling Pershing and Cruise missiles in the European countries of NATO, as military strategists on the other side of the Atlantic are trying to suggest. Are they doing all this because they are genuinely concerned about the security of their European allies? Certainly not! Their real intention is that any war in the future should break out on the territory of our old continent which has suffered so much and been laid waste so many times. Peoples should realize that reactionary circles and strategists on the other side of the Atlantic are prepared to sacrifice first of all, without giving the matter a second thought, the population and the material and spiritual culture of Europe, and count on remaining outside the sphere of military operations. This is the terrible truth which should have a galvanizing and sobering effect on politicians and statesmen and which should enlist millions of people in the struggle against nuclear weapons, for the limitation of armaments and for disarmament.

In present conditions, questions of peace and disarmament, far from losing their importance, are on the contrary becoming even more topical and urgent. Today more than even before it is necessary to stimulate the interaction of all forces

which are in favour of peaceful co-operation and détente, both in the political and military spheres. This is what friendly countries take to be their immediate task, and this is what the People's Republic of Bulgaria considers to be its duty. Being fully aware of this fact, we are preparing for the Madrid meeting where questions of détente and co-operation and of the reduction of the military danger in Europe will inevitably be the focal point of discussions.

The people and Government of Bulgaria believe in the future of détente. We believe that the wisdom of statesmen and the enduring interests and mutual advantage of all countries, States and peoples will eventually prevail. Clear-headedness, responsibility and common sense are necessary. Peace can and must be preserved, and détente can and must be protected and promoted. The People's Republic of Bulgaria believes in this goal and will work and fight to attain it.

In this crucial hour in the course of history, we appeal to all countries, to politicians and statesmen, to all right-minded people who cherish the cause of peace and the spirit of Helsinki, and to all those who realize the lunacy of the present alternative to peace and are aware of their responsibilities to their peoples and to mankind. Détente is in danger, but not yet buried. Let us spare no effort to defend it, to preserve it and to extend it. We are convinced that, if we display goodwill and realism and take into account the interests of peoples, all international problems can be solved by peaceful methods. We declare that anyone prepared to proceed along this road will find a true and loyal partner in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

The policy of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in the Balkans is, as we have pointed out on more than one occasion, a consistent policy, unswervingly loyal to principles and unaffected by any considerations of expedience. More specifically, this means that at the present time as well -- despite the aggravation of the international situation by imperialist and reactionary forces -- we remain and will continue to remain true to the objectives we proclaimed in our relations with neighbouring countries, namely, the preservation and consolidation of peace and security, and the promotion of good neighbourly relations, friendship, co-operation and understanding.

We realize, of course, that the changes taking place in the international situation as a whole also influence the situation in the Balkans. Our peninsula is not an isolated region but a part of Europe and of the world as a whole.

For example, we are not indifferent to the fact that medium-range missiles can reach our country from the other end of Europe. We are not indifferent to the fact that bases with missiles of so-called "limited" range are located around the People's Republic of Bulgaria, for they too can reach our territory. And we are far from indifferent about the future attitude of our neighbours towards us: whether we

shall continue actively to develop friendship, good neighbourly relations and co-operation. We cannot view without concern NATO's attempts to turn the territories of certain Balkan countries into launching sites for nuclear weapons.

We hope that reason and realism will prevail among the political and military leaders in these countries, and that they will not allow the Balkans to become a plaything in the hands of certain reactionary circles.

How can our relations with our neighbours be summarized at the present stage?

Relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Socialist Republic of Romania continue to develop and can be plotted as an ascending curve. This is quite natural. Romania is our neighbour and ally, we are both parties to the Warsaw Treaty and members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and our bilateral relations are based on the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance. Last year we had two meetings with Comrade Nicolae Ceaucescu, and we examined and drew up a series of measures concerning our future co-operation. As you know, further such meetings and talks will take place in the next few days. The good tradition is therefore being maintained.

Our relations with Turkey and Greece are very good. Last year, fruitful meetings took place between the Prime Ministers of the two countries, and we consider that the tradition of these annual meetings will be kept up. Meetings were also held between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, other ministers and senior government officials. We will continue to develop our relations with Greece and Turkey on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual advantage, mutual trust, and good neighbourliness.

As regards Albania, we continue to favour normalization and the development of inter-State relations.

Our relations with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continue to develop, but we would have liked them to be more active and varied. Recently, using President Tito's health as a pretext, a large number of mass media in the West took the liberty of making the most vicious insinuations and engaging in speculation with regard to Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. However, truth will out, as the saying goes.

I should like to declare once again that the People's Republic of Bulgaria is interested in having a peaceful, stable and prosperous Yugoslavia as a neighbour. The People's Republic of Bulgaria recognizes the political realities and the State frontiers that took shape after the Second World War; it has never had and does not have any territorial claims, either with respect to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or any of its neighbours.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria maintains all the proposals it has made so far for the further strengthening and development of friendly and good neighbourly relations with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In general, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has supported, is supporting and will continue to support the development of confidence and friendship among the Balkan countries.

The process of détente has yielded abundant fruit in the space of only a few years. Our country has done everything in its power to consolidate peace, security and co-operation in the Balkans, in Europe, and in the world as a whole.

The Bulgarian people are deeply attached to the policy of détente; they see no other reasonable alternative and declare that, despite the obstacles and difficulties raised by certain circles, they will continue to make efforts to extend the positive results already achieved in relations between the Balkan countries and the other European countries.
