

July 22, 1981
Report to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Politburo containing verbatim transcript of 21 July 1981 telephone conversation between Stanislaw Kania and Leonid Brezhnev

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Summary:

Brezhnev and Kania discuss the new composition of the Politburo and the dangers of counterrevolution in Poland.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

- English Translation

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Kadar

22 July [1981]

REPORT

Comrade Janos Kadar received Comrade Valeri Musatov, the chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Soviet Embassy in Budapest, at his request on 22 July 1981. Comrade Musatov reported that Comrade Stanislaw Kania phoned Comrade Leonid Brezhnev on July 21, while the latter was on holiday in the Crimea. The following conversation took place between them:

S. Kania: Good morning, Comrade Leonid Ilyich.

L. Brezhnev: Good morning, Stanislaw.

First of all I would like to congratulate you on the occasion of your re-election to the post of First Secretary of the CC of PUWP.

I closely followed the work of the Congress. It was a difficult Congress. What is your assessment of it?

S. Kania: You are right, the Congress took place in a difficult situation. But after all, it created conditions for development. There can be no doubt about that. I wonder whether Comrades [V.V.] Grishin and [Konstantin V.] Rusakov informed you about the course of the Congress.

L. Brezhnev: I read all the reports coming from Warsaw during those days. I followed with interest the television coverage of the work of the Congress.

S. Kania: You probably know how the Congress received Comrade V.V. Grishin's speech. The delegates applauded every remark referring to the Soviet Union and supported the idea of friendship with your country and our solidarity in the struggle for the principles of socialism. It made the proper impression.

The Congress adopted good resolutions. This holds especially for the rules and regulations of the party which your comrades helped us with. In other documents, however, the wording may not be perfectly correct. Nevertheless, we hope that we will be able to amend them when they are put into practice. Unfortunately, some comrades did not get in the Politburo whom we would have liked to see in it. I am thinking of Comrades [Andrzej] Zabinski and [Tadeusz] Grabski. Grabski obtained few votes in the secret ballot. In my opinion he had committed a number of mistakes and therefore he lost the votes not only of the revisionists but also those of the reliable comrades.

The present composition of the Politburo will ensure fully that we will work more effectively in the future. Comrade [Miroslaw] Milewski, Minister for Home Affairs, became a member of the Politburo. We plan to give him the post of administrative secretary of the Central Committee. You probably know him well.

L. Brezhnev: I have heard about him but I have never met him in person.

S. Kania: Foreign Minister J. Czyrek became a member of the Politburo and the secretary of the CC. We elected two comrades for the post of secretaries of the CC who had been previously doing lower-grade party work. These are Z. Michalek and M. Wozniak. The former will deal with agricultural issues and the latter with economic ones. We hope that Michalek, who used to work as the director of a major state farm, will be able to help us in reshaping the village-structure.

The composition of the Politburo is good all in all. It is made up of reliable people.

L. Brezhnev: If this is the case, then it is good.

S. Kania: We managed to elect all the people into the controlling organs, whom I had wanted. There were 18 candidates on the list of politburo members, of which 14 had to be elected. Those whom I did not consider suitable dropped out in the secret ballot.

Comrade Rusakov was quite afraid that [Mieczyslaw] Rakowski would get into the leadership. I promised him that this would not happen. It was not easy to fulfill this as they wanted to elect Rakowski even to the post of First Secretary of the CC of the PUWP. However, it all fell through and I am satisfied now.

Economic circumstances are, indeed, terrible in Poland. Due to the shortage of market supplies the possibility of rioting is most likely. We are short of a number of products, including even cigarettes. We spoke in detail of all this to your delegation which we met yesterday. We informed the delegates in detail about the economic situation of the country. They promised to report this to you.

L. Brezhnev: We are examining everything closely here in Moscow.

S. Kania: Comrade Jaruzelski and all members of the Politburo send you their best regards.

L. Brezhnev: Thank you. Give my best regards to Comrade Jaruzelski and the others.

S. Kania: Now we are going to draft a specific plan for our further action, which will have to be more offensive.

L. Brezhnev: That is right. Thank you for the information. I would like to give you my own opinion. We think that the Congress was a serious trial of strength for both the Party and you personally. It clearly cast light on the extent of opportunism and the threat represented by opportunists. If they had been given a free hand they would have diverted the party from Leninism to social democracy. Besides, they behaved in a mean way and launched a campaign of slander. In spite of this, the final outcome of the Congress and the fact that the highest party authority chose you for the post of First Secretary, create a reliable basis for resolute and consistent measures for the solution of the crisis and the stabilization of the situation.

The most important thing is that we do not waste time. People must feel right away that the leadership is in reliable hands.

I was informed that Solidarity is threatening a strike which is to be organized at your airline company. You have to show them that times have changed. There will be no more capitulations. Don't you agree?

S. Kania: I absolutely agree.

L. Brezhnev: After all, the whole struggle is still ahead of you. It is not going to be an easy fight. The counterrevolution—the danger of which we have already talked about several times—does not intend to lay down its arms.

I would like to believe that, holding together the party aktiv and all the Communists, you and your comrades will be able to stop the course of events, fight back the enemies of socialism and defend the achievements of socialist Poland.

In such circumstances, Stanislaw, be assured that you can rely on our solidarity and support. The Soviet people express their pleasure on your election as leader of the Party and they will follow attentively further happenings in Poland. This is natural as everything that is going on in your country is close to the hearts of the Soviet people. The development of Soviet-Polish economic, political and other relations will develop according to the settlement of events in Poland.

Taking the opportunity of your phone call I invite you to visit us. You could have a rest and, naturally, we would then have the occasion for a more profound discussion.

I wish you, Stanislaw, strength and health.

S. Kania: I thank you for all that you have said.

L. Brezhnev: I always say openly and sincerely what I think.

S. Kania: I know what you expect from us. You are absolutely right to say that we have to mobilize all our forces in order to take the offensive. We understand that. I assure you that I will do my best to eliminate difficulties. We shall seize the counterrevolution by its throat.

L. Brezhnev: I wish you and your comrades success in this.

S. Kania: Thank you for your invitation for a holiday. I have practically no time to rest. I have already told all my comrades that I would not go on holiday. Yet, I might travel to you for a couple of days so we could talk.

L. Brezhnev: I will meet Comrade Husak and Kadar in the next few days.

S. Kania: If you agree, I would let you know the date of my arrival later, when I can see more clearly.

L. Brezhnev: I understand that you have got a lot of work to do. The resolutions of the congress have to be carried out.

S. Kania: Leonid Ilyich, I wish you a good rest and gathered strength. Not only Soviet Communists,

but all of us need this.

L. Brezhnev: Thank you for your kindness. I cannot, however, free myself from work even during my holidays. Just before your call I was talking on the phone with the leaders of Georgia, Kazakhstan and the regional leaders of Rostov, Volgograd and Stavropol. And it is the same every day.

S. Kania: Nevertheless, you should find some time for a rest.

L. Brezhnev: Thank you. Again, I wish you success, Stanislaw. Good bye."

Budapest, 22 July 1981