

**Address by USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Shevardnadze  
on the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act  
Helsinki, 1 August 1985**

Mr. President, the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe rightfully holds an important place among major events in post-war international life.

The preparations for, and the successful conduct of, the European Conference required persistent efforts by the participating States over many a year. It took political will and diplomatic skill to develop and consolidate the precepts of peaceful co-existence, co-operation and confidence in inter-State relations.

At that time each and every one traversed his own part of the road towards an agreed solution. As a result, the Final Act constitutes a code of constructive mutual obligations. It orients States to live in peace, to co-operate fruitfully, and not to foist one's own views and rules upon others.

Whence does the vitality of the Final Act come? First and foremost, it comes from the fact that the Final Act rests on the foundation of peaceful co-existence of States with different socio-economic and political systems.

The objective need for peaceful co-existence was foretold with deep insight by the founder of our State, V. I. Lenin, and, in practical terms, has been borne out by the entire history of the twentieth century. Today, in the nuclear age, there is simply no reasonable alternative to peaceful co-existence. Expressing the will of the Soviet people, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, has stressed: "We will steadfastly pursue the Leninist course of peace and peaceful co-existence."

It is only natural that Europe has become the first testing ground for building relations of peaceful co-operation among States belonging to opposing social systems. Due to the closely intertwined economic, cultural and historical ties of its peoples, Europe is probably more than any other continent predisposed to peaceful co-operation.

Yet it is also here, on the European continent, that the two most powerful military and political alliances oppose each other. It is here that forces have been concentrated on an enormous scale, unprecedented in peacetime, and ever new arms, above all the most lethal, nuclear arms, are incessantly being built up.

Under these circumstances the policy of détente was a reflection of a high sense of responsibility and true statesmanship. Its spirit permeates the Final Act from start to finish.

No one, naturally, counted on Helsinki immediately leading to a "golden age" of cloudless relations. But much of what was achieved during that period has taken root and stood the test of time. Even the serious aggravation of tensions, which could not but affect the situation in Europe, has not killed the roots of détente.

It is our conviction that détente of the 1970s was not an accidental development which has since sunk into oblivion. It is a valuable experience which strengthens the belief that

constructive dialogue and mutually beneficial co-operation constitute the natural state of international relations which is in keeping with common interests.

The development of the entire international situation largely depends on the evolution of relations in Europe. Indeed, security in Europe is firmly linked to security throughout the world. If it proves possible by joint effort to dispel thunderclouds here, the sun shines brighter for everyone. The European States should not overlook this aspect of their responsibility.

The contribution of the European peoples to the development of world civilization is indeed invaluable. To protect this civilization, to make Europe a continent of peace and creative endeavour is the supreme duty of the present generation of Europeans. The Europeans, we trust, have a sufficient sense of responsibility before mankind and political wisdom gained through age-old experience to be able to attain this goal.

We say this, too, because the fortieth anniversary is imminent of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This tragedy left an indelible trace in people's memory. The interests of all countries and peoples require that this should not be allowed to happen again. For it is clear that, if nuclear weapons were used today, this would entail disastrous consequences for all mankind.

Ever since the appearance of nuclear weapons the Soviet Union has been strongly in favour of their prohibition. And all these years our country has been working consistently and vigorously against the stockpiling of nuclear arsenals and for putting an end to the competition in developing ever more sophisticated systems of such weapons.

The treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water was a major step in this direction. We are convinced, however, that, to be truly effective, a nuclear weapon test ban must be complete and general.

It is absolutely clear that a moratorium on any and all nuclear explosions would help to establish favourable conditions for a comprehensive solution of the problem. The Soviet Union has repeatedly proposed that nuclear weapon States agree on such a measure as of a certain mutually agreed date. However, there has been no positive response to these proposals put forward by us.

Seeking to facilitate the cessation of the dangerous competition in the build-up of nuclear arsenals, the Soviet Union has taken another bold step — it has adopted a decision unilaterally to discontinue all nuclear explosions as of 6 August of this year. This new major initiative of the USSR, motivated by a concern for the destinies of all mankind, was announced yesterday by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

The moratorium, to be in effect until 1 January 1986, will continue in force beyond that date provided the United States, for its part, also refrains from carrying out nuclear explosions.

The Soviet Union expects the United States to respond positively to our initiative and discontinue its nuclear explosions. A mutual USSR-US moratorium would serve as a good example for other nuclear weapon States as well.

At present, active co-operation among all States for the sake of our common peaceful future is the only reasonable alternative.

The Soviet Union seeks to ensure that its relations and ties with European countries are built on a solid and secure basis. A European orientation has always had and will continue to have a secure place in the foreign policy of the USSR. This is vividly attested by our country's deep commitment to the process of peaceful co-operation born of the European Conference.

As is known, what formed the core of the Helsinki accords was the formalization of the territorial and political realities which took shape as a result of the great victory over German fascism and post-war development. However, for some time now there have been fresh attempts to question the territorial and political realities in Europe. The allied agreements of Yalta and Potsdam, that have reliably served the interests of peace for forty years now, have come under attack. Revanchist claims are made again, and made overtly.

All that is sharply at variance with the letter and spirit of the Final Act and, indeed, relevant international treaties. The march of history is, however, irreversible. And this should be kept in mind by those who today attempt to build their policy on the ruins of past ambitions.

It is self-evident how to make the best use of the Helsinki potential for the benefit of peoples. The first commandment should be to respect and strictly observe all the principles of inter-State relations jointly elaborated and laid down in the Final Act. The Soviet Union has given these principles the force of law. It has established them in the Constitution and unswervingly follows them in its policy. Our country is prepared both now and in the future to implement in full the obligations it assumed in Helsinki.

We are entitled to expect all the States that affixed their signatures to the text of the Final Act to adopt the same approach. Yet this is not what the facts show.

Contrary to the interests of peoples, new US first-strike nuclear missiles have been and continue to be deployed in Western Europe. There is a rapid build-up of all components of the US nuclear strategic offensive potential. NATO is implementing a long-term programme to develop ultramodern conventional weapons coming close in terms of their destructive capability to nuclear arms and has adopted an aggressive doctrine of using them. The US is engaged in a full-scale development of most sophisticated types of chemical weapons, including binary weapons, which are to be deployed on the European continent as well.

Washington intends to call into question the time-tested treaties limiting both strategic offensive arms and anti-ballistic missile systems. In other words, what has been accumulated through great effort in curbing and restraining the arms race is being written off.

The United States administration is seeking to implement its "Star Wars" plans at any cost. Its intention is to involve its allies, too, in implementing this dangerous scheme, which is fraught with serious negative implications for both European and world security.

The peoples of the world have great expectations of the Soviet-US talks on nuclear and space arms, and the fact that there is no real progress yet in those negotiations cannot but give rise to disappointment.

At the negotiating table in Geneva we are motivated by a firm determination to achieve agreement. This determination takes the form of well-founded and constructive proposals not only in Geneva but also elsewhere.

However, contrary to the mutual agreement on the subject and objectives of the talks, we are faced with a reluctance to negotiate and to resolve in a business-like manner the issues that cause anxieties throughout the world, namely how to prevent an arms race in outer space, how to terminate it on Earth, how to limit nuclear arms and proceed to their radical reduction up to and including their complete elimination.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly declared at the most authoritative level that it is prepared for significant reductions in both strategic and medium-range nuclear systems. This requires that a new area of the arms race must not be opened up in outer space. Our concrete proposals, our unilateral measures of restraint and goodwill in the context of the Geneva talks are well known, both in America and in Europe. All that is required is reciprocity, a constructive response from the United States. So far it has not been possible to make headway at the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe.

In the view of many countries, progress at the Stockholm Conference could be more dynamic. There exist certain bases for that. It is time to proceed, without delay, to working out initial agreements on large-scale and mutually complementary confidence-building measures in both the political and military fields. The socialist countries have submitted to the Conference for its consideration carefully balanced proposals relating to these two areas. But, of course, all other States participating in the Conference have to make a constructive contribution as well.

We have only mentioned some of the most urgent matters whose resolution would help to bring about an end to the arms race and which would strengthen international and European security.

In the near future the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mr Gorbachev, will meet with President Francois Mitterrand of France and with President Reagan of the United States. Of course, the significance of these summit meetings goes far beyond the framework of bilateral relations. The Soviet leadership believes that the meetings should result in a relaxation of the present dangerous tension in the world and a turn for the better in European and world affairs.

I should like once again to stress that the Soviet Union is in favour of reaching agreements on an honest and equitable basis which would help everyone to move closer to the cherished goal — the complete elimination of the threat of nuclear war and the strengthening of the foundations of universal peace.

But there is another thing that should be clear: if anyone counts on negotiating with the Soviet Union from "a position of strength", then let him abandon such illusions. In the face of increased war preparations by the NATO bloc, the Soviet Union and its allies will be able to take care of their security and uphold their legitimate rights and interests. Any attempts to upset the existing military balance and to secure unilateral advantages will continue to be effectively countered by ourselves.

It is our firm conviction, however, that confrontation, be it in the military, political or economic sphere, is not the road which Europe should take.

The next CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna is not so far off. Preparations for it should start now, taking into account the experience gained, both positive and negative. The European ship will pick up speed and sail faster along the Helsinki course if — and this is what the Soviet Union is calling for — if we can rise above our differences and if all will consider themselves as partners in the efforts to develop broad international co-operation for the benefit of peace.

Take, for example, the co-operation among States in the commercial, economic, industrial, scientific and technical fields and in the protection of the environment. So far this has not yet achieved its full range. The socialist countries are in favour of expanding ties in the indicated areas by using tried and tested forms. We are also opening up new channels, as is demonstrated by the proposal to establish direct business relations between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the European Economic Community.

It stands to reason that such co-operation must be on an equal footing and should really be to mutual advantage. And it is high time to put an end to such inadmissible practices in relations between States as various sanctions and embargoes, discrimination and arbitrary refusal to abide by the deals and agreements concluded.

In other words, the time has come carefully to review the whole range of issues of the so-called second basket. After Helsinki those issues have been unjustifiably kept off the screen, although they are important matters requiring a new look and a political approach.

The Soviet Union is a dedicated champion of international co-operation in resolving humanitarian issues and in developing vigorous ties in the fields of culture and education. Understandably, such contacts and exchanges should contribute to the spiritual enrichment of the human personality and should serve to enhance mutual understanding and friendly relations among peoples. This is equally true of promoting respect for human rights on the principled basis of the Helsinki accords.

All these issues are directly related to the sphere of ideology where the socialist States and the capitalist world hold opposite positions.

Consequently, a line must be carefully drawn between ideological differences and inter-State relations.

This is precisely the way the Soviet Union acts, but our country has not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to interfere in its internal affairs. Any kind of aspersions cast on our system and on socialist democracy will continue to be duly rebuffed.

In the Soviet Union there exist legislative and material guarantees for the full exercise of the economic, political, social and cultural rights and individual freedoms of citizens. As a result of the socialist transformation of society in our country, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and any manifestation of discrimination based on race or nationality have

long been eliminated for good. It would be no exaggeration to say that it is the Soviet Union that has provided a model for solving the highly complex issue of nationalities by truly ensuring the principle of self-determination and the full equality of all nations and nationalities.

Co-operation between States in the humanitarian field is inconceivable without full and unswerving respect for their sovereignty, laws and regulations, without strict non-interference in internal affairs. Détente and a high level of confidence based on stable security are as important as air for such co-operation.

Objectively, all participants in the European Conference, in our view, should have an equal interest in strengthening European security and developing co-operation. It is political will that is required to move successfully along the path mapped out at Helsinki ten years ago through the collective efforts of States despite their differences in size, social systems, ideologies and foreign policy orientation.

The foreign policy of any State is inseparably linked to its internal affairs. Our Party and our State have been directing their main efforts towards accelerating social and economic development so as to make its achievements serve the goal of steadily raising the Soviet people's well-being, improving all aspects of their life and creating favourable conditions for an all-round development of the human personality.

To implement its vast plans, the Soviet Union needs durable peace in Europe and durable peace on our entire planet. This is what the peoples of all countries, in the final analysis, demand from their Governments.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I should like to express to our Finnish hosts our appreciation for the organization of, and careful preparations for, this meeting and for their hospitality. I would like in particular to mention the constructive contribution that Finland has from the outset made to the development of the CSCE process. The name of the Finnish capital has rightly become the synonym for this process.

The vital interests of the European peoples require that Europe proceed along the path charted at Helsinki. Europe can and must play an active part in removing the military threat hanging over mankind and in putting international relations back on the track of détente and peaceful co-operation.

Thank you for your attention.