

Mr. Václav HAVEL (President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic): Distinguished Chairman, Distinguished Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen, the rapid fall of the totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, which necessarily led also to Germany's rapid unification, as well as the stormy developments in the Soviet Union, have taken us all by surprise and, as a matter of fact, caught us a little unawares.

Thousands of Europeans rightly presume that in these days radically new prospects are opening for Europe, but they are at the same time feverishly thinking about what concrete steps should be taken to fulfil this hope. At the same time, thousands of Europeans are asking the question whether the newly freed countries of Central and Eastern Europe will not find themselves in a kind of political and security vacuum, whether their fragile and immature democracies will survive and whether they will succeed in coming to terms with countless serious problems ranging from economic to nationality ones which they have inherited from the old regimes and which have now appeared in their full nakedness. Many people are also asking how the advanced and developed West should help these countries lest they should drown in instability and chaos and become a brand-new and unexpected hotbed of tension. The East by right longs for its "return to Europe", while the West by right feels its responsibility for the East's future fate and its obligations to help it at this crucial historical moment.

Allow me to sum up, at least briefly, what I think to be good and realistic at this moment.

First, there is every indication that somewhere on the horizon of all our diversified efforts is the ideal of an all-European confederation, which was first publicly formulated by our host, President Mitterrand, and which could perhaps become a reality at the beginning of the next millenium. We have therefore welcomed President Mitterrand's recent proposal, which he voiced at the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, that the first consultative meeting of prominent European politicians on this issue should be held in Prague as early as next spring. Prime Minister Thatcher repeated on the same ground another proposal which, however, is not in contradiction with the ideal of a

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confederation, that is, that all European States should agree on a sort of European Magna Carta - a common bill of civil rights and freedoms. I assume that it is precisely the basic political document resulting from our summit that is to express in clear terms the common will of the countries of the Helsinki process to profess their allegiance to all well-tried values and traditions of European democracy

An all-European confederation is a mere idea as yet. However, many institutionalized forms of co-operation and various integrational groupings are already existing and functioning in Europe. The question is how they should operate and be transformed in the new situation to be in harmony with this target idea.

Second, in this connection Czechoslovakia attributes fundamental significance to the Helsinki process. From the very beginning nearly all European countries have been taking part in this process, and the same is true of the United States of America and Canada, which are tied to Europe by thousandfold historical, spiritual, economic, political as well as strategic bonds. It seems to us that the CSCE is an entirely logical framework for a future united Europe, a solid foundation on which it can be built.

I consider it very important that we have decided here to accelerate this process in a certain way and also to institutionalize it in a necessary measure. I think that on a relatively near horizon we can see something that could be called the second generation of the Helsinki accords. These would be accords which would not have the character of mere recommendations to governments, but which would directly commit the individual governments. I consider it important that also the remaining countries should be won to participate. First of all it would be good if the three Baltic countries - Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia - received, for the time being, the status of observers. All the newly elaborated contractual principles of the CSCE tending towards a more profound European integration would then become the basis of the top-level meeting called "Helsinki II", which is planned for 1992.

Third, a typical expression of the unfortunate consequences of the Second World War was the existence of the two opposing political-military pacts in Europe.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has proved itself to be a guarantee of freedom and democracy. It is a well-functioning and democratic security community which could become one of the supporting pillars of a new European security system. Such a system would be probably founded on the Helsinki basis and would grow out of the ground of the new generation of the Helsinki accords. If it decided to accept this perspective, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization should perhaps proceed at a substantially faster pace in changing inwardly and adapting itself to its new future, among other things it could perhaps conclude certain association agreements with other European countries.

In contrast with the North Atlantic Alliance, the Warsaw Treaty Organization - as is acknowledged today by all its members - is an outdated remnant of the past. It came into being as a typical product of Stalinist expansion and was an instrument of subordination of the Communist countries to the Soviet Union. The Warsaw Treaty Organization is to convene in the nearest future and to definitively decide on the liquidation of all its military structures. It will transform into a temporary consultative organization thoroughly orientated only on the questions of disarmament.

Fourth, Czechoslovakia attaches great importance to the Council of Europe, whose full member it should become in the first half of next year. It is presumable that the existing structures and forms of activity of the Council of Europe that have been developing for four decades will create the foundations on which the institutional core of the future European political confederation will be established.

The Council of Europe should co-operate with the United States of America and Canada wherever it will be possible and beneficial to all parties.

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Fifth, Czechoslovak foreign policy attributes great significance to our relationship towards the European Communities, which are - as is well-known - by far the most integrated European structure. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland are already negotiating with the European Communities about association agreements and all of them would wish to become their full members in future. I do not see any reasons why further strengthening and eventual enlargement of the European Communities should be an obstacle to more profound all-European political and economic integration. Both processes can run parallel and support each other rather than do each other harm. I also see no reasons why enlargement of the European Communities should hinder more profound integration of their present members.

Sixth, culturally, politically, economically as well as ethnically Europe is a very diversified and manifold continent. That is why various narrower regional communities based on cognate historical traditions will always be of great significance in its future arrangement. To give an example of such a new and prospective regional structure, I would like to mention the so-called Pentagonele. It is typical of today's state of Europe that the Pentagonele incorporates two members of the Warsaw Pact, two neutral countries and one NATO member. The establishment of such and similar regional communities does not weaken the processes of integration but, on the contrary, it supports them: these groupings too are building-stones of a future European architecture which will always be and, because of the very nature of our Continent, must be a richly diversified architecture.

Seventh, the developments in recent months show that another important component of the newly shaped Europe will obviously be constituted by a network of bilateral treaties between individual States, such as those which have been recently signed or which are being prepared between the Soviet Union, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries. Czechoslovakia has already started negotiations about a new treaty with Germany and would also like to conclude treaties with its other neighbours, specifically with Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union. In so doing, it would like to contribute to a rapid filling of the political-legal space in our part of Europe where a vacuum threatens to arise after the factual disintegration of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the "regulated self-liquidation" of the Warsaw Pact.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to finish my brief statement by a personal declaration: if I have the honour of taking part - as a representative of the Czech and the Slovak peoples - in the activity of this assembly, so historically important for the whole European Continent, and for the whole world too, I consider it the paramount moment in my life so far.

We are witnessing a moment which brings us closer to the commonwealth of freedom that President Bush talked about a while ago. In conclusion it is my pleasant duty to thank the French Republic and President Mitterrand for their hospitality and the excellent organization of this Meeting.