

Thirty years ago in *Pravda*



The idea of a pan-European security conference was raised by the Soviet Union in the 1950s and brought up again in the mid-1960s. In 1969, the western alliance indicated its readiness to take part in such a gathering provided certain conditions were met, including a discussion of conventional disarmament in Europe and the inclusion of human rights issues. Obstacles were overcome in the early 1970s, and finally the preparatory talks were launched in November 1972, with Finland serving as host. The signing of the Helsinki Final Act, wrote two *Pravda* correspondents, was “a victory for all who cherish peace and security on our planet”. Here are excerpts from their joint report on the landmark event of 1 August 1975:

Triumph of reason

This is a day we shall remember — people will be speaking and writing about it for many a year; it will go into the history books as one of the most important landmarks on the road to lasting peace in Europe. The document that was signed today in Finlandia Hall by the leaders of 35 States will not only be studied by politicians, diplomats and historians, it will be seen as belonging to millions and millions of ordinary people.

The signing of the Final Act may be seen as the practical implementation of efforts to achieve détente whose necessity was referred to at the Conference by the head of the Soviet delegation, Leonid Brezhnev, General-Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It is precisely this practical achievement that must be our main endeavour, that lies at the heart of everything that is needed to make peace in Europe truly stable and durable. And the cornerstone of all this, in our view, is the task of stopping the arms race and attaining genuine results in our efforts to achieve disarmament.

Today was the third and final day of this pan-European Conference. During the debates, Europe and North America once again, as yesterday and the day before, displayed to the whole world, in extraordinary diversity, their complex and to some extent conflicting views of public affairs. And once again we saw very clearly — without for a moment wishing to belittle these complexities and differences of opinion — that it is possible and indeed essential to find a common denominator for the vital interests, hopes and aspirations of all the States taking part in the Conference. This common denominator is a very short and eloquent word — peace, the need for peace.

... And so the debates are over. The clocks read 16.45 local time. The delegates leave the hall. These three days of joint effort have brought many of them closer together and given them a better understanding of each other's positions — although no one is inclined to close his eyes to the fact that differences of principle persist in some cases. On the whole, the atmosphere in the corridors is one of elation.

17.00 hours, and the participants again fill the hall, while the heads of delegation take their place at the rostrum. At this closing ceremony, the President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, presides. The Final Act, wrapped in a green cover, is in fact a fairly volumi-

nous book. Its text is reproduced in full in this edition of *Pravda*. What it is in reality is a vast charter for peaceful co-existence, and this is what it is called at the press centre by most political observers.

When the festive signing ceremony is completed, everyone, all participants in the Conference and press representatives, rise to their feet. The vaults of Finlandia Hall resound to prolonged applause, with which all present in the hall welcome the successful conclusion of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

A solid foundation of basic principles has been laid down for relations between participating States, principles designed to define standards for their behaviour in mutual relationships. The Conference determined the direction and the specific forms to be taken in co-operation in other areas as well, for instance in trade and economic relations as well as in science and technology, environmental protection, culture, education, and contacts between people, institutions and organizations.

Possibilities for co-operation now extend into areas where it would have been unthinkable in the days of the Cold War. We now have, for example, far broader exchanges of information in the interests of peace and friendship among peoples.

One is bound to agree in particular with the conclusions of the Finnish newspaper *Kansan Uutiset* which wrote, “The spirit of this Conference is oriented towards the future, and one must hope that the day-to-day practice of our continent and international relations in general will bear witness to a consolidation of the lofty principles enshrined in the signed documents.”

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe has now ended. What has been achieved, as Mr. Brezhnev said in his statement, is a triumph of reason from which all of us stand to gain: The countries of the

East and of the West, the peoples of the socialist and capitalist countries, participants in alliances and those who have remained neutral, small countries and large ones. This is a victory for all who cherish peace and security on our planet.

Helsinki, 1 August 1975

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(Translated by OSCE Language Services)



At the State dinner for the delegates in Helsinki, Finland's President Urho Kekkonen (foreground, left), converses with Janos Kadar, First Secretary, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Holding their own discussion across the table are Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and U.S. President Gerald Ford.