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Special Session of the World Peace Council  
Berlin 2-5 February 1979

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## WELCOMING ADDRESS

the General Secretary  
the Central Committee  
the Socialist  
Unity Party of Germany  
and Chairman of the Council  
State of the  
German Democratic Republic,  
Erich Honecker

Special Session of the World Peace Council  
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German Democratic Republic,  
Erich Honecker**

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,  
It is very pleasing to me that the people of the German Democratic Republic are participating in this significant event. It is a great honor for me to welcome you to this conference, which is a step towards new worldwide activities for the solution of the most urgent problem facing humanity—the consolidation of peace and security for all people.  
As people with differing political views, religious convictions and religious creeds, or representatives of the most varied social movements and organizations, you have come here with the intention of taking appropriate steps to remove the danger of nuclear devastation. Your conference, which reflects the momentum of these forces in the world, is fully committed to debate and the exercise of the same responsibility.

WELCOMING  
ADDRESS

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of the Central Committee  
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Mr President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to you, as representatives of the peoples of the world for whom the struggle for peace is the supreme concern. The German Democratic Republic considers it a great honour that you have chosen our capital as the venue for this significant session. I am quite certain that there will emanate from this Berlin conference strong momentum leading to new worldwide activities for the solution of the most urgent problem facing humanity—the consolidation of peace and security for all peoples.

As people with differing political views, ideological convictions and religious creeds, as representatives of the most varied social movements and organizations, you have come here with the intention of taking appropriate steps to remove from mankind the threat of new devastating wars. Your conference vividly reflects the momentum of those forces in the world which are committed to détente and the cessation of the arms race. It illustrates the pas-

sionate endeavours to cooperate in the solution of the most pressing international problems.

Since its foundation 30 years ago, the German Democratic Republic has striven with all perseverance for this noble cause. The historical experience of two World Wars, unleashed by German imperialism and militarism, greatly influenced the formation and development of our socialist state. As a result of the victory by the Soviet Union and the other states of the Anti-Hitler Coalition over German fascism, a fundamental turn for the better was achieved in our country. For us it was not only a matter of erasing the immediate after-effects of war. We eliminated its causes, by changing the relations of power. In the form of the German Democratic Republic, a state has developed on German soil and in the heart of Europe which is a reliable bastion of peace and friendship amongst nations. All its activities are pledged to ensure that never again a war will emanate from German territory. It actively serves the peoples' great aim of liberating present and future generations from the scourge of war.

Our country's foreign policy corresponds with the vital interests of the world's peoples. We support the international peace movement in its endeavours to incorporate broader sections and forces of society, to extend into new areas of the world and to render its activities more and more effective. Mankind does not need warlike confrontations, but rather peaceful cooperation. To work towards this end is a political mission for our people and, at the same time, it is our contribution to the preservation and consolidation of world peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The significance of your conference is also due to its timing. Without the shadow of a doubt, international development has reached a crossroads. Regrettably, positive and negative aspects are blended in international relations. However, we can record with satisfaction that in the past few years détente has led to important positive changes. This is particularly apparent in Europe. Thanks

to the strength of the peace forces, détente maintains its position as the dominant trend in world politics. Even though mighty efforts are still required to implement everywhere the principles of peaceful co-existence between states of differing social orders, the successful steps taken along this path cannot be overlooked. Despite all negative aspects, this strengthens the peace-loving forces in their determination to strive for a world in which harmony and peace between nations becomes the accepted way of life.

Friends, you will certainly have familiarized yourselves with the outcome of the Moscow meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the member countries to the Warsaw Treaty. At that meeting, we devoted particular attention to the consolidation of security and cooperation in Europe. We established that in Europe, where the Warsaw Treaty and NATO alliance systems stand face to face, significant, positive changes have taken place and these are not easy to rescind. At the same time, proposals are contained in the Moscow Declaration which, on account of their realistic and constructive nature, could lead to significant progress along the road to peace. I am thinking above all of the overriding objective of halting the arms race and bringing about a decisive breakthrough in the talks on arms limitation and disarmament. For the continuation and intensification of the arms race, its increased tempo and scale represent the main threat to peace and international security, détente, peoples' independence and their economic and social development.

The German Democratic Republic will continue, alongside the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, to spare no effort in working towards these ends. At the same time, we hold the opinion that all states—regardless of their social order, their political systems and their membership or non-membership of military alliances—should unite their efforts to achieve success in the cause of peace. We shall not be found wanting in our contribution to the further development of such cooperation.

Today the dream of millions of people all over the earth, of a world devoid of military conflicts, is no longer a mere utopian

vision. It can become reality through the joint efforts of all those who are prepared to battle for it.

The tremendous influence which the peoples of the world can exert in the central issue of the age, the issue of war and peace, has been shown in such historic actions as the first Stockholm Appeal for the banning of the atomic bomb. 500 million people gave their signature. Of great significance are the 700 million signatures in the second Stockholm Appeal against the arms race, which was presented to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Now the peoples' movement against the neutron bomb has reached such proportions that NATO ruling circles find it very difficult to ignore its impact.

However, we must never lose sight of the fact that imperialist circles are stepping up the material preparations for war. It is all the more essential to prevent the forces of aggression from implementing their plans for the production of new devastating means of mass destruction. Projects for the development of laser weapons, for the manipulation of human genes and anything else which might be in the secret cabinets of the Pentagon must not be allowed to be put into practice. The protection of the peoples of the world from such weapons of mass destruction is so vital that all men, regardless of world outlook and religion, should stand up for this.

The German Democratic Republic attaches exceptional importance to the conclusion of a new agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the limitation of strategic arms. With the great perseverance which characterizes its entire peace policy, the Soviet Union has long been working towards a second SALT agreement, the conclusion of which, as everyone knows, would be of worldwide importance and would give a boost to the peoples' struggle for peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
No one can ignore the fact that powerful proponents of the "Cold War" have for some time been undertaking massive attempts to

torpedo the process of détente and bring to nought what has been achieved so far. It is not only that these forces, in defiance of the interests of the nations, are stepping up the material preparations for war and staging an arms race without precedent in history—they are also openly interfering in the internal affairs of socialist and newly independent states, and indeed even in those of their own allies. All this has placed a heavy strain on the international situation.

At this point I cannot but mention the fact that events take place which constitute an outright affront to the desire for peace felt by the peoples of the world. You will remember that while the UN Special Session was giving expression in the shape of practical proposals to the nations' urge towards disarmament, at the same time a new long-term programme for increased armament was being adopted at the session of the NATO Council in Washington. The aim of this programme is to raise by further thousands of millions NATO's already high armament expenditures.

What the instigators of the arms race, who are mainly to be found in the military-industrial complex, want to achieve is not hard to discern. They are tempted by the gigantic profits which they hope to make out of building increasingly sophisticated and costly weapons systems. At the same time, the growing influence of socialism is to be met and its further advance checked. The intention is to force a kind of economic trial of strength on the socialist countries which will vitiate the unfolding of their potential in the work of peaceful construction and hamper the fulfilment of their economic and social welfare programmes. The instigators of the arms race harbour the illusion that they can alter the alignment of forces which has arisen in the world—one of approximate military equilibrium—in their favour. In the last analysis all their plans amount to nothing other than the attainment of their expansionist political goals by means of force and interference. Their chief targets are the popular movements for national and social liberation. The fact remains that the danger of a world war has not yet been eliminated.

In order to justify their armaments plans not a few NATO politicians trot out the old legend of a "threat from the East". In doing so, however, they cannot even claim that it is original. It was used by Hitler and Goebbels to prepare for their criminal war of conquest. Everybody knows how that particular story ended.

Inciting nations against one another and arming have ever been two sides of a single coin, namely that of imperialist war preparation. Peace and bringing about understanding between nations, on the other hand, are unshakable principles of socialism. They correspond to its essence, to its socio-political goals. Under socialism no one makes a profit out of armament, on the contrary. Our countries have a vital interest in diverting the considerable funds that have to be spent on their defence to the work of peaceful construction.

Progress towards disarmament would not, of course, be a palpable gain only for the socialist countries. Disarmament would have a favourable influence on the solution of many of the world's problems, whether one thinks of the elimination of hunger and desperate poverty in various regions of the world, the supply of energy and raw materials, or the preservation of the environment. But as long as the imperialist threat continues to exist as the result of a historically unparalleled arms build-up, the socialist countries are left with no other choice than to protect their gains at all times in the military sense as well. This is in the interests of peace and international security.

No one can leave out of account the fact that the USA and other NATO countries have since the end of the Second World War committed way over 100 acts of armed aggression. They fell upon Vietnam with napalm, chemical weapons and cluster bombs. Their mercenaries kill and burn in southern Africa. Wherever progressive forces rise up against reactionary dictatorships, the most reactionary imperialist quarters attempt to stifle the people's will to freedom.

Finally, let us remember that it was American atom bombs that were dropped on Japan in 1945. All proposals by the Soviet Union

to renounce this fearful weapon fell at that time upon deaf ears. So the Soviet Union had to respond by building an atomic device of its own. It broke the nuclear monopoly and in so doing rendered mankind a great service in the interests of peace.

The founding of NATO in April 1949 was unequivocally directed against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the other socialist countries. Six years later our states joined together in the Warsaw Treaty, a political and military alliance whose aim is the defence of socialism and peace.

Whether it was the introduction of B-52 strategic bombers, or of missiles with multiple warheads, or today's development of cruise missiles and neutron, laser or other weapons of mass destruction—the initiators were always the same. And all their measures for increased armaments were carried out to the same old refrain of how these instruments of destruction were necessary in view of the alleged "threat from the East". We have all lived through these times, are living through them today, and are aware of the verifiable facts. If one looks at the matter objectively, these calculated lies collapse like a house of cards. The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, there is no "threat from the East", but there are peace proposals "from the East". These deserve the support of all advocates of peace, of all those who plead its cause.

When one really gets down to it, what is of decisive, vital importance for the safeguarding of peace is the attitude to socialism as it really exists. Let no one allow himself to be confused by the attempts—made by the most diverse forces—to discredit socialism as it really exists in the world. Socialism and democracy belong together just as much as do socialism and peace. There is in truth no basis on which to play socialism off against democracy or democracy against socialism.

The dispute about human rights, which is being stirred up by certain parties with ulterior motives, is at bottom a blow against détente, against joint actions for détente and disarmament. We must not allow the masses of the people to go on being psychologically prepared for war under the specious slogan of "defend-

ing" human rights. This is why we say that the counteracting of this propaganda, which sets nation against nation, cannot be the concern of the socialist countries alone. Rather it should be the concern of all forces of peace, as their interests are directly affected.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

The Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and the other socialist countries have done more than a little in the past years so that a stable edifice of peace, security and mutually beneficial cooperation might arise on the European continent. And we should not overlook the favourable effect that this has had on developments in other parts of the world. It is indeed an inspiring fact to all nations that Europe has witnessed the greatest progress so far on the road to détente, in the implementation of the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Our country has made no mean contribution to this process. We are steadfastly putting into practice our policy of peaceful coexistence, and are thus taking into account the interests of peace and normal relations between nations.

We consider it one of the most important tasks to consolidate political détente, and to follow it up by military détente. It is essential to extend détente beyond the confines of Europe, to extinguish existing flashpoints of conflict and to prevent new ones arising. Without doubt, this will only be possible in bitter conflict with those who are pursuing confrontation and exacerbation of the international situation and who are motivated by chauvinism, revanche and the urge for hegemony. We regard as no less dangerous those who base their policies on the proposition that a nuclear world war is inevitable.

The unveiled threats against Vietnam made by Deputy Prime Minister Teng during his visit to the United States, his invective directed against the Soviet Union and his position against détente and for rearmament, provide evidence that present-day China is playing an extremely negative, dangerous role in world politics.

An integral part of the struggle for peace is the national and social liberation of peoples. It is proceeding apace. The valiant Vietnamese people have won, by bitter struggle, peace and freedom for the whole of their country. And now this historic achievement must be secured. The defence of the sovereignty and inviolability of Vietnam's frontiers has become the concern of all peace forces. The German Democratic Republic, faithful to the principles of peaceful coexistence and to the principle that every nation has the free and sovereign right to determine its own path of development, has officially recognized the People's Revolutionary Council of Kampuchea.

The popular movements for national and social liberation can count on our support. We stand in solidarity with the progressive forces of Africa, a continent which is awakening, a process which serves the interests and happiness of its peoples and the whole of humanity. We feel a close involvement with the just struggle of the Arab peoples, with the Palestinian people, and their liberation organization, the PLO. We are also engaged in active solidarity with all the fighters for freedom and social progress in Latin America and Asia. We are convinced that the states which have achieved national liberation will solve their problems in the way they wish. No power in the world can alter that.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thirty years of the German Democratic Republic represent three decades of struggle for peace in the heart of Europe. Through your extensive support for the peace policy of the GDR, you have performed an undying service for our people. For this we are very grateful, and for our part will do everything in the future to justify your trust. With this policy we are pursuing what is for us a constitutional principle and social reality.

We believe that one of our major tasks is to bring up the younger generation in the spirit of peace, humanism, progress, and understanding between nations. Our education system takes due account of this as do a multitude of other forms of social activity.



Since the founding of the German Democratic Republic it has been a matter of course that our children should be systematically taught about fascism and its crimes. In countless works of art and literature, in films and television broadcasts, the crimes of the Nazis and their backers have been exposed and stigmatized. Films such as "Marriage in the Shadows", "Council of the Gods", "Professor Mamlock", "Stronger than the Night", "Naked Among Wolves", "The Pictures of the Witness Schattmann", to name but a few, have made a major contribution to keeping alive the anti-fascist legacy and to fulfilling it today.

A basis of the progress of our people is the indissoluble alliance of the German Democratic Republic with our liberators from fascism, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as well as the other socialist countries and all those who stand for peace. It was literally from ruins that, in keeping with our political aims, a new life blossomed forth in our country. With us industry and agriculture produce with the purpose of constantly raising the people's material and cultural standard of life. The housing programme assumes a special place in this. We have resolved to erect between 1971 and 1990 2.5 to 2.6 million dwellings, so that housing will finally cease to be a social problem. The results achieved so far, the building of 1.1 million dwellings in the last eight years, justifies our optimism in assuming that we can fulfil this task.

Our people are, it may be said, justifiably proud of these achievements, and we mean to continue along this path. This goes for all the major questions surrounding the improvement of material and cultural living standards and also for the increasing expenditure involved in implementing our social welfare programme. Thus our economic plans are genuinely geared to peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

It is nearly thirty-four years since the Second World War ended, and the forces of peace have succeeded, in a struggle that was by no means easy, in preventing the outbreak of a third world war,

which would take an immense toll in human life and cause incalculable material losses. What is more, peace has been made more secure, and the forces of peace are stronger than ever. But we should not stop halfway, nor shall we. It is both necessary and possible to push back the forces of aggression, to end the arms race, and to pass on to effective measures of disarmament. Through world-wide campaigns by the forces of peace, détente can be promoted, and ever more favourable conditions for international cooperation created. If all peace forces, irrespective of differences of approach to this or that question, act together, they will be in a position to frustrate the designs of the enemies of détente and to march further forward along the road to peace. And in future, too, a nuclear holocaust will be averted if the peoples defend peace resolutely and as one.

We share the concerns of your session in every respect. Our socialist German Democratic Republic will, as will all the countries of the socialist community, always be a source of reliable support for your noble work in the cause of peace and friendship among nations.

I wish your discussions, which millions of people throughout the world are following with interest and anticipation, every success.