

**BULGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRAGUE
SPRING**

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Abstract

The thesis examines the Prague Spring, one of the most crucial events in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, from the perspective Bulgaria - state member of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The work traces the development of its foreign policy throughout the period of crisis, from March to October 1968. It reveals different practices conducted by the Bulgarian Communist Party, in order to tackle the deviationist model represented by the CPCZ, illustrating the internal political measures and the active position of the political leadership during International meetings related to the situation in Czechoslovakia.

I also attempt to shed a light upon the motivation and the expectations of Bulgaria, taking it as a case study about the role of a Soviet satellite, during this phase of collision in the Socialist Camp. Therefore, the thesis combines the particular character of the Bulgarian foreign policy with strongly emphasized international context.

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	6
<i>Crises and Satellite States in the Soviet Bloc</i>	10
I.1. Common grounds of the Hungarian Revolution and the Prague Spring	10
I.2. The nature of political demands in the Satellite Regimes	13
<i>Bulgaria's foreign policy in the context of the meeting in Dresden</i>	15
II. 1. The situation in the Warsaw Pact	16
II.2 Bulgarian foreign policy in the 1960s	17
II.3. The political leaders	19
II. 4 The Bulgarian response to the meeting in Dresden	21
<i>Bulgaria in the Evolution of the Crisis: From the April Action Program until the Warsaw Meeting</i>	28
III.1. The Crisis Unfolds – April – July 1968	29
III.2 The Warsaw Meeting from July 25 1968 and its Aftermath	37
<i>Bulgaria and the Normalization in Czechoslovakia</i>	42
IV.1 The closing period of the diplomatic efforts	42
IV.2 The role of Bulgaria after the Intervention: motivation and final outcome	46
IV.3. Bulgaria and the Brezhnev Doctrine	51
<i>Conclusion</i>	54
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	58

Introduction

The new political leadership of Czechoslovakia came in power in January 1968, after long struggle with the orthodox communist leader Antonin Novotni. The party was led by the devoted communist Alexander Dubček. He began his reforms with the official idea of making up the process of De-Stalinization, which was not accomplished during the Novotni era. However, the removal of party members loyal to the Soviet Union and the growing signs for Independence in the international and political sphere, generated distrust in the Socialist Camp. Afterwards, on the basis of their policy in tackling the reforms in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, GDR and the Soviet Union remained under the compendious term – the “Five” which illustrated the division in the Socialist Camp by putting aside Romania and Yugoslavia. In this context the thesis will trace the foreign policy of Bulgaria as a participant in the “Five”, during the reformist period in Czechoslovakia named “Prague Spring”.

The character of the thesis reflects onto the basic literature which is divided into two major units – the Prague Spring and the Foreign Policy of Bulgaria. Surly, the Prague Spring is far more studied topic and amongst this large number of works, I must point out the following. One of the first authors, who worked on the events in Czechoslovakia, was the historian Zbynek Zeman¹, who wrote his book in 1969, and provided the first elaborated chronological model for

¹ Zbynek Zeman, *Prague Spring: A Report on Czechoslovakia*, (Harmondswosrth: Penguin Books, 1969).

further scholars. Later in 1976 was published the work of Henry Gordon Skilling². The book remains the most detailed overview of over 1000 pages, and describes each particular event, dealing with the events also in a broader aspect as for example it analyses the relations between Prague and Moscow, traces the roots of the division in the Czechoslovakian Communist Party and gives more reasonable overview on the political role of Alexander Dubcek. The next important contribution which portrayed the period was the work of Kieran Williams³. Its well elaborated division into three periods – Liberalization, Intervention and Normalization, served to correlate the foreign policy of Bulgaria into this framework. In terms of the reforms conducted in Czechoslovakia, the most important achievement was the book by Gallia Golan⁴ which divided it into three spheres- political, cultural and social. In addition my thesis will illustrate the struggle between BCP and CPCZ on the basis of these three sectors.

The works about the foreign policy of Bulgaria during the 1960s develop in two major streams. The first generates a theory about political development which is strictly narrowed by the economic dependence of Bulgaria from the Soviet Union, and therefore, the role of Todor Jivkov as a politician who, having in front of him this predestined context, managed to “bargain” the loyalty of Bulgaria for economic profit⁵. The second stream, illustrates the policy of Jivkov, as one which is mostly orientated to keep him and his regime in power⁶. Although, contradicting

² H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

³ Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak politics, 1968-1970*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴ Gallia Golan, *Reform Rule in Czechoslovakia: The Dubček Era 1968-1969*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

⁵ Iskra Baeva and Eugenia Kalinova. *Bulgarskite prehodi* [Bulgarian Transitions 1945-1989], (Sofia, 2000).

⁶ Vladimir Miguev. *Prajkata Prolet i Bulgaria* [Bulgaria and the Prague Spring], (Sofia, 2005).

in its nature both theories tend to represent Bulgaria, as a passive participant in the International policy.

In difference, my attempt is to shift the view towards the active role of Bulgaria, during one of the major crises of the Cold War. Therefore, the work contains three major contributions. In first place it traces the policy of Bulgaria within the international status-quo in the Socialist Camp. Secondly it displays the mutual dependence between foreign policy and domestic political doctrines, expressed in the argumentation of Bulgaria during the crisis. Thirdly the thesis underlines the leading role of the Bulgarian communist leader, Todor Jivkov and sheds a light upon his political skills.

The text is based, mostly on primary sources. It includes documents from the Bulgarian Communist Party archive, protocols from discussions in the Central Committee, and official reports to the Politburo. In addition I use sources from the Bulgarian Military Archive, containing secret reports edited during the deployment of the Bulgarian troops in Czechoslovakia. This documental basis is reinforced by the volume “Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Reader”⁷, which covers in documents the whole course of the crisis. I also worked the Bulgarian media and focused on two newspapers, “*Rabotnichesko Delo*” - the official of the Bulgarian Communist Party and “*Narodna Armia*” – the official of the Bulgarian Army, illustrate the propaganda in Bulgaria during the crisis. The usage of these sources serves to establish the framework of the Bulgarian foreign policy in the 1960s, which could be placed in comparative prospect within the context of the Prague Spring,

⁷ The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Document Reader, (Budapest, 1998).

The thesis consists of Four Chapters. The first chapter will focus on the model of crisis in the Eastern Block, by comparing the crisis of 1956 to that of 1968 in terms of motivation, goals and political role of satellite countries - Romania during the Hungarian Revolution and Bulgaria during the Prague Spring. The aim will be to provide an answer on the level of benefits, based on foreign policy, which two satellites regimes can gain from certain geopolitical context.

The Second Chapter will represent the background of the political situation in the Warsaw Pact before 1968 and the Bulgarian foreign policy on the eve of the Prague Spring. It will also underline the importance of different political background by comparing the two leaders – Todor Jivkov and Alexander Dubček. Afterwards it will deal with the results the meeting in Dresden on March 23 in which for the first time the situation in Czechoslovakia was commented by the leaders of the states in the Warsaw Pact, and in particular with the response of BCP, given during the Plenum of the Central Committee.

The Third Chapter will trace the most intensive period of political meetings and negotiations among the leaders of the “Five” between April and July – from the launch of the Action Program until the Warsaw meeting on July 17. It will demonstrate how in parallel with the political division, it was triggered another one which included, media, intellectuals and even the Youth. The whole process during these three months has been contextualized as an adjustment of the ideas of the Bulgarian Communist leadership into the quickly changing context of the situation around Czechoslovakia.

The Fourth Chapter will follow the last diplomatic efforts before the military Intervention and the role of Bulgaria in the following process of Normalization. In the last part, the chapter will conclude with the final outcome of the Bulgarian politico- military mission and the elaboration of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

To sum up, on the basis of conclusions in the text, I underline the role of Bulgaria during the Prague Spring and define the characteristic of the model of foreign policy conducted by the Bulgarian communist leader Todor Jivkov.

Chapter I

Crises and Satellite States in the Soviet Bloc

In terms with the nature of the thesis which consists of tangible event and particular political participant, the theoretical chapter aims to exemplify this approach. Therefore, I will represent on the one hand the general context of two crises- the Hungarian Revolution and the Prague Spring, and on the other two political protagonists in these events – Romania in 1956 and Bulgaria in 1968.

1.1. Common grounds of the Hungarian Revolution and the Prague Spring

The process of De-Stalinization provided the “Communist” and the “Capitalist” world with a binding doctrine of “peaceful coexistence”. In other words it recognized the division between two rivalry systems, based on political systems which obey by different socio-political rules. In

addition due to mutual benefits the Doctrine was unchallenged by the West and the Cold War conflict shifted away into “neutral ground” outside of Europe in Vietnam and the Third World.

The importance of Eastern Europe for the geopolitical strategy of the Soviet Union was officially established in foreign policy doctrine elaborated by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. It was revealed in his statement from 1959 in which he publicly announced the victory of Socialism⁸, and constructed new international relations framework of the socialist countries called Commonwealth of the Socialist States. The main point, in which, was the model of overcoming differences through coordination which implied stronger role of every socialist satellite, although under the leadership of Moscow.

The need for this new ideological framework appeared after the misleading message of the De-Stalinization, which resulted in the Hungarian Revolution. Therefore, in order to protect the ideological and political unity of the Socialist Bloc, the Soviet leader strictly underlined the difference between one’s state right to have its own approach to socialism and the prohibition of reviewing the historical gains of the communism. However despite these efforts, postulates imposed from Moscow continued to be an object of different approach from communist leaders, which was at the core of the next crisis that exploded 12 years after the Hungarian revolt.

In addition both the Hungarian Revolution and the Prague Spring resulted in the most vivid act of aggression in Eastern Europe on behalf of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The main reasoning was that the Intervention had been conducted as one last attempt of restoring the unity of the socialist system. In terms of foreign policy reasoning and motivation, the two

⁸ R. J. Mitchel, “The Brezhnev Doctrine and Communist Ideology” in *The review of politics*, Vol. 34, No 2, April, 1972.

cases exhibit many similarities allowing us to observe it under common theoretical and methodological framework.

The scheme suggested by Ivan Volyges in his comparative research about 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia focused on three main political demands proposed by its political leadership. In first place both regimes experienced severe crisis of legitimacy and lost authority, therefore the solution was found in the establishment of a new model of unification between party and society. Secondly, it was the process of modernization encompassed by the desire to be crossed the economic boundaries imposed by the Soviet Union. The third demand was the main appeal by Czechoslovakia and Hungary to be brought back in the European Community as an economic and cultural part of the history of the Continent.

These three main concepts clashed with the understating about the content of the reforms on behalf of the Soviet leaders. Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev would not allow reforms which questioned ideological principles and mostly which endangered the predominant position of the Soviet Union in Central Europe, a case which was apparently in the essence of each of the three stated above demands. In addition the 1956 revolt and its ambitious project of Independence, was applied within the framework of the De-Stalinization. Also the development of the reformist policy in Czechoslovakia was the basic stimulus for the elaboration of a new doctrine, which was to provide in Volyges words “*an adjustment born of necessity to be sure in the direction of socialist solidarity and away from Khrushchev’s acceptance of separate roads to socialism*”.⁹ Therefore, in 1956 and in 1968 the lack of well-established ideological rules provided the gap for

⁹ Ivan, Volyges, “The Hungarian and Czechoslovak Revolutions: A Comparative study of Revolutions in Communist Countries” in *The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: Its Effects on Eastern Europe* (New York: Praeger publishers, 1972), p.47.

Imre Nagy and his followers, and for Alexander Dubček and the Czechoslovakian reformists to fill in.

Therefore, the final outcome of the doctrinal influences of Khrushchev and Brezhnev imposed on the newly established regimes to restore order and stability on the basis of a new inter-Bloc order. Nevertheless, the aftermath produced results directly related to the doctrinal credo espoused by these two Soviet leaders. In Hungary after 1956 Janos Kadar's regime became one of the most liberal in the Socialist Bloc, a fact proved also by the support of the Hungarian leader given to the Reform movement in Czechoslovakia in the first six months of 1968. By contrast, the removal of Dubček as a leader of the CPCZ in April 1969 brought to power one of the most orthodox regimes in Eastern Europe.

1.2. The nature of political demands in the Satellite Regimes

The general atmosphere of the two crises provided a case study about states which were under the control of the Soviet Union and its foreign policy motivation. In this respect it is important the comparison of the policy of Romania towards 1956 Hungarian Revolution to that of Bulgaria towards the Prague Spring of 1968.

Firstly the situation in the political leadership resembled the two cases. In 1956 Gheorghiu-Dej was an example of political leader who belonged to the Stalinist period and confronted a new political conjuncture - the denunciation of the Cult of Personality. Therefore, the crisis was a possibility to for him to become closer to the new Soviet leader on whom he was dependent. On his behalf Todor Jivkov was a protégé of Khrushchev and his road to power between 1953 and

1962 was personally supported by the Soviet leader¹⁰. After 1964 and the denunciation of Khrushchev, the Bulgarian communist leader had to adapt to the new political situation in Moscow and the crisis with Czechoslovakia gave him the opportunity to convince the regime in Moscow about his continued reliability.

With their loyalty beyond doubt, the two leaders could follow particular goals. Gheorghiu-Dej had to negotiate the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Romania in an attempt to answer the anti-Soviet feelings in his country, while Jivkov traded his loyalty for economic support and in 1973 asked the Soviet leaders to increase the delivery of Gas and Electro energy for Bulgaria¹¹. In addition the Bulgarian leader embedded his demands in the deeper idea of rapprochement with the Soviet Union – a problem which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Therefore, two conclusions followed from the nature of the demands of Satellite Communist regimes. In the first place, during a period of crisis, the loyal leaders of the Communist bloc attempted to reinforce the stability of their regimes by advocating solutions for the central problems concerning their own Socialist societies. Second, the two leaders found a solution for their main weak point: the preservation of the unity of their regimes, which would be impossible without the direct assistance and approval of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that the situation in 1968 illustrated that Romania changed its political perspectives by embracing the concept of national-communism concept, while Bulgaria remained in its static political development. The latter allowed to the regime of Jivkov to survive the second major

¹⁰ Boyan Kastelanov, *Todor Jivkov Mit I Istina* [Todor Jivkov: Myth and Truth], (Sofia: Trud 2001), pp. 70-135.

¹¹ Baeva and Kalinova, *Bulgarskite Prehodi*, p. 99.

crisis in the Eastern Bloc, without any consequences to the stability of the political leadership and also without causing any turmoil in society.

The development and the outcome of 1956 and 1968 framed the anatomy of a crisis in the vertical system of international relations in the Eastern Bloc. Soviet Union was the main driving force to set the pace of the reforms and Bulgaria, Romania and Czechoslovakia interpreted it in coherence with its own political projects. On these “versions” of reforms was based the conflict which will be revealed in the following chapters

Chapter II

Bulgaria’s foreign policy in the context of the meeting in Dresden

The chapter aims to introduce the international relations context in Eastern Europe, and the place of Bulgaria in it, from the creation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955 until the first meeting of the pact on the Czechoslovakian problem, which took place in Dresden on March 19 1968. It also introduces the two communist leaders of Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia – Todor Jivkov and Alexander Dubček, in terms of their ideological background differences and common political experience. The conclusive part reveals the preoccupations of the Communist leadership of Bulgaria, after three months rule of Dubček, expressed at the end of March 1968, during a special Plenum meeting.

II. 1. The situation in the Warsaw Pact

The Warsaw pact was created in May 1955 as a response to the Paris Agreements by which West Germany was added into the Brussels Treaty, and also a response to its entering in NATO. The states which signed the treaty were Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union. This act was the first official unification of the states from the Eastern Bloc under the leading role of Moscow. However the program of the pact did not include ideological postulates and recognized the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty of every state and non-interference in their internal affairs". In addition it did recognize United Nations and proclaimed the defense of peace as main priority.

However, the "ideal" formula of the Pact was to be challenged one year after the establishment of the Organization, when Hungary tried to leave the pact in pursuit for independence, and the attempt was averted with Soviet military intervention. The second challenge for the stability of the Pact appeared when the tension between Moscow and Peking, gave the opportunity to small members to use the situation for gaining more independence. Albania took this chance and was "de-facto" excluded from the pact in 1962. However, the unity of the pact was threatened most seriously in the second half of the 1960s when Romania inaugurated an autonomous foreign policy. The most important reason was that the Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu opposed to the centralization of the Pact, which in other words meant a challenge towards the leading role of the Soviet Union. As a result in 1967 Romania boycotted the pact's meeting in Sofia and its attitude during the Prague Spring was in a

way predetermined by this political doctrine of independence in the realm of the communist ideology.

Despite the contradictions stated above, the vertical structure of the Organization and the undisputable role of the Soviet Union continued to be the main guarantee of the Pact unity. This predominance was marked by the character of the System as “an adaptation of the Soviet national security”.¹² However in the first six months of 1968 the Soviet Satellites were left be the driving force against Czechoslovakia and the leader of the Soviet Union appeared more as an arbiter of the tension within the Bloc.

II.2 Bulgarian foreign policy in the 1960s

J.F. Brown, the historian who dealt with Bulgarian history after the Second World War, defined the situation in the country’s foreign policy at end of 1967, in an attempt to establish its priority outside of the role of a satellite, as following: “*Yet it is worth discussing the motives, for this policy, as well as those areas where Bulgaria has played an active, rather than passive role, and finally, the recent signs of Bulgaria’s will to play a positive role in foreign affairs, although still under the Soviet aegis*”¹³.

The international representation of Bulgaria could be divided into three areas. On the international political scene Bulgaria adopted the new Khrushchev doctrine of “peaceful coexistence” and as a result reestablished its relations with United States and West Germany.

¹² F. Rubin, “The theory and concept of the National Security in the Warsaw Pact countries”, in *International affairs*, Vol. 58, 1982, p. 648.

¹³ J. Brown, *Bulgaria under Communist Rule* (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1970), p.303.

Also, the Bulgarian leader Todor Jivkov visited Paris in 1966, and due to the anti-NATO official line of De Gaulle, Bulgaria regained its good relations with France. The foreign policy demonstrated in this period consisted into the framework of a small satellite state a decade after the Second World War.

Nevertheless, the place where Brown's concept about the active role of the country could be applied is on the Balkans. During the 1960s, and especially after the partial defection of Romania, Bulgaria became the only state in the region completely loyal to the Soviet Union. In terms with that regional importance was the conflict with Yugoslavia which exploded during the Prague Spring, but its roots were outside the division between Tito and the Soviet Union, and were part of the pre-war national project.

The "Macedonian question" is the political term which illustrates the situation with the population living around the Pirin Mountain (today in Bulgaria) and the population living around the river Vardar (today in Macedonia). The problem with the mutual recognition continued to dominate the relations with Tito's Yugoslavia and during the plenum from March 1963¹⁴, Jivkov tried to come up with a solution, which had to open the space for political maneuvers. In order to do so, he denied the existence of historical Macedonian national consciousness, but on the other hand recognized the existence of a process of formation, which had started after the Second World War. As a result Jivkov represented the Bulgarian foreign policy as non-aggressive abroad, but he also appeared as national leader with certain conviction of protecting the unity of the state. In the period of the Prague Spring, he would try to put Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia

¹⁴ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op.5 - documents of central committee of BCP, file 567 – protocol of plenum of Central committee from March 1963.

in the same enemy line. Firstly from Propaganda purposes, representing it as an easily recognizable old enemy of the Bulgarian national unity, and secondly to use the situation to encourage the Soviet Union for more direct actions against deviationism which was exemplified by Tito. As an outcome, Jivkov managed to exchange pre-war national political goals for better position in the hierarchy of the Socialist Camp.

The relations with the Soviet Union were the other basic pillar of the Bulgarian foreign policy, composed of economic dependency and political loyalty. The most indicative sign about the policy of BCP was expressed during the plenum from December 1963 in which Jivkov officially declared the ambition of Bulgaria to become Soviet republic¹⁵ *“about future involvement and in depth rapprochement with the perspective of unification between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union”*. It was the beginning of a long term political goal of Jivkov, which he never accomplished. However, on the eve of the meeting in Dresden, the regime in Bulgaria had already testified its undisputable loyalty.

II.3. The political leaders

The introduction of the two leaders, Todor Jivkov and Alexander Dubček, would illustrate the two personalities on the level of their sense of belonging to the communist world. The parallel is important because of the nature of the decision-making process, and it also can partly explain their political behavior.

¹⁵Ibid, file 568 – protocol of plenum of central committee of BSP from December 1963.

Ideologically both experienced the system in a very different ways. Dubček's father was a social-democrat and afterwards a founder of the CPCZ. He involved his family to travel in the Soviet Union, in his search for jobs opportunity encompassed with his ambition to be part of the building of socialism. Dubček retained his fascination with the situation in Soviet Union and the economic and industrial development which at that time took place there. Even though, it coincided with the period of Stalin's great purges, it did not give him any doubts about the efficiency of the system and the just cause of the ideology.¹⁶

The case of Jivkov, on the other hand, was predetermined by the nature of Bulgarian communism after 1925.¹⁷ He was a pupil with poor results who fled to the capital in search for realization. His political life, begun in the printing house popular in the early 1930s with workers with left political attitude. In the time when Dubček, was experiencing the communists success in Soviet Union, Jivkov was the head of the department for street actions in Sofia which in practice meant, that he was responsible for the street fights between leftist and rightists which were happening often during that time.

The road to power for both of them had started as a part of the De-Stalinization and implementation of the new communist elite, brought up in the domestic sphere of communist rule. However, the pace of success differed and in 1962 when Dubček took his position as a member of the Czechoslovakian Party Presidium, Jivkov had already completed his road to power. The key for both was in the hard work into the *party apparatus*. This was a very threatening game in which both of them, being in the shadow of influential communist leaders –

¹⁶ William Shawcross, *Dubček and Czechoslovakia 1918 – 1990*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1990).

¹⁷ After 1925 the Bulgarian Communist Party was abolished, because of the organization of a bomb assault in the church "Saint Sunday".

Antonin Novotni and Vulko Chervenkov, had to gain confidence and support from the young generation without jeopardizing its position in front of the old party elite. Meanwhile, the two would-be leaders sneaked into the circle of the leader and after a certain period, they managed to shake his authority. Nevertheless, everything had to happen with the official blessing of Moscow and it was the denial of support from Khrushchev for Chervenkov and from Brezhnev to Novotni, that provided the successful outcome for Jivkov and Dubček.

In terms with the importance of the official ideology in the period, Jivkov was chosen because he was a “domestic communist” who completely fit into Khrushchev’s new political course¹⁸. On the other hand the Soviet Leadership during the Brezhnev Era, based on his past considered Dubček to be an Orthodox Communist, totally loyal to the Soviet Union. This image would completely change during the process of the Prague Spring in which Jivkov stood for the Orthodox communist principles, while Dubček was considered to be revisionist and anti-Soviet. However, the main argument between the two leaders was not on the attitude towards the Soviet Union¹⁹, but mostly about the personal approach towards the Communist Ideology. In this respect Jivkov based his political credo on extreme pragmatism, while the Czechoslovakian communist leader, considered that he could debate and look for different solutions.

II. 4 The Bulgarian response to the meeting in Dresden

¹⁸ Marcheova Iliana, Todor Jivkov – Putyat kum Vlasta, [Todor Jivkov – The Road to Power], (Sofia, Kota, 2001), p. 45.

¹⁹ On the positive attitude of Dubček towards the Soviet Union see also Andras Sugar, *Dubček Speaks* (New York: I.B Tauris, 1990).

The position of Bulgaria on the eve of 1968 determined its place as main hardliner within the “Five” during the events in Czechoslovakia. The situation in the rest three satellite states is also important to the understanding of the context surrounding the meeting in Dresden. The most tolerant towards Dubček’s reforms was the Hungarian communist leader Janos Kadar. His moderate reforms, which stabilized the country after 1956, were accepted by the Soviet Union leadership and he personally supported Dubček in his attempts to finish the process of De-Stalinization.²⁰ Therefore, Kadar became the mediator between the “Five” and Czechoslovakia.

On the other side were Poland and East Germany. The situation in GDR must be seen in the context of its fears from the “*Ostpolitic*” strategy and the attempt of Czechoslovakia to leave the door open for improvement of the relations with West Germany.²¹ The position of the East-German communist leader Walter Ulbricht reaction was a combination between his fear of the endangered international positions of his state and the reflection of the Dubček reforms on the domestic sphere. On the basis of the character of the regime in Poland, the leader Wladislaw Gomulka was supposed to be more sympathetic to the reforms in Czechoslovakia. However at that time his power experienced instability which concluded in the events from March 1968 and the students demonstrations. Therefore, the polish communist leader had no other choice but to become strongly anti-Dubček, also having in mind the song that polish students were singing during the March protests: “Poland is waiting for its Dubček”²².

²⁰ George Gomori, “Hungarian and Polish Attitudes on Czechoslovakia” in *The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: Its effects on Eastern Europe 1968* (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1972), pp.107-113.

²¹ James Mccadams, *East Germany and Détente: Building Authority after the Wall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

²² Gomori, Hungarian and Polish Attitudes on Czechoslovakia, p. 115.

After the first three months of 1968 the new political leadership in Czechoslovakia undermined the Soviet trust, because of growing signs for independence and different ideas for changes in the economic and social life. It was accompanied by publicly expressed critical attitude against the political system in Eastern European countries and particularly in the Soviet Union²³. In addition was the impossibility of the Soviet leaders to get correct information on what actually was happening in Czechoslovakia²⁴. Despite number of personal meeting between Dubček and different representatives of the Soviet Union the problems persisted. Therefore, the meeting in Dresden was the first time when the problem was officially articulated within the realms of the Warsaw Pact. The atmosphere of this meeting was described by Dubček: *“I sat down and saw that I was facing a tribunal that was all ready for me. I thought where have I ended up? I suddenly felt like Jan Hus at the council of Constance”*²⁵.

However, the existence of the problem was kept in secret from the public, which suggested that during the meeting there should not to be taken stenographic records. So the official statement of the meeting did not refer to any problems in Czechoslovakia. This gave the communist parties possibility to deal with the problem in their own countries, and practically to narrow the decision-making process to the highest party hierarchy. This method of implying the official policy line within the party structure was conducted in two levels. The first was Politburo-the highest political organ of the Communist Party, where high-ranked political circle would deal with certain problems and the second was the Central Committee in which the

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak politics, 1968-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp. 71-72.

²⁵ Sugar, *Dubček Speaks*, p.

problem was transferred to a larger group of party elite and where the official policy has been defined.

The Politburo meeting of BCP was held on March 26 1968 and concluded with two important decisions: firstly to be organized detailed observation on the situation in Czechoslovakia from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency²⁶ and secondly *“Under the control of the department of Propaganda and Agitation of CC of BCP to be taken measures for proper clarification to our community about the events in the Czechoslovakian Socialist Republic, with the use of press, radio, television and other sources.”*²⁷. The use of the media as an instrument to gain information was the first political decision of the Communist leadership, and proved the obscurity which surrounded the Bulgarian communist leaders about the events in Czechoslovakia.

The Central Committee was convoked on March 29 and the discussion within the top party members illustrated the fears in the communist leadership at this stage of the Prague Spring. The first person who spoke was Stanko Todorov – an important member of politburo. His reconstitution of the meeting in Dresden begun with a general defense of the existing order in the Warsaw Pact states compared to what was happening in Czechoslovakia. *“Everything in Czechoslovakia happens under the slogan for democracy and liberalization, but in all of us rises one question – isn’t socialism a democracy and what is liberalization and which is its content”*²⁸. The unclear character of the reforms stated above, logically led to the second idea in the report of Todorov. Namely that any political reform in the Socialist state was never supposed to endanger

²⁶ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP) op.35 - Politburo, f. 127 – meeting from 26 March 1968.

²⁷ Ibid, op. 58 – central committee, file 3 - plenum of central committee of BSP from 29 March 1968, p. 12.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

the nature of the system and to question its reliability - a problem which had become obvious from some trends in Czechoslovakia to revisit the 20 years of Communist rule²⁹ in “*the talks of bringing back the Masaryk type of democracy, and not the socialist democracy*.”³⁰ In brief this meant the first accusation of revisionism towards Czechoslovakia. Also the attitude towards the pre-war period was an effective strategy, because BCP had already completed the struggle against the “bourgeoisie” in all important spheres of the social life. The revisionism was also exemplified on the basis of information received from The Bulgarian Telegraph Agency about events organized by “*the most extreme elements in the country, who had put the question of reestablishing the bourgeoisie democratic republic from the inter war period*”³¹.

The lack of control over the intelligentsia, as part of the major issue of diminishing role of the party, was pointed out in the speech of Todorov. The proposed solution was the model of “*ideological work and appropriate cadres policy*”³². The problems related to the social function of the party would continue to dominate the language of the Bulgarian Foreign policy and was part of the other essential element of the social order – the department of State Security. The importance of this unit had always been stated by the Bulgarian Communist officials and was based upon two major pillars – Army and Secret police. Therefore, the reforms conducted by the CPCZ in the Ministry of Defense and State Security were posed by Todorov as a great threat and attack over the fundamentals of the socialist state.³³

²⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³² Ibid., p. 53.

³³ Ibid.

The concerns on the international aspect of the reforms were based on ideological postulates and political reality which was bound to be followed. *“The events in Czechoslovakia are example for the struggle between two world systems – the capitalistic and socialistic. What they want is thinkable in new conditions when there are no antagonistic classes there are no class contradictions and class struggle. So this is impossible now, when in Europe, the German militarism is preparing for revenge and the war in Vietnam and in the Middle East is still going”*³⁴. This international context was basic element in the arguments against the reforms in Czechoslovakia. BCP used it in the course of the crisis to define its policy as part of the Ideological Struggle.

The concluding speech delivered by Todor Jivkov underlined main problems mentioned during the plenum and sharpened the messages. Firstly, the Bulgarian Communist leader complained that the people in the CPCZ, who had supported the policy conducted now by Bulgaria, were expelled from the Politburo. Then he continued with personal evaluation of Dubček *“Dubček himself does not have the experience, the intellect and the will to lead the party”*³⁵. Personal qualifications were part of Jivkov’s political style and the object of it in the next three months would be the Czechoslovakian communist leader. Afterwards he relied on the experience of BCP in the reforms made during the De-Stalinization and embodied in the Plenum of April 1956³⁶. He, also pointed out the meaning of the Internal Security, claiming that in

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

³⁶ The plenum of April was part of the process against the cult of personality, spread around Eastern Europe, in order to imply Khrushchev’s reform.

Bulgaria the reforms related to the abolishment of the cult of Personality did not involved the Army and State Security, as it has happened now in Czechoslovakia.

Jivkov also informed the Central Committee about his personal meeting with Brezhnev and Kosygin. In front of them the Bulgarian communist leader had demanded an immediate response to the situation in Czechoslovakia with the words “*even if we should take a risk*”³⁷. He even had gone further by suggesting to the two Soviet top officials that “*We must be ready to act with our armies*”³⁸ and became the first political leader who proposed military intervention as a solution to the problem. The logics of this aggressive political line might be found in his proposition, that after restoring the order in Czechoslovakia, the Pact has to do the same in Romania, and at the end in Yugoslavia³⁹. However the message given by Jivkov appears more as a verbal prove about the readiness of Bulgaria to serve as a defender against all forms of deviationism in the Socialist Bloc, than as a serious thread towards Czechoslovakia or the Balkan neighbors.

The concerns of the speakers during the Central Committee meeting illustrated the spheres in which the communist state principles were seen endangered by the CPCZ. The dominative role of the party as a stronghold for the unity of the regime and the control over political and social life was to be the main argument in the foreign policy of Bulgaria during the crisis. Likewise the representation of the regime as a solidly based, gave the Bulgarian communist leader Jivkov the opportunity to proclaim the achievements of the Bulgarian Communist Party in front of the rest members of the Warsaw Pact. This became visible in the

³⁷ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op. 58 – central committee, file 3 - plenum of central committee of BSP from 29 March 1968, p. 97.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p.98.

next period, when the problem officially appeared and in the political language through which BCP justified its foreign policy in front of the CPCZ, the Soviet Union and the local population.

At the end of March, Bulgaria was already participant in a sanitary cordon stretched around Czechoslovakia. The development of this process in the next two months, would have unleashed all the possible means which the Bulgarian Communist Party had established, in order to support its non-comprising and orthodox foreign policy.

Chapter III

Bulgaria in the Evolution of the Crisis: From the April Action Program until the Warsaw Meeting

The chapter traces a period of intensive development of the relations between the “Five” (Bulgaria, GDR, Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union) and Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria will play important role by being part of the most conservative wing of the Pact. Its attitude will be demonstrated in numerous of occasions, not only during political meetings, but also on other major occasions, which relate to the problem of Czechoslovakia. Although its policy in the following period would reflect the relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, the Bulgarian Communist Party will manage to mingle its own motivation into the general line provided by the Soviet Union and its allies.

III.1. The Crisis Unfolds – April – July 1968

The end of March was marked by another important change in Czechoslovakia, the resignation from presidency of Antonin Novotni. This meant that Dubček and liberalizers had won the battle with the more orthodox orientated party members. As a result, in the beginning of April during a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was accepted the Action Program. This document represented an attempt to adjust communism to the new socio-political reality and to regain the authority of the party with economic and social reforms and to serve as mobilizing power for the reformers in the CPCZ⁴⁰.

The whole period of three months of speculations and fears related to the unknown format of the reforms had ended and the situation appeared as if all fears were proved right. In terms of two main preoccupations expressed by the Bulgarian communist leadership during the plenum devoted to the meeting in Dresden- the leading role of the party and State Security Service, the Action program stated: *The communist party enjoys voluntary support of the people; it does practice its leading role by ruling the society but by most devotedly serving its free, progressive socialist development. The party cannot enforce its line through directives but by the work of its members, by the veracity of ideas*⁴¹.

This collapse of the party monopoly over history and ideas⁴² practically meant the first challenge towards every regime to reconsider relations between party and society. In terms of

⁴⁰ Williams, *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak politics, 1968-1970*, p. 74.

⁴¹ Zeman, *Prague Spring: A Report on Czechoslovakia*, p. 37.

⁴² Williams, *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak politics, 1968-1970*, p. 69.

State Security the program declared that “this apparatus should not be directed and used to solve internal political questions and controversies in the socialist society”⁴³. The concept of the State Security in the orthodox version was to imply control over the citizens in the communist state and it had been ruled out in the Action program, this endangered the existing model of social stability in the Socialist state supported by the Bulgarian communist leaders.

There were also personal changes which exemplified the new reformation spirit in Czechoslovakia. Josef Smurkovsky was elected as a speaker of the National Assembly and Oldrich Černic became prime minister. However the new membership the Central Committee was balanced and only three of its members could be classified as hard core liberals.

The first report on the situation in Czechoslovakia after the changes was produced for Politburo and submitted on April 24 by Dobri Djurov, the Minister of National Defense⁴⁴. It was a summary based on series of conversations with high-ranking military officials in Czechoslovakia. Based on these meetings it had become obvious that Dubček and Svoboda might have been a cover for counter- revolutionaries, with the possibility in future both of them to be replaced and the country to take the same direction as Yugoslavia and Romania “and even more to the right”. Also the Army and the State Security were “softened” after January and the youth was taken over by the Reaction. Nevertheless, the people on whose opinion was based this report, were obviously victims of the reforms which happened in the early period of Dubček’s rule. Evidently the report had been made to support the official line in BCP, a fact which illustrates an important element of the decision –making process in the Bulgarian Foreign Policy.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria, Military Archive, F. 24, op.X^a, file 21 – Secret bulletin by the Minister of Defense.

On April 24, one month after the meeting in Dresden and two weeks after the launch of the Action Program, the Bulgarian communist leader, Todor Jivkov, went to an official meeting with Alexander Dubček in Czechoslovakia. This gathering was part of series of meetings between Dubček and leaders of the “Five” which aimed to cool down the tension and clarified the misunderstanding that appeared between them, after the appearance of the Action Program.

Dubček reconfirmed his position of loyalty to the Warsaw Pact states gave an indirect answer to the concerns of the ‘Five’ and to other problems expressed by the leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party⁴⁵. He described the situation in Czechoslovakia after January 1968 as a “spontaneous awakened activity on behalf of communists, and lowest organization”, and as part of the process of rehabilitation and de-Stalinization that had not been accomplished during the Novotni Era. The Czechoslovakian general secretary reassured the Bulgarian leadership, that there was no trend of denying the last 20 years of Communism, and the nostalgia which appeared on the pre-war period was part of the euphoria related to the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Republic. This statement was concluded in the words “All of us here are communists, and in our blood burns the internationalism”.

The leading role of the party was also underlined by Dubček in the following words “when we were talking about the leading role of the party, we never questioned its existence, but mostly the way that it has to be applied”. However he mentioned that the reforms had raised questions about the relation between the party and the government which still had not been solved.

⁴⁵ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op.60 – meetings of communist parties, file 7 – protocol of meeting between Jivkov and Dubček.

On the international context the Czechoslovakian communist leader, reassured the importance of the relations with the Soviet Union and the rest of the Socialist states. Based on the Action April Program, he emphasized that due to its geographical position Czechoslovakia had to have stronger influence in Europe.

In his speech the Bulgarian communist leader Todor Jivkov based his arguments on the concerns expressed during the Central Committee plenum. His main concept was based on a parallel between the Plenum of April 1956 and the policy conducted by Dubček. The major problem pointed out was the unity of the party, during that time. He spoke about the appearance of unofficial line led by two people Yugov and Chankov who were in fact his main rivals in the struggle to power. In front of Dubček he described them as conductors of policy which aimed to cross over the limits of the De-Stalinization by endangering the immunity of the system – the Army and the State Security. In fact it is known that it was Chankov and Yugov who advocated for reforms in all spheres of the State⁴⁶ and the conflict resembled the one between Dubček and Novovtni, but in the Bulgarian case the more orthodox wing led by Jivkov had prevailed. Jivkov expressed his concept for Socialist Democracy concluded in the “increased role of the public organization”⁴⁷. In order to testify it the Bulgarian general secretary used as an example the last Congress of Culture and the newly elected leadership, which had proven that “whole cultural front is now governed on state-public bases”. Jivkov proudly said “Our intelligentsia marches in

⁴⁶ Marcheva, *Todor Jivkov Putyat kum Vlasta*, p.123.

⁴⁷ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op.60 – meetings of communist parties, file 7 – protocol of meeting between Jivkov and Dubček, pp. 16-17.

the same line with the party”. The relation between Jivkov and the intelligentsia were described as an example how to build up solid political power with its use, and not pulling them out of party control.

In terms of the international situation, the main priority for Jivkov was the increased role of the United Leadership of the Warsaw Pact, which had to bring the unification that lacked in the previous years. Jivkov also denied any ambitions of Bulgaria to dominate in the Balkans, which might be compared to the idea of Dubček, about the important role of Czechoslovakia in Central Europe.

Officially the meeting concluded with the signing of Treaty for Friendship which renewed the previous from 1948. It included “mutual respect for the state sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs”⁴⁸, the two states also were obliged to “protect the immunity of its borders”⁴⁹. The following events, however, proved that the Bulgarian position represented the one expressed in front of Brezhnev, and not the one in front of Dubček which was proved after three months when sovereignty and non-intervention principles were denounced.

The beginning of May was marked by the meeting between the Soviet and Czechoslovakian party leadership. Brezhnev criticized the CPCZ, about the situation in the country after January and for the first time outspokenly posed a threat *“The main thing is to decide in what manner the cause of socialism can be defended. This question concerns not only Czechoslovakia itself, but your neighbors and allies, and the entire world communist movement. We ourselves are ready to do this, and because I know the views of comrades Gomulka, Ulbricht*

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

*and Jivkov, and the others I can say they are prepared for this as well*⁵⁰. Based on these words, it seemed that the first sketches of the Brezhnev Doctrine already emerged.

Likewise two international scandals increased the tension within the Socialist Bloc. Firstly a demonstration took place in front of the Polish Embassy in Prague to support the Polish students and to protest against the anti-Semitic campaign in Poland. This was understood as an aggressive attitude towards the Polish leadership and on May 6 the government officially protested against these incidents. During another youth demonstration in Czechoslovakia, a placard appeared proclaiming that Macedonia belonged to Yugoslavia. These incidents enforced the fears about the spreading inter-bloc influence of the situation in Czechoslovakia. In addition with the constant preoccupation in East Germany, about the development of the relations between Czechoslovakia and West Germany, the situation resulted into the creation of a mini “alliance” between three regimes which felt mostly destabilized by the situation in Czechoslovakia. This intensified situation led to unofficial meeting of the “Five” in Moscow, in which the fierce attacks on behalf of Ulbricht, Gomulka and Jivkov were opposed by the Hungarian communist leader Janos Kadar, who still insisted that there was no counter revolution in Czechoslovakia⁵¹. Gomulka supported by Jivkov suggested Military exercise to be held before the next meeting⁵². However the final conclusion was that healthy forces in the CPCZ still exist and they have to be “boldly supported”⁵³.

⁵⁰ The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Document Reader (Budapest, 1998); Document No. 28, Stenographic Record of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Summit meeting in Moscow, May 4-5, 1968(Excerpts).

⁵¹ The Prague Spring 1968: Document No 31.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

The growing concerns in Bulgaria about the loosen control in Czechoslovakia had been reconfirmed from the vice-chairman of the Committee for State Security, Grigor Shopov. He sent a report to Politburo about his meeting with members of the Czechoslovakian State Security considering the conclusions of the officials who represented the so called “healthy forces” in the office. The report described the situation with the Czechoslovakian internal security as a complete devastation. Jozef Pavel, the Czechoslovakian minister of internal affairs was blamed for not having protected the members of his department, from becoming victims of purges in the System and allowing disclosure of agents and staff. In addition it was pointed out that the work of the Department was focused mostly on foreign intelligence. The last part contained personal description of the Czechoslovakian Minister of Internal Affairs, who was represented as a person with too much publicity, and who was ruining the prestige of the institution⁵⁴. The report resembled the one made by Dobri Djurov after the April Congress of the CPCZ. However, the bottom line of Shopov was to represent the State Security as a victim of the policy conducted after January, which had decreased its working capacity. It served to reconfirm one main argument of the Bulgarian Foreign Policy – the diminishing role of the State Security.

The contradictions between Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia on international level reflected also, during the IV Congress of the Writers Union, in an openly negative attitude towards the Czechoslovakian guest of the forum, the writer Petr Puiman. His speech was not broadcasted, and his attempt to explain the vision for the cultural freedom in Czechoslovakia was attacked by

⁵⁴ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), f.1b, op. 91 – Politburo, file 786 - report to Politburo from 20 May 1968, p. 2.

Georgi Djagarov, the chairman of the Bulgarian Writers Union. The scandal was popularized by Radio Free Europe and the Belgrade Radio. In their reports the situation was expressed as an act of marginalization towards the Czechoslovakian representative. In reality the attitude of Djagarov exemplified the unity between the Party and Intelligentsia, expressed from Jivkov in front of Dubček. On the other hand, it proved the deepest division between Czechoslovakia and the “Five”.

The next step which enhanced the pace of the crisis was the publication of “2000 words Manifesto” on June 27, in which the author Luduvik Vaculik⁵⁵ announced the period after January 1968 in Czechoslovakia as “revival of communism”. The impact from the Manifesto, served as pretext for another wave of severe critics, towards the situation in Czechoslovakia. The reaction in Bulgaria was expressed in the party official “*Rabotnichesko Delo*” (Workers affair) in an article called “*2000 words or a call for counter-revolution*”⁵⁶. The bottom line of the article was in the following passage “*It was not so long ago, so we cannot forget those similar appeals from 1956, just before the counterrevolution in Hungary. The mental initiators attack the identity of the communism, the Czechoslovakian Communist Party, the government of CSSR and the Soviet Union*”.

The process was catalyzed also by the fact that the Extraordinary 14th Congress of the CPCZ expected to stabilize Dubček and the pro-Soviet members to lose their position. To tackle it the Soviet leaders came up with another meeting which was hosted by the polish leader Wladyslaw Gomulka.

⁵⁵ His work “The Axe” was one of the most critical writings during the Novotni era.

⁵⁶ *Rabotnichesko Delo*, 4 July 1968, № 156.

III.2 The Warsaw Meeting from July 25 1968 and its Aftermath

“We must take into consideration that, we are the driving force of our camp. Not Cuba, not China, not Korea, but our countries! We are the visit card, the face of socialism and its power depends on our unity”⁵⁷

The Warsaw meeting was the next turning point which marked the change of the context since the meeting in Dresden. There were no Czechoslovakian representatives at the meeting, and this gathering turned into a trial which had to decide the destiny of Czechoslovakia. The words of Gomulka quoted above, underlined the meaning added to this meeting. The international context was strongly emphasized in his speech and it implied the new approach of justification - a danger coming from outside and based on the strategically important position of Czechoslovakia. This type of already elaborated idea about the “defense of socialism” would allow the build-up of a doctrine, which would vindicate further intervention. In addition, all the problems which during the meeting in Dresden appeared only as probability, such as revisionism or return to capitalism, now were expressed as a present danger. This was concluded in the speech of Brezhnev who declared that Czechoslovakia “is now on the dangerous road to detach itself from the socialist camp”.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op.58 – plenums of central committee, file 8 – protocol from 25 July 1968, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

In his speech Todor Jivkov emphasized the deficiency of control on behalf of the CPCZ over the public sector and the organs of power and the solution for him was that “*Only by relying on the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact can we change the situation*”⁵⁹. In addition he claimed that in Czechoslovakia must be restored the Dictatorship of Proletariat, because the counterrevolutionaries had taken the control over the party. For Jivkov the “healthy forces” had to become aware of the help from the Warsaw Pact. Although, in his opinion, the operation might create strong opposition, the he believed that in perspective the positive outcome would be stronger and would mean “*Strike against the opportunism in the international communist movement and it must be underlined that the opportunism – the rightist and also the leftist, which takes higher proportions*”⁶⁰. His words were embodied in the understanding for “Historical Mission” in the protection of the socialism, which was the main Propaganda argument fabricated from Moscow during the Intervention. The meeting was concluded with the edition of the “Warsaw Letter” which reconfirmed the positions stated during the meeting and gave an ultimatum towards the CPCZ to take control of the situation.

On July 18 “*Rabotnichesko Delo*” published the “Warsaw Letter” under the title “In order to destroy the counter-revolution”⁶¹. The main argument was the danger about the common interest of all socialist states and that the CPCZ must restrain the opposition movements, to regain control over the mass information, and unify the party on the bases of Marxist Ideology.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.34.

⁶¹ Rabotnichesko Delo, July 18 1968, №170.

This expressed the leading official motivation of the Bulgarian Communist Party, one month before the Invasion.

On July 23 the organ of the Ministry of Peoples Defense, *Narodna Armia* (People's Army), published an article called the "The defense of the Socialism - an International duty". The text explained the idea of the Internationalism "*The socialism in its foundations is an international duty. It would be treason if all the other communist states did not respond*"⁶². The newspaper reminded how the fraternal parties fought side by side in Hungary, against the counterrevolution. The Hungarian case had been repeatedly mentioned, as the crisis unfolded which was another example of how far the Czechoslovakian Communist leaders had gone in the eyes of the Bulgarian Communist Regime. In the same newspaper appeared an official statement of the Bulgarian Army, in support of the Warsaw Letter. On the same day Dobri Djurov gave an order to 12 regiment for participation in joint exercises⁶³.

At the end of the month, Bulgaria became arena to another international confrontation, which reconfirmed the division in the Communist Movement. Sofia hosted the IX Youth Festival, which political importance was displayed in the preparation period. "*Taking into consideration some essential aspects of the Festival related to its emphatic political content, the complicated situation on international level and in the international workers communist movement, it necessary a serious political work to be conducted. This should be in the center of*

⁶² Narodna Armia, July 20 1968, № 172.

⁶³ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria, Military Archive, F. 24, op.X^a, file 22 – secret information of ministry of defense.

the attention of the party leadership”⁶⁴. With this purpose there was organized a special corps of 500 young communists, which had to be part of the audience during political discussion with the mission to isolate specific groups and manifestation of ideas⁶⁵.

Despite those precautions the Festival proved as an example of deep division in the Socialist Camp. The attempt to marginalize the representatives of Czechoslovakia was not successful and had even created grouping between Yugoslavian, Czechoslovaks and the most radical leftists- the French Communists. The incapability of sustaining the conflict reflected onto its international impact and underlined the fear of the “domino effect”.

The period between March and July established a situation in which Dubček continued to neglect the intensified concerns of the “Five”. It served as a justification of the judgments given by the Bulgarian communist leadership on the situation in Czechoslovakia, in terms of lack of control in the country on behalf of the Party. In addition the international influence of what was happening in Czechoslovakia generated an atmosphere of insecurity within the Socialist Camp because the disclosed the vulnerability in front of the enemy on the other side of the Berlin Wall.

The next period would test the capability of the Warsaw Pact to reestablish the order in Czechoslovakia but decision-making process portrayed above had not represented an elaborated framework on the model on which this had to be done. Under the general concept of defending the socialism the “Five” might lacked common strategy for action⁶⁶ and it was one of the reasons

⁶⁴ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op.36 – documents of central committee, file 140 – report to central committee of Sofia’s department, p.2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁶ Fred.H. Eldin, *The logic of “Normalization” The Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia of 21 August 1968 and the Czechoslovakian response*, (Columbia University Press: New York, 1980), p. 158.

for the Soviet Union to come up with the build-up of common framework which had to bring Normalization.

Chapter IV

Bulgaria and the Normalization in Czechoslovakia

The chapter traces the period from the last diplomatic efforts, to the withdrawing of the Bulgarian troops from Czechoslovakia. In the international context of the situation in Czechoslovakia, it conveys the problems faced on behalf of the Bulgarian soldiers and the Military Command in bringing the “Normalization”. It concludes with the major outcome of the crisis – the Brezhnev Doctrine and the place of Bulgaria in it.

IV.1 The closing period of the diplomatic efforts

The meeting in Čierna nad Tisou between the leaders of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union on July 27 was one of the last attempts for peaceful solution of the crisis. In his speech the Soviet leader Brezhnev, acknowledged that the overcoming of previous mistakes and shortcomings was as an internal work of the CPCZ, but also emphasized that this must happen under strict party control, otherwise counterrevolutionary forces might use the situation for transformation of the system. On the basis of its “aligned obligation”, the Soviet leader denied the fate of Czechoslovakia to be completely internal matter. His words illustrated political reasoning set to be implied in further actions. However the tension was lessened after Dubček and Cernik agreed another meeting between the “Five” and Czechoslovakia.

The results from this summit which took place in Bratislava, on August 3 expressed “*nothing more than long editing session*”⁶⁷. The joint draft edited afterwards kept the possibility for intervention in terms that the situation remained unstable.⁶⁸ The resulting document allowed each state to follow its own road to Socialism, but also justified any intervention in case of danger of counterrevolution⁶⁹. However the CPCZ still lacked credibility amongst the “Five” and during the first ten days of August, the tension continued to grow. Despite these contradictory results the meeting in Bratislava, was illustrated by the media in Bulgaria as great achievement and evidence for the capability of the Socialist States to solve the problems which existed between them. Articles appeared, under titles such as “*An important step towards the consolidation of the Socialist Community*”⁷⁰ and “*Our power relies on our unity*”⁷¹.

In contrast the division in the Eastern Bloc was underlined by the Yugoslavian and Romanian political leadership. On August 11, Tito was accepted as a hero in Czechoslovakia and in the official newspaper “*Borba*” was published an article with support, guided except from sympathy to the people of Czechoslovakia, also by “our own experience from the struggle for just principles of socialist and inter-socialist relations”⁷². In Romania the communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu delivered a speech during a manifestation in support of Czechoslovakia, through which he managed to earn the support of even the most anti-communist Romanian

⁶⁷ Williams, *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath: Czechoslovak politics 1968-1970*, p. 103.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 104.

⁷⁰ Narodna Armia, August 6 1968, № 189.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Werner Sichel, “The economic effects on Yugoslavia of the invasion of Czechoslovakia” in *The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia and its effects on Eastern Europe*. New York: Praeger, 1972, pp. 172-173.

citizens⁷³. Despite the internal political reasons of Tito and Ceausescu, the fact that at this moment they supported the reforms of the CPCZ, reconfirmed the decisiveness of the Czechoslovakian leadership to lead foreign policy which was not predetermined by the official line implied by the Warsaw Pact. In this atmosphere the meeting between Janos Kadar and Dubček in Komarno on August 17 was the last attempt of the “Five” to convince Dubček to take actions against the counter-revolutionary forces in Czechoslovakia and to regain control over the situation. The Hungarian leader repeated previously known facts, without hinting, military operation, on his behalf the Czechoslovakian leader, responded that plenum of the Central Committee would be convoked and promised that Bratislava agreements would be implied.⁷⁴

The final decision for Military Intervention was officially taken on August 18, during a meeting of the “Five”. It was justified in a speech by Brezhnev, in which after reviewing the situation, he confirmed that the politburo of the CPSU had reached to the conclusion that Dubček was not going to fulfill any of his commitments, and had completely shifted the political course towards the “Right”, in these circumstances, for the Soviet leader, any failure to support the healthy forces would make the situation extremely difficult”.⁷⁵ The mechanism reconfirmed the structural model of work in Warsaw Pact in which the organization ratified the decision which was in fact taken from the Politburo of the CPSU.

In this period of last diplomatic maneuvers the Bulgarian army forces had been preparing for further intervention and collected equipment of military tools and financial resources. On

⁷³ E. Benet Warnstrom, “Romania and invasion of Czechoslovakia” in *The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia and its effects on Eastern Europe*. New York: Praeger, 1972, pp. 164-165.

⁷⁴ The Prague Spring 1968: Document 86 – summary of Alexander Dubček’s meeting with Janos Kadar, August 17, 1968.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Document 92 – Leonid Brezhnev’s Speech at a Meeting of the “Warsaw Five” in Moscow, August 18, 1968.

August 19 the Bulgarian minister of Defense Dobri Djurov, edited an official order for Regiment 12 and Regiment 22 to participate in the military assistance to Czechoslovakia as being part of the Warsaw Pact troops *“To liquidate the counter revolution I order the regiments to carry out the assignments ascribed by the commander in chief of the Joint Military Forces mission - the debacle of the enemy elements”*⁷⁶.

Regiment 12 had to take control over Banska Bystrica and to assist the local authorities in pushing back the counter-revolution and restoring the order in the city. The relations with the local population were also an important element of the mission and had to be conducted *“in a proper way and in terms with the party and state policy of the states from the Warsaw Pact”*⁷⁷. Regiment 22 was ascribed to control the Airport of Ruzyně, situated in 10 km from the center of Prague. Its two main priorities were not to allow landing or taking off of military airplanes coming from Capitalist States, and in case of danger to be ready of braking into the capital center⁷⁸.

The political decision was officially announced with Government decree on August 20. The format of the text expressed a response to *“the plea from party and state officials towards the USSR and the other alien countries” to help the Czechoslovakian people in their fight against the counter-revolution*⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria, Military Archive, F. 24, op.X^a, f.22 – order of minister of defense from 19 August 1968, [p.1](#).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Government of Republic Bulgaria, Archives, Government decree № 39 edited August 20, 1968.

IV.2 The role of Bulgaria after the Intervention: motivation and final outcome

In his memoirs cornel Trifonov described the common perceptions of the Bulgarian solders about the implementation of their Internationalism duty combined with undisputable belief that they provided support for the Czechoslovakian people.⁸⁰ In addition the internal propaganda of BCP expressed total support for the act of the Intervention and also described the tension in international political reality illustrating it with the negative campaign in Yugoslavia provided by Radio Belgrade and its “anti-Bulgarian” rhetoric⁸¹.

The Yugoslavian communist leader reconfirmed these fears and remained supporter of Dubček and the reform movement in the CPCZ, and during a speech from August 22 he officially expressed his negative attitude towards the military intervention of the “Five”. Tito claimed that the actions taken by the Warsaw Pact “*will have far-reaching and extremely negative consequences for the whole revolutionary movement in the world.*”⁸² Therefore, his policy was still dominated by the idea of justifying the model of Yugoslavia and therefore Bulgaria was the example for the negative trends in the Communist movement. During the period of Bulgarian presence in Czechoslovakia and with use of its official newspaper “Borba” LCY communist would carry on this line of critics towards the policy of BCP and the Intervention.

⁸⁰ Trifon Angelov, *Czechoslovashki Dnevnik* [Diary from Czechoslovakia], (Sofia 2008).

⁸¹ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria; archive fond 1b - documents of Bulgarian communist party (BCP), op.38 – information to central comminute, file 8 - Informational report to central committee from 21 August 1968.

⁸² Sichel, The economic effects on Yugoslavia of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, p. 174.

During the last days of August, the Czechoslovakian leaders Dubček and Svoboda were taken to Moscow and obliged to participate in the first meeting of the “Five” after the invasion. The problems of faced by the Warsaw pact troops were expressed by Brezhnev who admitted that the right-wing forces had not been scared off after the Invasion⁸³. Jivkov again took the role of the most decisive leader and suggested as only possible solution the imposition of military dictatorship⁸⁴, and also declared that *“The Confrontation with the counter-revolutionaries is inevitable and Civil War is brewing in the country”*⁸⁵. He reconfirmed his theory expressed during the Warsaw summit about “workers and peasants government” and also claimed that *“Government could be established with the participation of Cernik, but without Dubček”*⁸⁶. The leader of BCP thought that the presence of Dubček in any further political power body would represent crash to the reestablishment of order in Czechoslovakia and would facilitate the survival of the reformist ideas. On the benefit of hindsight he was again proven right because it was only after the removal of Dubček when the effective “Normalization” begun to work. In conclusion, the Bulgarian leader supported by Gomulka demanded the Czechoslovakian army to be used against the protesters.

“The Moscow protocol” which concluded the meeting, imposed to Czechoslovakia: restoration of full control over the media, cleansing the party apparatus and regaining the leading role of the party including the elimination of unacceptable clubs and organizations. It other

⁸³ The Prague Spring 1968: document 118 - Minutes of the First Post –Invasion meeting of the Warsaw Pact in Moscow, 24 August 1968, p. 477.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 479.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 481.

words it covered the areas mentioned during the meeting of CC of BPC on March 29 after the meeting in Dresden.

The problems in establishing the order in Czechoslovakia and the failure of the political mission during the first ten days after the Invasion became more apparent and on August 31 Dobri Djurov sent a letter to motivate the Bulgarian soldiers in Czechoslovakia: *“You realize that our party and government, by accomplishing its International duty, send you as valiant defenders of the achievements of the communism. Together with the rest socialist armies you are defending the communism not only with arms but also with your attitude, with your moral – political power, communist belief, and class-party consciousness, through which you are struggling to win the honest Czechoslovakian people”*.⁸⁷

The struggle to win over the Czechoslovakian people continued to be unachievable mission, which resulted in continuing resistance and complete loyalty towards the legitimate leadership of the CPCZ. Although the internal propaganda in Bulgaria claimed the opposite and on September 1 under the title *“We are protecting the gains of the Communism”*, in *Narodna Armia* was published a report on the situation including, opinions expressed in personal conversation with local people and aimed to show, the welcome reception from the local population. *“What the counterrevolutionaries want I know, but what want the astride our compatriots. Great number of our youth was deluded. We were fighting against the agents of Hitler, when many of those who today raised their voice of dissatisfaction were not even born.*

⁸⁷Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria, Military Archive, f.1, op X file 82 p.1 – order of minister of defense.

*But it is the Press that poisoned them. Once again I would like to express my gratitude that you came*⁸⁸.

On September 8, was issued another bulletin about the political work conducted by the Bulgarian National Army. During political meeting the soldiers expressed their understanding of the importance of the execution of the Moscow decisions for normalization of the country. On the other hand they exuded indignation to the fact that general Svoboda was not using the Czechoslovakian Army against the counter-revolution⁸⁹. These problems illustrated the situation after the Intervention from the soldiers perspective. Their motivation was questioned on the basis of the reality they faced - non-cooperation on behalf of the local population, and no support from the military services of Czechoslovakia. The lack of results was taken into consideration, in a letter to Todor Jivkov, in which Dobri Djurov informed him about the slow normalization process and suggested that *„In this situation we don't have the right to leave Czechoslovakia, until the danger of losing it as socialist state still exists. Therefore, our troops must stay”*⁹⁰.

The uncompromising character of Czechoslovakia's policy was also confirmed by Dubček's statement on September 12 when he announced that the Communist leadership would stick to the Moscow Protocol, but will never return to the pre-January politics. The situation remained the same until the end of September. In reality the stationed troops never managed to challenge the belief of the local population in the righteousness of the development in Czechoslovakia after January 1968.

⁸⁸ Narodna Armia, 1 September 1968, № 212.

⁸⁹ Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria, Military Archive, f.3, op.VI, f.22 – military bulletin from 8 September 1968, p.1.

⁹⁰ Ibid, f.24, op.X, f.22 – Secret Report of minister of defense from 13 September 1968, p. 2.

In terms with the growing doubts about the reasons of the mission, on September 30 Radio Sofia issued bulletin related to the justification of the Intervention and its results. Facts were discovered about the real danger under which was Czechoslovakia and therefore was quoted part 4 of the Warsaw Pact Contract which stated: *“In case of danger for country in the Unity, it has to provide immediate assistance, individual or with an agreement with other states members of the Pact, with all measures which it found appropriate, including military force”*. The radio report also stressed the character of the Warsaw Pact as an organization which was not „just *common grouping of states*” and embodied deeper reasoning rooted in the character of the social order in the Socialist states namely – the Marxist-Leninist ideology that „*cemented the unity*”. In conclusion it stated that after the intervention, the situation in Central Europe was stabilized and the attempt on behalf of the imperialists to shift the balance of power in this area had failed. The success was pointed out as strong warning against the revisionists from West Germany⁹¹.

In the line of contradictions between propaganda reports and reports from the military command on October 3, coronel Mitev representative of the Central Command of the Bulgarian Army briefed about the situation in Czechoslovakia at the end of September. He reported that the process of Normalization was very slow and the „*forces of the counter-revolution were still not thrown away*”⁹². The text appeared two weeks before the withdrawing of the troops and concluded the political failure of the mission.

On October 20 Dobri Djurov sent a letter to Todor Jivkov, related to the further withdrawing of the Bulgarian Army forces. The report retailed the decisions taken after the

⁹¹The Golden Archives of Radio Sofia – radio bulletin from 30 September 1968.

⁹² Central State Archive in Sofia, Bulgaria, Military Archive, f.24, op.X^a, f.22 – military report from 5 October 1968.

meeting between the Ministers of the Defense of the „Five” and the Czechoslovakian representatives in which was decided only Soviet troops to remain stationed in the country⁹³. The decision referred to the report delivered by the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, who had declared that on political reasons it was not appropriate such an amount of troops to be kept in Czechoslovakia. This was a political act which ended the unsuccessful period of the “Normalization”. The new prospect was the Soviet troops to remain in Czechoslovakia as a support for the Pro-soviet members of the Presidium. and encouraging them to overthrow Dubček⁹⁴.

The Bulgarian army presence in Czechoslovakia, expressed in the documents quoted above illustrated the minimal role it had and the unsuccessful process of explaining the concepts of its presence in front of the local population. On the other hand, the political leadership of the Bulgarian Communist leadership marched in terms with the rising of the new doctrine for power relations in Soviet Camp - the Brezhnev doctrine.

IV.3. Bulgaria and the Brezhnev Doctrine

The process of the Normalization described by Jiri Valenta as “*partly or fully reverse revolutionary change in given Eastern European country*”⁹⁵ was not accomplished during the presence of the Bulgarian troops in Czechoslovakia. The most important result however was the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Jiri Valenta, “Revolutionary Change, Soviet Intervention and Normalization in East Central Europe” In *Comparative politics* Vol.16, 1984, p. 128.

framework of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which appeared in the text by Sergei Kovalyov in Pravda on September 26 1968⁹⁶. The principles which appeared reconfirmed theses which were circulating during the Normalization and even before. The sovereignty of individual countries was not in contradiction with the world socialism. Also each party was free to apply the principles of the Marxism-Leninism and socialism in its own country, but it was not free to deviate from these principles. In this respect the article stated the most important argument: “*The weakening of any of the links in the world system of socialism directly affects all socialist countries and they cannot look indifferently upon this*”.⁹⁷ The term “weakening” was opposed to the stabilized and secure regime which was in control of the social factors and the society.

The article by Kovalev, which was the theoretical foundation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, was followed and finally elaborated in a speech delivered by Brezhnev on November 12 1968 with six principles which contemplated the article of Kovalev.-1.The weakest link of the communism. 2. The contradictions of Socialism. 3. The possibility of restoration of the capitalism. 4. The Vanguard role of the communist party 5.The common natural laws of socialist development. 6. The revolutionary basis of Sovereignty.⁹⁸

The principles such as the leading role of the party, the possibility of restoration, consisted in the major concerns expressed by Stanko Todorov and the rest of the Central Committee members and were implemented into political line of BCP after the Plenum from March 29. The principles which appeared, later during the conflict, were also defended on behalf

⁹⁶ Mark Kramer, “Beyond The Brezhnev Doctrine” In *International Security*, Vol. 14,1990, pp. 25-26.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ R. Judson Mitchell, “The Brezhnev Doctrine” In *The Review of Politics* Vol. 34, No. 2 Apr., 1972, pp. 190-202.

of the communist party with certainty that the internal situation in Bulgaria corresponded to them.

The Brezhnev doctrine gave confidence to the party leadership of the BCP in their difficult international situation in the Balkans where the two socialist neighbor states – Romania and Yugoslavia conducted policy in contradiction to the official line of Moscow. Therefore, in the new redefined power – relation rules, Todor Jivkov become the most reliable leader in the region. In terms of internal policy the regime would use the orthodox postulates of the Doctrine. On the basis of the leading role of the party, Jivkov reinforced his authority in the Communist Party. Also by using the theory of the weakening link, he established the opposite - stabilized and secure regime which was in control of the social factors and guaranteed calamity to the Socialist Bloc. In practice Bulgaria became the “strongest link” and for the next 20 years never jeopardized this position.

Conclusion

The attitude of Bulgaria during the Prague Spring came as a logical continuation of the foreign policy conducted by the leadership BCP in the 1960s. The unofficial division in the Eastern Bloc was framed as a conflict with the so called “Deviationism”, which main representative was Yugoslavia. Therefore BCP turned into the guardian against its spreading effect on the Balkans. After the first three months of the new political leadership in Czechoslovakia, the communist leaders in Bulgaria recognized the policy of CPCZ as another example of Deviationism. In this period the main preoccupations of BCP were the reactionary politics of Czechoslovakia, the lost party control over the society, and the destabilization of the unity in the Socialist Camp. Although in this early stage, Todor Jivkov was convinced about the need of immediate response and suggested to the Soviet leaders to be ready for Military Intervention of the Warsaw Pact.

After the launch of the April Action Program, it appeared as if all fears, stated above, had already become reality. The problems related to the situation in Czechoslovakia were expressed in direct conversation between Dubček and Jivkov. In this meeting the Bulgarian leader enumerated the major concerns and proposed the solution – an emulation of the Bulgarian model of Reforms. In first place it had to be conducted moderate pace of reforms in the Army and State Security, which to be shielded away from any substantial changes and consequently bind with the political leadership. Also the Bulgarian leader proposed his idea about complete control over the public spheres, which meant to connect the intellectuals with the Party by protecting the leading role of the latter in the society. Both ideas illustrated the essence of the conflict which spread in the next months – between the subordination model of Jivkov in which the internal security and well being of society could only be accomplished through the regime,

because on theory the party was the organism which embodied the rule of the working class, and the model of Dubček in which he saw the communist system as a linkage between party and society and therefore the reforms must restore the legitimacy of this regime in front of the society.

In this period the tension and distrust between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia continued to grow and finally appeared in the public sphere. The Bulgarian communist leadership had already been prepared about this situation. The public denunciation, which followed the speech of Peter Puiman, during the International Writers Meeting, was accompanied by public campaign in the media against CPCZ. It gradually exposed evidences about the character of the regime in Czechoslovakia and its reactionary foundations. Also, the publication of the 2000 words manifesto was exemplified by the media in Bulgaria as an appeal for counter-revolution. The whole public campaign against Czechoslovakia culminated during the IX Youth Festival. It included openly hostile attitude towards the Czechoslovakian delegation, which was illustrated with an attempt to marginalize its presence at the Festival. This whole gamut of attacks, in which participated important factors in the society as Intellectuals and Youth was in complete coherence with the foreign policy of Bulgaria. It provided the solid image of the regime in battling against the thread coming from Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the parallel development of the Bulgarian foreign policy with the International context of the crisis, merged during the Warsaw meeting. This time in an outspoken manner, the Bulgarian communist leader expressed his view about the restoration of order through Military Intervention.

The basic contours of Bulgarian foreign policy remained constant after the Military Intervention in Czechoslovakia. However it was accompanied by the new task of justifying in public its military participation in the mission. Therefore, the propaganda mechanisms were unleashed and revealed the ultimate conflict between international stability and the nature of the Socialist system itself. However the media coverage of the events, proclaiming the success of the Bulgarian mission was in complete contrast with the reality expressed in the reports, delivered by the Military Command. The main point in these reports was the impossibility to convince the local population about the reasons for this intervention. The decision about the withdrawal of the troops, taken in consequence with Soviet – Czech, illustrated the figurative character of the Bulgarian military participation.

However the Brezhnev Doctrine, which came as an aftermath of the crisis, justified the participation of Bulgaria in the whole period of the crisis in Czechoslovakia. It embodied the main argument of the Communist Leadership in Bulgaria, about the priority of the leading role of the party and also expressed serious support against any deviationism tendencies. As a result it stabilized the Orthodox type of regimes and political leaders, which was the case with the Communist authority in Bulgaria.

The achievement of this political stability became possible because of the skills of the Todor Jivkov. Firstly he demonstrated direct approach and become the most aggressive leader from the first moment, suggesting military intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia. Secondly, the Bulgarian leader demonstrated his ability to ally, by grouping with Wladisaw Gomulka and Walter Ulbricht, using their internal preoccupations connected with the situation in Czechoslovakia. In the end, the most valuable skill in the context of the Prague Spring was the

capability of Jivkov to interconnect domestic stability and international context and keep up with pace of changes generated by the latter. This was expressed in the character of the Bulgarian demands towards Czechoslovakia, which easily transfused from internal justifications into international preoccupations.

The result of the crisis in Czechoslovakia proved the successful character of the regime in Bulgaria. This was possible because the foreign policy rested on certain basic foundations from which it could or would never deviate. On the international scene it was the acceptance of the undisputable role of the Soviet Union for the well-being of every Socialist Society. On the domestic aspect, it was the conviction that the internal security of the party and survival of the regime must not be affected or influenced by reformist ideas which might contradict to the leading role of the party or to generate any turmoil in the Society. The combination between these two principles guaranteed the regime of Jivkov to endure three major crises – Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1980.

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