

**Address by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Schmidt
to the third stage of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
Helsinki, 30 July to 1 August 1975**

The Federal Republic of Germany feels that the signing of the documents of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe marks a major step forward in contributing to peace in Europe. The States of Europe and North America, recognizing their common responsibility, have tried "to build bridges of co-operation between the systems, spanning the gulfs that divide them". Those were the words in which Walter Scheel, then Foreign Minister and today President of the Federal Republic of Germany, described the mandate of this Conference here in Helsinki in July 1973. My country has been supporting these efforts wholeheartedly. Indeed, securing peace and the lessening of tension are the fundamental objectives of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Because I feel that there are no other people than the German people who have been feeling so strongly the dangers deriving from the conditions of our continent. The liquidation of the Cuban crisis was indeed the first step away from military confrontation. With the nuclear test-ban Treaty the United States and the USSR have begun a long and painstaking road to detente. It is this very road that has brought us today to Helsinki. Indeed, the various mutual consensus on this road have been the non-proliferation Treaty and also the first agreements at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). These two agreements have so far been major results of this policy.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has for years been contributing actively to the process of world-wide detente and the securing of peace. I would like to mention in particular here the treaties which have been concluded by Mr. Brandt and Mr. Walter Scheel. I would like to mention in particular the Treaty concluded with the USSR on 12th August 1970. I would also like to mention the Treaty with the People's Republic of Poland concerning the very basis of the normalization of mutual relations dated 7th December 1970. The third Treaty concerning the basis for relations governing relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on the 21st December 1972. I would also like to mention another Treaty concerning relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Finally, the Four Powers have, with the Agreement of 3rd September 1971, included Berlin in the process of détente.

The German Federation and the citizens of my country fully appreciate the results of this Conference while viewing them quite dispassionately. Decades of confrontation are not replaced overnight by an era of co-operation. And it is not enough to give a single impetus to the process of detente; it requires the steady action of all of us so as to progress continuously. However, we can observe that, at the end of several years of detente policy, the nations have moved closer together. Of course, with 35 States the common denominator on which agreement can be reached is often a low one. There remain fundamental differences between East and West in their ideological, political and economic systems.

But for the first time important formulas for peace through detente and co-operation have been embodied in the documents of this Conference by the States in East and West as their common political intention. With this step standards have been set.

It would be wrong, given the present state of relations between East and West, to set immediate expectations too high. As regards the relations between East and West and the progress of detente, as many previous speakers have mentioned today, depend very largely on

how far we are going to translate these principles into realities, and how far we can translate them into practicality, and how far we can implement them to justify mankind's hopes. I think we have all to work very hard to translate these principles into realities so that mankind's hopes be fulfilled.

We have reaffirmed, in the all-European context, general principles guiding relations between States. The Federal Republic of Germany has always regarded the renunciation of the use or threat of use of force as the basis of its policy.

This also applies to changes of frontiers. Frontiers are inviolable; but one must be able to change them by peaceful means and by agreement. It remains our aim to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German nation will regain its unity through free self-determination.

In accordance with principle I of the Conference concerning possible changes of frontiers through peaceful means and by agreement, this is an extremely important principle and it is also important in relation to the declared aim of the nine European countries of the European community which is going to lead us into a European union.

For the Federal Republic of Germany, as for other participating States, it is also of primary importance that the Conference texts do not affect the existing rights and obligations, nor the corresponding treaties and other agreements and arrangements.

Equally significant for us is the stated intention of the participating States to give effect to the results of this Conference throughout Europe — i.e. also in Berlin. Detente must stand the test throughout Europe, and not least in Berlin; for the Berliners, more than many other Europeans, have experienced the tensions and conflicts which, in the long years of the cold war, made their city a centre of unrest and of a dangerous state of friction affecting the entire world. In this connection I welcome the statement by the British Prime Minister.

We hope that the arrangements on the prior notification of manoeuvres, too, will help to foster trust among the peoples of Europe. Certainly the direct military value of that arrangement should not be overestimated; this alone will not make much difference to the security situation in Europe. But it is a step forward, in political terms, towards agreements which will reduce the military threat and the dangerous concentration of troops and weapons in Europe.

The talks in Vienna on mutual, balanced force reductions (MBFR) can now — building on Helsinki — lead to further progress. The aim must be to liberate the Europeans from the fear of war, to reduce armaments costs and at the same time to preserve a balance of power. I make no secret of the fact that, as a Social Democrat, I also expect this to enhance our social well-being and our economic progress.

We are firmly resolved to intensify further our present policy of economic co-operation. However, my country is not just embarking on this; on the contrary, in the past five years we have expanded to a remarkable extent our trade with Eastern Europe and it is our intention to continue this in the future; we will not be deflected from this course by the diversity of economic systems. Our aim must be to make better use of our mutual resources for our mutual benefit and to promote peace by more intensive co-operation between our national economies.

A great deal has been said by participants in the Conference about the need for human contacts, exchange of information and co-operation in the field of culture and education. The results so far achieved cannot be fully satisfactory to those European States in which freedom of movement and the free flow of ideas are taken for granted and are the source of the rich diversity of ideas and the prosperity of these countries.

For the present people must content themselves with what is possible today in view of the diversity of the systems and the mistrust which still exists. But it is the earnest desire of mankind that the remaining restrictions be abolished. They expect tangible progress towards co-existence of the peoples in the East and West, increased travel across the frontiers which divide them, improved working conditions for foreign journalists and greater exchange of young people and sportsmen. Confidence is built upon encounter.

Political leaders in all countries, whatever their type of constitution and social system, are judged by whether they have the moral strength and political force to translate reasonable principles which so far exist only on paper into solid reality.

The citizens of all our countries have already witnessed many international conferences and they sometimes feel sceptical about them. Only substantial progress in their relations with their European fellow-citizens will convince them that these documents are not just an ingenious piece of diplomacy but a challenge to act, a challenge which no one can ignore in the future without detriment to himself.

In signing these documents, therefore, we assume a grave responsibility to translate our words into deeds. What is at stake here is the credibility of every head of State or government in the East and the West.

All participating governments were aware two years ago that in many respects they were breaking new ground. The aims of the CSCE are without precedent. For the first time the States of Europe and North America have sat down together at one table to discuss the whole range of their problems.

This Conference has not created a new international law for Europe, but it has established common rules to govern the way we conduct our relations and live together in Europe. Here in Helsinki we have reaffirmed and demonstrated that Europe, together with the States of North America, has taken a new step towards the stabilization of peace. This is a road along which we must continue step by step, with patience and perseverance, undeterred by setbacks. The neighbours of the Federal Republic of Germany in the East and in the West can rely on our determination to be dependable partners. We will fulfil our European obligations.