

**Speech by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev
to the Second Summit of CSCE Heads of State or Government
Paris, 19-21 November 1990**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Ladies and Gentlemen, not only is this Meeting taking place at a turning point in the history of our age, it is also an outstanding event in and of itself.

In all probability none of us is fully aware of all the implications of this event, this turning point, implications which are likely to be felt for centuries to come. But one thing can be said, and that is that 1990 will be the decisive year of the age which we are leaving behind us, an age marked by two world wars and almost half a century of nuclear antagonism between our social systems.

We are entering into a world of new dimensions, in which universal human values are acquiring the same meaning for all and in which human freedom and well-being and the unique value of human life must become both the foundation and basis for universal security and the supreme criterion by which we measure progress.

As little as two or three years ago, many people viewed as illusory some of the basic political ideas that were taking shape. Even as the drafting of this Meeting's programme began, they had doubts over whether we were not aiming too high or whether the tasks outlined were at all realistic. It has now become clear that this Meeting is indicative of the profound changes which, for the first time ever, offer us the chance of a breakthrough to a world order of a kind that this world has never seen before.

As generally recognized, one of the major changes in today's world has been the historic shift occurring in the Soviet Union away from totalitarianism towards freedom and democracy, away from the bureaucratic command system towards a State underpinned by the rule of law and political pluralism, away from a State-dominated economic monopoly towards a diversity of equitable property ownership and market relations, and away from Unitarianism towards a union of sovereign States based on federal principles.

While remaining a great power our country has changed and will never be the same as it was before. We have opened up to the world and the world has opened up to us in response.

This is what has foreshadowed a radical shift in the most important area of international relations, a shift to a basically new way in which the States perceive each other.

The breakthrough in Soviet-American relations has been pivotal in this respect. It is exactly five years ago to the day that we had the first Soviet-American Summit with President Reagan in Geneva.

What a long way our world has come since then! Whereas five years ago we discussed ways of reversing the slide towards nuclear catastrophe, today the Soviet Union and the United States no longer act as adversaries but as partners.

Understanding between them has grown so strong as to make it natural for them to share the responsibility for peace and security on earth. Rapprochement, openness, the ever-growing

interaction and communication between our two countries, between our Governments and our people, in both their own interests and in the interests of positive changes in the world as whole have constituted a contribution to modern civilization.

By consistent co-operation in all areas where new world policies are taking shape, where transition to a new and peaceful period in history is taking place, we have been doing our duty towards other people as well.

The ensuing improvement in the international situation has saved Europe from grave upheavals, for all this has taken place at the point when sweeping socio-political changes came to a head in several countries.

Had all these changes occurred during the cold war, it would have been impossible for them to take place in even a relatively peaceful framework, and the result could even have been military confrontation.

The fundamental principles of the new thinking, including the freedom of choice, ideology, free relations between States, the unconditional equality of all countries without exception, and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, have passed the test and have offered something new to the world community: trust and confidence.

In this context, the unification of Germany marks a major event, both for Europe and for the world as whole, closing the chapter that consisted in a 4-year-long division of a great nation and of the hole of Europe into two camps.

Likewise, the conciliation between the Soviet people and the people of a united Germany, formalized in treaty language, has developed into a long-term factor for co-operation and trust in the evolution of a new Europe. It is our view that a series of joint declarations and treaties that the Soviet Union has recently signed with France, Italy, Spain and Finland have made a substantive and unique contribution towards building a new international political system in Europe.

These documents break new ground, being unlike anything which went before, and as such have rendered totally meaningless any confrontational juxtaposition of East and West in Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the goals enunciated in the Helsinki Final Act continue to be a steady beacon of guidance for us. In a way, they were before their time – an effort to reach forward and develop détente in the framework of a system based on Yalta and Potsdam.

However, the ideological incompatibility of the régimes as they existed then, an incompatibility which shaped interstate relations at the time, prevailed, and the détente of the '70s became a casualty in the psychological war.

Currently, however, the plans outlined in Helsinki are taking on flesh and blood, so that we can realistically broach the subject of a legally formalized, spatially defined Europe in the areas of security, human rights, economics, the environment and information.

Similar ideas of a common European home, a European Confederation, or a European peaceful order combine into a political plan that we will all have develop and implant in the nineties.

Great European minds have often dreamed of a united, democratic and prosperous Europe, a community and a commonwealth not only of nations and States but of millions of European citizens. It is up to our generation to tackle the task of making that plan an irreversible reality in the coming century.

In the process, however, we must bear in mind that Europe is only a part of the world, a world whose destinies are shaped not only here but beyond the boundaries of our continent in places where the winds of change are also making themselves felt.

The world's overriding objective is building a more secure and civilized world order that, instead of military force, would be based on equitable dialogue, a balance of interests and the ability to find a consistent path between sovereignty and the integrity of the human race where it stands today.

Concern over the survival of the human race is no longer centered almost exclusively on removing the threat of nuclear war as it was only a short time ago.

It is increasingly focused on non-military global problems, among them the environment, energy, food and water supplies, social ills, crime, mass poverty, foreign debt and so on.

What is particularly remarkable is the international solidarity that is emerging as we tackle all these problems.

However, we would be succumbing to impermissible euphoria should we conclude that by achieving the great accomplishment of having virtually eliminated the threat of a major war in Europe, we thought that we had totally ruled out the possibility of conflict on the continent.

At the moment, each country is in the process of a vigorous search for the place it could occupy in a future system. This search can be productive only if we remain aware of two major realities in our world – namely, that multi-dimensional socio-political development is both inevitable and fruitful, and cannot be ignored without rendering meaningless the principle of freedom of choice; and that the partnership and mutual accommodation we all need and value are incompatible with nationalistic selfishness or parochial isolationism.

Failure to take into account that multi-dimensional aspect of development, or any attempt to impose any particular way of life on someone else as a precondition to be met before co-operation is envisaged, is bound to breed suspicion, mistrust, militant nationalism and reckless separatism, leading to conflict and animosity, the “Balkanization” or, even worse, the “Lebanization” of entire regions, either of which would slow down the establishment of a shared Europe so essential for the European process.

Therefore, it would seem desirable, immediately after the Paris Meeting, to proceed to the establishment of structures and institutions that would be truly capable of shaping the economic, environmental and technological foundation of a new Europe.

This would offer the only truly democratic chance of exerting a positive influence on internal developments in a number of countries and protecting them from dangerous outbreaks of nationalism and separatism.

The claims to territorial changes that result from nationalism and separatism are particularly unacceptable, for once the process has begun it may have a destructive snowball effect that would throw Europe back into the kind of situation which it knows only too well from its own history.

While developing into a system of States, Europe remains a continent of countries and nations that are open to co-operation with one another in a variety of ways. These two factors balance each other, providing stability in these new conditions as well.

The notion of a European space covers more than the territory from the Atlantic to the Urals. It includes the Soviet Union as far as the Pacific, as well as the United States and Canada, inseparably linked as they are with the old world by the bonds of common history.

If the European process gains the necessary momentum, each nation will be able to rely in the foreseeable future, provided we pool our efforts, on the potential for an unprecedented powerful community of nations spanning almost all the upper part of the globe.

What is our vision of the process of establishing all-European structures, the first outline for a European home? We favour an active and prompt continuation of the Vienna negotiations with the participation of all 34 states which, alongside further cuts in their armed forces and changes in the structure of these, could proceed to the elaboration of new and comprehensive confidence-building measures.

It would be desirable to combine, in the "Vienna 2" framework, the two negotiating components of the first phase. It is time we broadened their agenda through inclusion of other types of weapons, above all naval armaments.

Of course, the political and psychological changes we have noted and welcomed have brought to the fore the issue of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. We would be prepared to start negotiations on that subject within another month or two.

Our proposal jointly to give some thought to the concept of what exactly we mean by minimal deterrence and where to draw the line beyond which nuclear retaliatory capability may develop into a defensive capability, is indicative of our willingness to proceed gradually towards the elimination of that capability without over dramatizing existing differences of opinion on the role of nuclear weapons per se.

We are also prepared promptly to set about substantive discussions of the "open skies" issues.

The situation of Europe is in a flux. It will clearly take some time before we are able to grasp all the changes taking place in our day, but what counts is our shared understanding that they must be peaceful. That is why starting work on institutionalizing the European process would be one of the major practical results of this Meeting.

Among the trail-blazing decisions with respect to the setting up of a three-tier mechanism, I would wish to single out the Conflict Prevention Centre, designed to provide settlements, as it

were, for political military situations that might arise. We find this highly promising, since it may gradually develop into a kind of all-European Security Council that would have effective means to extinguish the sparks of any possible conflict.

The two years between now and Helsinki, too, will be a trial period to test the unprecedented mechanism for European interaction set in motion here in Paris. Understanding and agreement on the role played by the United States and the Soviet Union appear to be of the greatest importance during the transitional period. No matter what difficulty the Soviet Union may face today, it will remain a great world and European factor, playing an innovative and stabilizing role, in line with its huge potential.

Of the subject of the military alliances – the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO – the Warsaw Treaty Member countries are likely to take important decisions before the end of this year on transforming the organization and changing its character.

It is, of course, for the NATO Member countries to take any NATO-related decisions. Hopefully, the transformation of the alliance, as already announced, will assume a bolder attitude in taking stock of the profound and apparently irreversible changes underway in Europe.

The outcome of the decisions we are about to take here will, to a great extent, depend on the attitude and activity of existing international structures that have proved effective and gained useful experience likely to be of benefit to us all.

I am referring here to the European Communities, the Council of Europe, European Parliamentary institutions, Western European and international economic organizations, non-government research and information centers and, of course, inter-party and inter-labour associations.

Both their ability to adapt to new developments on the one hand, and also the willingness and ability of non-members to co-operate with them on the other hand, constitute a highly complex issue that needs time before it can be properly tackled, particularly in the light of the huge gap in the socio-economic legacy of the various European countries and the critical situation prevalent in many of them today.

The ability to meet each other halfway as an objectively formulated imperative of solidarity is what we need and what this forum, convened in the interests of all of Europe, urges on those who will take part in the all-European process covering the areas I have outlined above.

Profound changes in the Soviet Union will increasingly generate the necessary preconditions for its rapprochement with the European Community. I should also add that the arc of co-operation we are beginning to develop around the Northern hemisphere would be inconceivable without developing a new relationship between the Soviet Union and Japan.

Finally, a word on yet another subject, which is not on our agenda. Iraq's aggression has become the second serious test as we begin our movement towards a new period of peace in history.

Our unity in condemning it and our shared concern over the outcome of the crisis are also indicative of a radical shift in our midst in the perception of the goals of, and the means

available to, world politics. Any armed attack, wherever it may occur, now serves to unite us rather than scatter us on different sides of the barricades.

In demanding that the aggressor withdraw from Kuwait we are defending the hopes that millions of people have begun to pin on the ability of the international community to cope with the most critical of conflicts. If we disappoint these hopes, much of what we have accomplished in the past few years would be in jeopardy.

We are prepared to show patience in the quest for a political solution, but we will remain firm and determined in implementing the will of the United Nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the people of Europe, the United States and Canada have resolved to create a common historical entity based on shared principles and purposes, on democracy and humanism. May I congratulate you on that major first step and wish you all success.

The revival of the spirit of international solidarity that was kindled during the war and that inspired the founders of the United Nations raises the hope that what we conceived then will ultimately prevail.

It is most important for the United Nations and its Security Council to take up, at long last, the purpose for which they were originally designed. And I would like to welcome in our midst a most distinguished guest, Mr. Pérez de Quéllar, who has done so much to revive the role of the United Nations.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the leaders of France and personally to President François Mitterrand for their warmth and hospitality as well as their excellent preparations for this Meeting. Thank you.