

**Statement by US President Ronald Reagan  
on the 10th Anniversary of the Signing of the Helsinki Final Act  
Washington, 30 July 1985**

Ten years have passed since the United States, Canada, and 33 European governments joined in Helsinki to sign the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Today Secretary [of State] Shultz and the Foreign Ministers of those nations, East and West as well as neutral and non-aligned, are meeting again in the capital of Finland to commemorate this important event.

In 1975 President Ford affirmed the support of the United States for the universal standards of international conduct and the fundamental human freedoms contained in the Helsinki Final Act. Today I reaffirm our commitment to those principles and our equally firm dedication to give them meaning in the daily lives of all citizens whose governments have undertaken the obligations contained in the Helsinki Final Act.

The CSCE process has long been a source of hope that the division of Europe can be overcome and that the human freedoms enjoyed in the West will be honored and respected throughout the continent. The Helsinki process offers the peoples of East and West the way that, by patient and serious dialog, we can improve the lives of our individual citizens and increase security and co-operation among our states.

As Secretary Shultz said in his statement in Helsinki, we had no illusions in 1975, and have none today, that words alone can strengthen security and nurture freedom. When heads of state and government gathered in Helsinki 10 years ago, President Ford stated: "History will judge this conference not by what we say here today, but by what we do tomorrow -- not by the promises we make, but by the promises we keep."

Sadly, despite some gains, the Soviet Union and several other signatories of the Helsinki Act have failed to keep their promises. Despite the solemn pledge that citizens have the right "to know and act upon" their rights, brave men and women have suffered for taking this commitment by their governments seriously. Those who have tried to exercise freedoms of religion, thought, conscience, and belief have often paid a tragic price. The Helsinki Accords called for freer movement of people and ideas across the European divide, but that flow remains impeded, and in the case of the Soviet Union it is but a trickle.

The Helsinki Accords and the Madrid concluding document of 1983 provided standards by which to judge the conduct of the 35 participating states and set down a process which can be used to ensure accountability. The United States will continue to uphold these standards and press for compliance with them. We consider this a commitment on the part of all those who voluntarily subscribed to the Final Act of the Helsinki Accords.

As we mark this 10th anniversary and reflect on the hopes initially raised by the CSCE process, it is time to renew our efforts to ensure that those hopes were not totally without foundation. We rededicate ourselves to the code of conduct embodied in the Helsinki Final Act. We call upon all of those who participate with us in CSCE to fulfill their pledges. With commitment and determination, we can make the promise of the Helsinki Accords' first 10 years the reality of this second decade of CSCE.

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