

DOCUMENTATION

Peace and Security for the Asian-Pacific Ocean Region

Excerpt from Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok, 28 July 1986

The main problem confronting mankind today — that of survival — is equally acute and urgent for Europe, Africa, America and Asia. Yet, in each part of the world it looks different. Therefore, while being here, in Vladivostok, it is natural to look at international policy issues from the Asian-Pacific standpoint.

Such an approach is justified for many reasons. In the first place, a greater part of our country's territory lies east of the Urals, in Asia — in Siberia and the Far East. It is here that many national tasks put forward by the Party Congress will be carried out. Therefore, the situation in the Far East as a whole, in Asia and the ocean expanses adjoining it, where we are permanent inhabitants and seafarers of long standing, is to us of a national, state interest.

Many major states of the world, including the USSR, the United States, India, China, Japan, Vietnam, Mexico and Indonesia are situated on the enormous expanses of this territory extending over almost half of the earth. Here are situated states which are considered to be medium-sized ones, but are rather big by European standards — Canada, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, and tens of comparatively small and tiny countries. Some of them have a history covering millennia or many centuries, others have formed in modern times, and still others have formed quite recently.

Asia, which woke up to a new life in the 20th century, has enhanced world progress with its diversified and unique experience in the fight for freedom and independence. This is not only history. This is a living legacy forming an important part of the foundations of the current political realities in this part of the world.

Every country has its own social and political system with all conceivable shades, its own traditions, achievements and difficulties, its own mode of life and beliefs, convictions and prejudices, its own understanding of spiritual and material values. Each country has something to be proud of and something to uphold in the treasure-house of human civilization.

This impressive diversity, this colossal human and socio-political massif calls for close attention, study and respect. We know well from our own, Soviet, experience what an immense creative force a renewed sense of national dignity becomes, what a constructive role is played by the national identity of a people in its organic interrelationship with other equal and free peoples. This process is now on the rise in Asia and the Pacific region: everything is in motion here, far from everything has settled. The new mixes with the old. A way of life which seemed unshakeable only yesterday is giving way to the whirlwind of changes — social, scientific and technical, and ideological. This is, I would say, yet another period of renaissance in world history, a period harbouring a huge potential of progress. And progress not only for Asia and Oceania.

Which direction will socio-economic and political development take in the region?

What processes will prevail in inter-state relations? These issues will largely determine the destinies of the whole world.

Socialism is an inalienable factor in the large-scale and complex changes taking place in this region. It gained firm positions in Asia as a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the victory over fascism and Japanese militarism, as a result of the great Chinese revolution, as a result of the consolidation of the new social system in Mongolia, in the land of Korea whose people displayed outstanding steadfastness in the struggle for the socialist future of their country, and then in Vietnam and Laos. But it is also in Asia where it met with the most brutal and cynical counteraction. Vietnam is the most graphic example of this. Its heroic experience, the lessons of its victory over imperialism accentuated once again the irresistible force of the ideas of freedom and socialism.

Here, in Asia, the concept of non-alignment, a movement which now includes more than a hundred nations, emerged. It is trying to come up with its own response to the challenge of the time, is actively working for overcoming the world's division into military blocs and is seeking its own ways of reducing the nuclear threat. In rejecting and condemning exploitation, the policy of aggression and neocolonialism, the non-aligned movement is urging mankind to work for unity, for cooperation in combating hunger and the acute poverty of hundreds of millions of people.

The great India, with its moral prestige and traditional wisdom, with its specific political experience and huge economic potentialities, is the recognized leader of this movement. We highly value its contribution to establishing standards of equal co-existence and justice in the international community. Friendly relations between the USSR and India have become a stabilizing factor on a world scale.

Japan has turned into a power of foremost importance. The country which became the first victim of American nuclear weapons has traversed a great path within a brief period, and has achieved outstanding successes in industry, trade, education, science and technology. These successes are due not only to the organizing ability, self-discipline and energy of the Japanese people, but also to the "three non-nuclear principles" which officially underlie its foreign policy, although lately — and this must be emphasized — they, as well as the peaceful provisions of Japan's Constitution are being circumvented ever more openly.

But we also see many other things in Asia and Oceania. The fact that the peoples' dignity was insulted by colonialism, the legacy of poverty, illiteracy and backwardness, along with profound prejudices, preserve conditions for mistrust and hostility between peoples, including peoples living within one state. Imperialism takes advantage of the difficulties and prejudices, which leads to local conflicts, ethnic and religious strife and political instability.

Wherever independence becomes a tangible international value and a threat to the exploitative interests of imperialism emerges, it resorts to its favourite methods: economic blackmail, intrigues and plots against the leadership of the country in question, and interference in internal affairs; it backs separatists and finances and even directly arms counter-revolution and terrorists. Punjab, the Tamil problem, with attempts being made to turn this problem against India too, undeclared wars on Kampuchea and Afghanistan, the annexation of Micronesia, interference in the Philippines, and pressure on New Zealand provide enough examples showing how the contemporary mechanism of imperialist intervention and diktat works.

The experience of history, the laws of growing interdependence and the need for economic integration urge one to look for ways leading to agreement and to the

establishment of open ties between states in the region and beyond it. These states have tens, hundreds of glaring problems, problems inherited from the colonial past and emerging out of contradictions of present-day development. And these states are being dragged into blocs; the freedom of utilizing their own resources is being curtailed. They are being forced to increase their military budgets, and are being drawn into the arms race and the militarization of the economy and the entire social life.

All this deforms the processes of internal development, creates tension and, naturally, hampers a normalization of relations between nations and states.

The Soviet Union is also an Asian and Pacific country. It is very much aware of the complex problems facing this vast region. They concern it directly. This is what determines its balanced and comprehensive view with regard to this huge part of the world where a large number of different nations and peoples are concentrated. Our approach to it is based on a recognition and understanding of the existing realities in the region.

At the same time our interest is not a claim to privileges and a special position, or an egoistic attempt to strengthen our security at someone else's expense, or a search for advantages to the detriment of others. Our interest is in the pooling of efforts and in cooperation, with full respect for the right of each nation to live as it chooses and resolve its problems on its own in conditions of peace.

We are in favour of building together new, fair relations in Asia and the Pacific.

Recently I have had many meetings with leaders of European states, with various political figures of European countries. I cannot help comparing the situation in Asia with that in Europe.

On the whole the Pacific region has not as yet been militarized to the extent Europe has. But the potentialities of its militarization are truly immense, and the consequences are extremely dangerous. One only needs to look at a map to be convinced of this. Major nuclear powers are situated here. Large land armies, navies and air forces have been established. The scientific, technological and industrial potential of many countries — from the western to the eastern fringes of the ocean — makes it possible to step up any arms race. The situation is being exacerbated by the preservation of conflict situations. Let us not forget: it is in Asia that American imperialism waged two biggest wars since 1945 — the war in Korea and the war in Indochina. In the last four decades there is hardly a period of even just a few years when the flames of war did not blaze in one or another part of the Asian and Pacific region.

In Europe, whether it is working well or not, the Helsinki process of dialogue, negotiations and agreements is under way. This creates a certain stability and reduces the probability of armed conflicts. In the region under consideration this is absent, or nearly absent. If something has changed lately, it has not been for the better. Since the second half of the seventies the USA has undertaken large-scale measures to build up armed forces in the Pacific Ocean. The militarized triangle of Washington, Tokyo and Seoul is being set up under its pressure. And although two out of three nuclear powers in the region — the People's Republic of China and the USSR — pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, the United States has deployed nuclear weapon-delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads in one of the zones of crisis — in the Korean Peninsula, and nuclear weapon-delivery vehicles on Japanese territory.

One has to state that militarization and the escalation of the war threat in this part of the world are taking place at a dangerously fast pace. The Pacific Ocean is turning into an arena of military and political confrontation. This is what gives rise to growing concern among the peoples living here. This is alarming also for us from all points of view, including for considerations of security in the Asian part of our country.

The Soviet Union's policy towards Asia and the Pacific region is an integral part of the general platform of the CPSU's international activity worked out by the April Plenary Meeting and the 27th Congress. But a platform is not a chart that can be applied to any situation. Rather, it is a set of principles and a method based on experience.

How, then, should one envisage the process of establishing international security and peaceful cooperation in this vast region?

First of all, in keeping with its principled policy as approved by the 27th Congress, the Soviet Union will try to invigorate its bilateral relations with all countries in the region without exception. We shall strengthen in every way friendship and promote many-sided relations with the Mongolian People's Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea. We regard relations with our friends, built on the principles of equality and solidarity, as an integral part of overall Asian and Pacific security.

At present, for instance, a question of withdrawing a substantial part of Soviet troops from Mongolia is being considered jointly by the Soviet and Mongolian leadership.

We are prepared to expand ties with Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Brunei, the Republic of Maldives, and the youngest independent participants in the region's political life. With some of these — Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa, the Kingdom of Tonga, Fiji, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, Tuvalu and the Republic of Vanuatu — we already maintain diplomatic relations.

Speaking in a city which is but a step from the People's Republic of China, I would like to dwell on the most important issues in our relations. These relations are extremely important for several reasons, starting with the fact that we are neighbours, that we share the world's longest land border and that for this reason alone we, our children and grandchildren are destined to live near each other "for ever and ever".

Of course, there is more to the question than that. History has entrusted the Soviet and the Chinese peoples with an extremely responsible mission. Much in international development depends upon these two major socialist nations.

Relations between our two countries have improved noticeably in recent years. I would like to reaffirm that the Soviet Union is prepared — at any time and at any level — to enter into discussion with China on additional measures for establishing an atmosphere of good-neighbourliness. We hope that the border dividing us (I would prefer to say linking) will become in the near future a line of peace and friendship.

The Soviet people respond with understanding and respect to the objective advanced by the Communist Party of China — to modernize the country and build in the future a socialist society worthy of a great people.

As far as it is possible to judge, the Soviet Union and China have similar priorities — to accelerate social and economic development. Why not support each other, why not cooperate in implementing our plans wherever this is clearly to the benefit of both sides? The better our relations, the more we shall be able to share our experience.

We note with satisfaction that a positive shift has become visible in economic ties. We are convinced that the historically established complementarity between the Soviet and the Chinese economies offers great opportunities for expanding these ties, including in the border regions. Some of the major problems of cooperation are literally knocking at the door. For instance, we do not want the Amur, which runs along the Chinese-Soviet border, to be viewed as a "water barrier". Let the basin of this mighty river unite the efforts of the Chinese and the Soviet peoples in using the river's rich resources for mutual benefit and in

building water-management projects. A relevant inter-governmental agreement is already being jointly worked out. And the official border could pass along the main ship channel.

The Soviet government is preparing a positive reply concerning the question of assistance in building a railway connecting the Xinjiang-Uygur Autonomous Region with Kazakhstan.

We have suggested cooperating with China in space exploration, which could include the training of Chinese cosmonauts. The opportunities for mutually beneficial exchanges in the sphere of culture and education are great. We are prepared for and sincerely desire all this.

On relations with Japan. Signs are emerging indicating a turn for the better here as well. It would indeed be a positive development if the turn did take place. The objective position of our two countries in the world demands profound cooperation on a sound and realistic basis, and in a calm atmosphere free from problems of the past. A beginning was made this year. Foreign ministers exchanged visits and an exchange of top-level visits is on the agenda.

Economic cooperation is of mutual interest. The main issue here is our coastal regions which already have business contacts with Japanese firms. It is possible to discuss the question of establishing joint enterprises in adjacent and nearby regions of the USSR and Japan. Why not establish long-term cooperation in the investigation and comprehensive use of the ocean resources, why not correlate programmes of the peaceful study and use of outer space? The Japanese, it seems, have a method of making relations more dynamic which is called "economic diplomacy". This time let it serve Soviet-Japanese cooperation.

The Soviet Union also shares the border with the United States in the Pacific region. It is our next-door neighbour in the literal meaning of the word, with only seven kilometres dividing us — the exact distance between the Soviet island of Big Diomedes and the American island of Little Diomedes.

We recognize clearly that the United States is a great Pacific power. Primarily because a considerable part of the country's population lives on the shores of this ocean, the western part of America, gravitating towards this area, is playing a growing part in the country's development and is a dynamic force. Furthermore, the United States, undoubtedly, has important and legitimate economic and political interests in the region.

No doubt, without the United States and its participation, it is not possible to resolve the problem of security and cooperation in the Pacific Ocean to the satisfaction of all nations in the region. Regrettably, Washington has thus far shown no interest in this issue. It is not even contemplating a serious talk on the Pacific issue. If the issue is taken up, it inevitably leads to the trodden path of the "Soviet threat" and to sabre-rattling corroborating this myth.

Our approach to relations with the United States is well known. We are for peaceful, good-neighbourly, equitable relations, and mutually beneficial cooperation which offers, incidentally, considerable opportunities in the Far East as well as in the Pacific.

A few words concerning the most important aspect of our relations with the United States at present — on the termination of the arms race. Since the Geneva meeting the Soviet Union has put forward many large-scale proposals on the entire range of problems involved in reducing and eliminating arms and verifying this process. We have not noticed any movement to meet us even half-way. In fact, our proposals met the same response as before the Geneva summit.

In an attempt to overcome the standstill, we went a step further: new large-scale proposals of compromise were put forward in my June letter to the President of the United States. When visiting here, in the Far East, I received a reply from President Reagan. The

reply sets one thinking and we have begun to study it. We shall treat it with responsibility and attention. The most important thing from our point of view is the extent to which the proposals contained in the letter meet the principle of equal security and whether they make it possible to reach effective joint solutions in ending the arms race and preventing its spread into outer space. We shall determine our further steps accordingly.

As far as a new Soviet-U.S. summit meeting is concerned, I can repeat: we favour such a meeting. But we are resolutely against interpreting the accords reached at the previous meeting in Geneva as a promise to have more meetings. No. The main thing on which we agreed last time with President Reagan and what we signed is the consent to strive for the normalization of relations between the USSR and the USA and for the improvement of the international situation, and to speed up the course of talks on the reduction of armaments. This should also be the purpose of a new summit meeting.

We frequently hear from abroad all kinds of stories to the effect that the Soviet Union is building up its military power in the east of the country. Let me state with full responsibility: we are not doing anything and shall not do anything over and above the level that corresponds to the minimal requirements of our own defence, and the defence of our friends and allies, especially in the light of the American military activity not far from our and their frontiers.

This applies in full measure to the medium-range missiles. Those who do not want to see the lessening of world tensions continue to allege that we will be able to move our SS-20 missiles from the west to the east and from the east to the west. This is why I emphasize one more time — we suggest that both American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe *be eliminated*. Eliminated — not moved somewhere else. This quite clearly promotes the interests of the Asian countries as well.

I would also like to state that the Soviet Union is a dedicated advocate of disbanding the military groupings, renouncing the possession of military bases in Asia and the Pacific Ocean and withdrawing troops from the territories of other countries. The USSR is a member of the Warsaw Treaty; but this is a European defensive alliance and it operates strictly within the stipulated geographical limits. In our turn we are strongly opposed to the U.S. attempts to extend NATO's "competence" to the entire world, including Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

Our views about security in the Asian-Pacific region did not come out of thin air. They take into account the experience of the past and of today. The principles of "Pancha Shila" and of Bandung have not sunk into oblivion. The positive examples of the truce in Korea, the 1954 Geneva meeting on Indochina, the Indo-Pakistani agreement in Tashkent live on in diplomatic experience. Nowadays, too, we have witnessed the efforts of a number of states to solve in practice common economic problems and the attempts somehow to regulate conflicts. In the activities of the ASEAN and in bilateral ties many positive steps have been taken. After the plan for a "Pacific community" had been rejected, the discussions began on the idea of a "Pacific economic cooperation". We approached this idea without bias and we are ready to join in the deliberations on the possible foundations of such cooperation; this is, of course, if it is not conceived in a forced, bloc-oriented, and anti-socialist pattern, but is rather the result of free discussion without any discrimination. The sufficiently vast arsenal of scientific and political ideas on the issue of establishing a new world economic order and the experience of integration in the West and the East could become a solid foundation for such discussions.

For an objective, however remote, we would like to propose a conference, in the mold of the Helsinki conference, to be attended by all countries gravitating towards the Ocean.

When an agreement is reached on its convocation (if an agreement is reached at all, of course) it will be possible to establish the place for this conference. Hiroshima is a possible option. Why should that city, the first victim of nuclear evil, not become a "Helsinki" for Asia and the Pacific Ocean?

In summary, I would like to emphasize that we stand for integrating the Asian-Pacific region into the general process of establishing a comprehensive system of international security proposed at the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

What are our concrete views on this issue?

First of all, the issues of *regional settlement* inevitably arise. I'll speak of Afghanistan separately. Now let me speak of South-East Asia and Kampuchea. The Khmer people sustained terrible losses. That country, its cities and villages were victims of American bombing raids more than once. Through its suffering that country has earned itself the right to choose its friends and allies. It is impermissible to try and draw it back into its tragic past, to decide the future of that state in the distant capitals or even in the United Nations.

Here, as with other problems of South-East Asia, much depends on the normalization of Sino-Vietnamese relations. It is a sovereign matter of the governments and the leadership of both countries. We can only express our interest in seeing the border between these socialist states become again a border of peace and good-neighbourly relations, in seeing friendly dialogue resumed and the unnecessary suspicion and mistrust removed. It seems that the moment is right, and all of Asia needs this change.

In our opinion, there are no insurmountable obstacles in the way of establishing mutually acceptable relations between the countries of Indochina and ASEAN. Given goodwill and the absence of foreign interference they could solve their problems which would simultaneously benefit the cause of security in Asia.

There is a possibility for not only relieving the dangerous tensions in the Korean peninsula, but also for beginning the solving of the national problem of the entire Korean people. As far as the truly Korean interests are concerned, there are no sensible reasons for evading a serious dialogue which has been proposed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Second. We are for blocking the proliferation and build-up of *nuclear weapons* in Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

As is known, the USSR has pledged not to increase the number of medium-range nuclear missiles in the Asian part of the country.

The USSR supports proclaiming the southern part of the Pacific, a nuclear-free zone, and urges all nuclear powers to guarantee its status in a unilateral or multilateral way.

The implementation of the proposal of the DPRK for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Korean peninsula would be a significant contribution. The idea of creating such a zone in South-East Asia has aroused well-deserved attention.

Third. We propose to start talks on the reduction of the activity of *naval forces* in the Pacific, in particular, nuclear-armed ships. Restriction of the rivalry in the sphere of anti-submarine weapons, specifically, the arrangement to refrain from anti-submarine activity in certain zones of the Pacific, would help strengthen stability. This could become a substantial confidence-building measure.

In general, I would like to say that if the United States gave up its military presence, say, in the Philippines, we would not leave this step unanswered.

We remain strongly in favour of resuming the talks on establishing *the Indian Ocean as a peace zone*.

Fourth. The Soviet Union attaches great importance to the radical *reduction of armed*

forces and conventional armaments in Asia to limits of reasonable sufficiency. We realize that this problem should be tackled gradually, stage-by-stage, by starting with one certain region, say, the Far East. In this context the USSR is prepared to discuss with China concrete steps aimed at the commensurate lowering of the level of land forces.

Fifth. The Soviet Union believes that it is high time to switch to practical discussions on confidence-building measures and on the non-use of force in this region. Simpler measures could serve as the beginning, for instance, measures for the security of sea lanes in the Pacific, and for the prevention of international terrorism.

A conference to discuss and work out such measures could be held in one of the Soviet maritime cities. By the way, with time the question of opening Vladivostok to visit by foreigners could be solved. If the situation in the Pacific actually changes for the better, Vladivostok could become a major international centre, a commercial and cultural centre, a city for festivals, sports events, congresses, and scientific symposiums. We would like it to be our window opened widely on the East. And then the words of our great Pushkin "the ships of every flag and nation will hail our shores" will apply to Vladivostok as well.

And in conclusion, about Afghanistan. It was declared from the rostrum of the 27th CPSU Congress that we are ready to recall Soviet troops stationed in Afghanistan at the request of its government. As is known, the Party now firmly adheres to the principle that words should be confirmed by deeds.

Having thoroughly assessed the current situation and having held consultations with the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the Soviet leadership has adopted the decision which I officially announce today: six regiments will be returned home from Afghanistan before the end of 1986 — one armoured regiment, two motorized infantry regiments, and three anti-aircraft artillery regiments — with their regular equipment and armaments. These units will be returned to the areas of their permanent deployment in the Soviet Union, and in a manner that these moves will be obvious to all those who take an interest in this.

Taking this serious step, of which we informed the states concerned in advance, including Pakistan, the Soviet Union is striving to speed up and give further impetus to a political settlement. The Soviet Union expects that those who organize and implement the armed intervention against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, will correctly understand and duly appreciate this unilateral step we have taken. It must be answered by the curtailment of outside interference in the affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

Certain progress has been achieved recently at the Afghan-Pakistani talks held through the mediation of a representative of the UN Secretary-General. As soon as a political settlement is finally worked out, the recall of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan can be accelerated. Schedules for their stage-by-stage recall have been agreed upon with the Afghan leadership.

But all who encourage and finance the undeclared war against Afghanistan and from whose territory it is waged, should know that if the intervention against the DRA continues, the Soviet Union will come to the defence of its neighbour. This position stems from our internationalist solidarity with the Afghan people and from the interests of the Soviet Union's security.

We support the policy of the present Afghan leadership aimed at national reconciliation and at widening the social base of the April National-Democratic Revolution. This includes the creation of a government in which would participate those political forces that have found themselves beyond the country's borders but who are prepared to participate sincerely in the nationwide process of building new Afghanistan.

Comrades,

The present generations have inherited many difficult and painful problems. In order to reach a solution to these problems it is necessary to get rid of the burden of the past, to seek new approaches, guiding oneself by one's responsibility for the present and the future.

The Soviet state calls upon all Asian and Pacific nations to cooperate for the sake of peace and security. Everyone who strives towards these goals and who hopes for a better future for one's people, will find that we are willing to talk and are honest partners.

Mankind is living through a difficult and dramatic time. But it has a reserve of strength, which allows it not simply to survive, but also to learn to live in a new, civilized world, in other words, to live without the threat of war, and to live in freedom, when the highest criterion will be mankind's benefit and the maximum development of the individual's abilities. But this requires a persistent struggle against the common enemy — the threat of universal annihilation.

Mobilization of the existing potential of common sense and the partnership of reason are now more important than ever before to stop the slide towards catastrophe. Everyone can rest assured, all peoples in all countries, that our resolve to do our utmost for this cause remains unchanged.

This, in brief, is the state of our domestic affairs at present and the state of the general international situation, in the development of which the Asian and Pacific part of the world is to play an ever increasing role. We should draw practical conclusions from all this in order to act ever more vigorously to rebuild and improve our life.

Although there are no direct analogies in history, similar situations do arise. Therefore, we find past experience useful and edifying. In the article "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution" Lenin wrote:

"We have already started the necessary changes in our economic policy and already have some successes to our credit; true, they are small and partial, but nonetheless they are successes. In this new field of 'tuition' we are already finishing our preparatory class. By persistent and assiduous study, by making practical experience the test of every step we take, by not fearing to alter over and over again what we have already begun, by correcting our mistakes and most carefully analyzing their significance, we shall pass to the higher classes. We shall go through the whole 'course' . . ."

This is Lenin's advice, comrades, and a sample of his analysis with its typical depth, clear thinking and self-criticism. We are advised how we should act in the present situation, how we should go about rebuilding, so that we might complete the whole course successfully and bring our country to a qualitatively new level. It is our duty to make full use of Lenin's wise counsel.

I wish you every success and achievement in putting our plans into effect. I wish you happiness, good health and all the best in life.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of the Soviet Far East for their kind words of trust and support, for their recommendations and suggestions, and for their warmth and cordiality. Thank you, comrades.