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Stenographic transcript of the ExCom of the Central Committee of the Romanian Worker's Party

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Summary:

The discussion centers on the growing split between China and Soviet Union, Vietnam, relations with Western Europe (specifically the FRG), and the Middle East.

Original Language:

Romanian

Contents:

Translation - English

TRANSCRIPTof the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party18 March, 1969Participants in the meeting: Comrades Nicolae Ceausescu, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Gheorghe Apostol, Emil Bodnaras, Chivu Stoica, Paul Niculescu-Mizil, Virgil Trofin, Ilie Verdet, Constantin Dragan, Ianos Fazekas, Manea Manescu, Leonte Rautu, Gheorghe Stoica, Vasile Valcu, Stefan Voitec, Iosif Banc, Petre Blajovici, Dumitru Coliu, Emil Draganescu, Mihai Gere, Dumitru Popescu, Corneliu Manescu, Ion Ionita, Ion Gheorghe, Mircea Malita.Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu :Let me inform you in a nutshell, comrades, about what happened in Budapest. In fact, you have read the communiqué and the appeal, so this is the whole result.The discussions were held within the framework of the commission, especially with the comrades who were there before, and – to some extent – in the evening; then Monday morning with some of the delegations.The main concern was that of the Soviet [delegates], and also of some of the other [delegates], namely to include as a first issue in the communiqué the incidents with China and reach solidarity against China. Besides the other appre-ciations in the communiqué, which referred to the increase in the aggressivity of imperialism, in the number of aggressive actions, and the imminent danger of war, there was also the necessity of strenghtening the fighting force of the Warsaw Treaty so that it can crush any aggressor on any boundary. Isn't it so? The last formulation was something to that effect. The appeal was somewhat better but again with many such tendencies. Let's call for the achievement of security, but if you don't come, they'll beat the living daylights out of you. The sense of the appeal was something like this: you'll get into hot water whether you come or you don't! (smiling).Those persons who were more active in the commission, in the sense of their having adopted harsh positions, were the Poles, who really had the harshest positions.The comrades said nice words to one another at about 2 o'clock in the morning and it seems that these words were of some good ultimatelly.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :Afterwards they entered the zoological field. Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :You see, [Mircea] Malita was the spokesman there. And this in the following way: if people don't help one another in all respects, then what kind of an alliance is that if you don't act in both the East and the West, in both the South and the North?Naturally, something was obtained, especially due to the appeal in the commission, but practically nothing was obtained until the delegations came, and an understanding was reached.We arrived there the day before yesterday. Our reception was correct, as it was with all the others; nobody was received differently. We went to the hotel on Margareta Island, where all the delegations – except for the Soviet one – were accommodated. The Hungarians told us that no program had been envisaged for Sunday evening, that each delegation was free to do as they wished. We set about playing chess, and agreed to pay a visit to the embassy.[Ion Gheorghe] Maurer went downstairs to go for a short walk, and in the meantime the Soviets came and the discussions began. We went downstairs, too, and stopped. Among other general topics for discussion, [the Soviets] raised the issue of essence. Let's discuss serious things to see what we have to do. They said they wished the meeting to yield good results, and a unity be achieved. We told them that we wanted the same thing. But, as they surely knew, it was difficult to reach a result as regards the communiqué. My dear sir, to our knowledge the appeal is in a more advanced form and maybe a short communiqué would be good, but it should reflect all of the points of view. They said: Vietnam should be in.We answered: we also agree that it should be.They said: European security?We answered: we agree for it to be.They said: what about the Middle East?We answered: we agree for it to be in, but let's not start making history. At any rate, the first discussion went something like that.They said: then let's discuss with the other delegations and issue a com-muniqué, where all of these issues are raised. We'll go and discuss with the other delegations as well, and then we'll come back again and discuss with you.We went to the embassy and at about twelve at night they finished the discussions with the others and came to us – Brezhnev and Khrushchev – and told us: we discussed with all the others. Of course, everybody has his own opinion, and everybody wants a more comprehensive communiqué We have to take a stand. The main point, however, is that we cannot help taking a stand and include in the communiqué the issue of [border] incidents with China, that this is the main issue. [They added} that it would be inconceivable for us to meet and discuss about anything and not discuss about the most serious issue.After they repeated again history according to them, that we have to raise the issue of European security, that we have to raise the issue of the Middle East – things that they had repeated the day before – they told us: look what Nixon did, he advocated the strengthening of

NATO, of course, in one form or another; he declared that Germany could not remain divided for ever, and it would have to be united [in the long run], and then he called for the peaceful solution of issues, but only in general terms. [They added] that [the Western countries] were strengthening NATO, and we have to factor in this fact. [Later] they spoke about Vietnam again, the Middle East, the FRG, and the last outstanding issue was China.We listened in silence, and did not interrupt them at all. The main issue is China and we have to discuss it.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :This was as a result of the consultation with the others.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :I listened to them in silence, I did not interrupt them at all, I let them finish what they had to say, and I briefly told them all the issues, and it was also with the European security issue that I began. It is just, we must speak about European security, and we take the view that we must include this [on the agenda of our discussions] and we commit ourselves to act for strengthening European security.It is true that Nixon paid this visit but we must not forget that Nixon's partners in NATO called for emphasis on the ways of reaching an understanding with our socialist countries, and for taking the road of peace not of tension, and especially France and even other partners, and we have to take this into account when we cooperate, in our policy.As regards the FR of Germany, I said we agreed that there were revanchist and neo-Nazi forces, but it was also true that there were progressive forces wanting a different policy, that there the trade unions, the youth, consequently the working class get stronger. [I also told them] that, nevertheless, the communist party was created and it was functioning legally, which means that these forces have their say in the FRG. In addition, one has to take into account the outcome of the elections, the fact that Gustav Heinemann was elected president and that – after the elections – he declared that the possibility of the FRG leaving NATO has to be considered. We must take all these facts into account and encourage these forces to act for the purpose of dissolving this aggressive block, as we have always agreed.Concerning Vietnam, we told them we agree.Concerning the Middle East, we agree. Obviously, there is no point in our making the history of the Middle East, but concern ourselves with what we have to do now.As far as China is concerned, of course, we told them that we were worried by these events but we did not think they could be discussed within the framework of the Consultative Political Committee, and that we did not gather there for that purpose. Moreover, we told them that if they wished – outside the meeting and on a bilateral basis – we were ready to listen to them, we were willing to let them know our considerations if they were interested in them.They said: OK. [We said]: we are in full agreement with everything, only with [the China issue] we are not. All the outstanding issues are OK with us. They said: how can we go home and tell our Political Bureau that we came here and did not speak about this issue, that we get information every two hours that the situation changes, that {so and so} took over the command of the troops, that [the Chinese] mobilize their agricultural divisions etc. Why do we keep discussing the FRG…I can spit on FRG, but China is the main danger.I was about to tell him, my dear sir, you are smart – it is true – but you cannot spit on the FRG any time you feel like it, but I did not.I told them: we do not agree to discuss [the China issue].[They said]: what, are we not going to discuss anything, is this issue so…?Here [Ion Gheorghe] Maurer cut in to clarify things: however, we agree to discuss. We can discuss anything but, let it be clear to you, we will not sign any communiqué and will not tackle this issue! Whereupon we parted company.They said: now we go to speak with the Hungarians – because we have not discussed with them today – and we will think it over and tomorrow we will see.This is how we parted; then we went to bed without a worry in the world.We did not sleep very well, it is true… (laughs).Cde. Emil Bodnaras :What time did you part?Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :It was 2.00 a.m.I also called them (the comrades who had participated in the meeting), and told them not to waste their time there any longer. Then they said that they would see the following day [what to do].Meanwhile, Karpishenko came, too. [He said]: you see, we did not understand, we do not want to include this issue in the communiqué at any price, however, we want to discuss this issue about China, because Kosygin made a mistake when he said he did not conceive [of tackling] this [issue] other than in the communiqué. Naturally, this would create a bad impression (he told the boys), would be detrimental to the bilateral and multilateral relationships.They discussed all morning long, to all appearances with the Poles and the Germans; they also discussed with the Czechs for a short while.In the meantime,

the comrades worked on this appeal.Eventually, only the discussion of an amendment of ours and of one of the Poles' was still outstanding., and the Poles asked us for a meeting. We went downstairs, in a hall there, and they raised the issue of their amendment. It was an amendment dealing with recognizing the borders. We had something clearer, but ultimately they proposed a formulation which we accepted, however without West Berlin, because they wanted to put down in writing in the amendment that FRG's claim on Berlin should be rejected, a formulation which we could not accept as this would have meant that we were the ones to decide who Berlin belonged to. But this was something we could not decide there. We could only say that Berlin had a special status and it was not part of FRG. With that we agreed. The rest…more…we should decide who belonged Berlin to…this would be established when we arrived at peace.And there was also our proposal, whereby we requested that – in the interest of peace – an end had to be put to demonstrations of force and military maneuvers. [The Soviets] did not agree with it. We did not cherish any illusions that they would accept it but they had the Poles reject it on their behalf. Then we proposed an acceptable formula: one should act to increase trust or one was to abstain from undertaking any actions that could poison inter-state relationships. We added to the interpretation: including no maneuvers are to be performed in future.With this the communiqué was ready.In the meantime, the Soviets worked on a shorter communiqué which they did not show to anyone and proposed to us to meet at 2.00 a.m. – Budapest time – but only the first secretaries and the presidents of the Councils of Ministers, before the official meeting began, because [that meeting] was postponed till 15.00 hrs.We met, they showed us the communiqué, and we had only one observation to make: that it was not the Consultative Political Committee which decided to adopt the documents but the participating states.We agreed with the appeal and went to the conference. Cde. Emil Bodnaras :The Chinese issue did noty appear any more.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :It did not appear in any way whatsoever although Kosygin had said that if we gave up, others would raise this issue because they were very angry.The Soviets said that no one was to take the floor at the conference. We gathered together and listened for about twenty minutes to the supreme com-mander who gave us an exposé about the documents which had been being drawn up for a year, and told us how good was the work of the defence ministers, and then we passed to the signature of the documents.I asked: my dear sir, we have not clarified things in the draft decision yet (because they had maintained the old formulation, where it was stipulated that it was the Consultative Political Committee that decided on the adoption of documents, not the participating states). I said that we did not agree with [the oldFormulation], and instead we should say: the participating states.We all agreed but since the documents had been already typed, [I pro-posed] to sign them in that form and afterwards to have the respective page retyped (they had had the document tied with a string", and showed up with it ready). When they brought the document for us to sign, to make sure that that page would be retyped, I crossed it out with a pen to cancel it (laughters). Well, what was I to do if they acted like that?!Cde. Emil Bodnaras :That is why you were laughing when you signed [the document]?!Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :We had decided in advance that the respective page would be retyped but to be sure that they would not forget to do so, I crossed it out.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :Well done, very fine.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :Then I signed. Afterwards, in the end, we remembered that – in fact – the pages should have been initialed so that none of them could be changed. That is why I requested that the documents be initialed.We all agreed and this operation was performed right away.Then this appeal was brought in, and I signed it, but – as there were no photographers around – I waited till the photographers came. With this we finished. We congratulated one another for having done a good job. Brezhnev thanked us.When I went [out of the hall] with Brezhnev, he said he thanked me because we had succeded in having a very good result, and this was a very important thing.He said we should fiind an adequate moment to sign the Treaty since they did not have more amendments. I told him we did not have any amendments either.With this all was finished.We had dinner there, without problems.[Janos] Kadar made a speech, a general one, and proposed a toast.There was not any other problem and we said goodbye and came home. We parted company last night in a fairly good atmosphere.That was about all.Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :And a conclusion: when people face a firmly supported position, they cave in. Cde. Nicolae

Ceausescu :This is a correct conclusion. Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :They have no other choice, so they give in. They do not give in because they are wise but because this is what the situation requires. This is an especially important thing to remember. Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :With the Czechs, we discussed a little longer. Over dinner we discussed to some extent with Janos Kadar, and we arranged to have a meeting. We discussed with Todor Zhivkov, too; he remembered that the works at the hydro-electric power station on the Danube were behind schedule, and that we had to meet [for discussions].Cde. Emil Bodnaras :How glad were all the others the morning after!Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :It seems that the Hungarians were a little concerned. The Czechs told us that they did not see either but I do not know whether they told this to the Soviets. With the others we did not discuss this issue. [?] During the discussions last night, when the conversation inadvertently digressed to yugoslavia, Fock [?] said we had to start getting rid of it.We think that both the communiqué and the appeal are good.Cde. Paul Niculescu-Mizil :Everything is good.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :It is good that we did not accept to discuss the issue of China because this would not have been of any help and would have contributed, in a way, towards the aggravation of the situation.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :We cannot but express our admiration for the way our delegation pre-sented itself, including the crossing out of that page. It was a formidable initiative.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :It was Maurer's initiative.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :This is something we must remember: that if [the Soviets] come to face a just and firm position, they are compelled to cave in; they have no other options.This is also valid for cde. Niculescu-Mizil, who leaves for Moscow.As regards the communiqué, we have to see [what to do]. Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :We can at most make recommendations regarding the readiness state, and take measures for equipping.Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer :The only tedious thing you can have here is the fact that it compels you to incur expense.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :I think that this fact, [namely] that it is the participating states [that decide on the adoption of documents] not the Consultative Political Committee, has a qualitative aspect. This is valid as it extends to any relationships. Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :They said: the states participating in the meeting of the Consultative Polit-ical Committee. We proposed a different formulation, but afterwards we agreed. Cde. Paul Niculescu-Mizil :In 1956, after an hour and a half of discussions, [the Soviets] said they did not understand what this issue was all about.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :Now they understand. They said they had nothing against, and the others said the same thing.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :And we saved the other socialist states from having to commit themselves.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :I do not know whether we saved them [from that] because they can commit themselves.Cde. Emil Bodnaras :I am sure that as in our country the Executive Committee was beforehand informed about the issues to be discussed, so – with certainty, given the scope of the issues – all of the Central Committees or the central organs were informed that the communiqué was to be signed, and what the position on the Chinese issue was. Now they will go back home and will have to explain why they did not sign.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :Brezhnev said: how can I go home and say that I did not discuss this issue?Cde. Emil Bodnaras :And when they arrive home, many will breathe freely. Here the adven-turous spirit was stopped. [But not only this spirit but also] the formulations about Europe, which were very bellicose, and the spirit of European security built on the spirit of August 21.Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu :With this we can finish the meeting, comrades.In the minutes of the meeting it must be written down that the Executive Committee agreed.Several comrades :Not only that, but also that the Executive Committee highly appreciated [the activity of the Romanian delegation at the meeting in Budapest].March 18, 1969