

Address by Carlos Arias Navarro at the third stage of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki, 31 July 1975)

Caption: Address given by Carlos Arias Navarro, Spanish Prime Minister, at the third stage of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki on 31 July 1975, one day earlier than planned owing to the absence of Francisco da Costa Gomes, President of Portugal.

Source: Archivo General del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, Madrid. R014051.

Copyright: (c) Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación de España

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_by_carlos_arias_navarro_at_the_third_stage_of_the_conference_on_security_and_cooperation_in_europe_helsinki_31_july_1975-en-740275f9-951e-4df8-977a-61d532b8921b.html

Last updated: 19/02/2014

SPEECH OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF SPAIN AT THE III PHASE OF THE
CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE.

HELSINKI, 31th July 1975

Mr. President,

I am bound to begin this speech of mine by expressing my deep feeling of gratitude to the President of the Republic of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, and to the Finnish Government and people, without whose unflagging efforts this historic meeting bringing together the representatives of thirty-five countries here today would not have been possible. My feelings of friendship and gratitude go out towards the country that, since the very beginning of our long adventure in this Conference, has become the champion of the cause of peace, security and co-operation in Europe, and that more than deserves the fact that its capital, Helsinki, should be the host on this unparalleled occasion at which we are all present today. Helsinki is today the capital of Europe, and we are confident that the future will witness the confirmation of its vocation and the continuance of its present role.

When, on 22nd. November 1972, the preparatory consultations of the Conference began here, no-one, not even the gloomiest pessimists, would have thought that the Conference would need almost three years in order to accomplish its vital programme. In the course of those three years, and above all throughout the prolonged negotiation during the Second Phase in Geneva, there have been no few moments of despondency, tension

2.

and difficulty. This is the proof that the task undertaken was huge, that enormous contributions of political spirit, effort and imagination, plus the will to negotiate, were necessary in order to begin to accomplish what seems to us the ambitious and main objective of the Conference: namely, to lay new and solid foundations for relations between States that will ensure to the European peoples a dynamic future of peace, justice and progress.

Spain, Mr. President, has always believed in the potentialities contained in the root idea of our Conference, and the Spanish Government, at a very early date, in 1969, responded positively to the Finnish Government's initiative in summoning it. At that moment, we declared ourselves resolutely in favour of a forum in which all the European nations, besides the United States of America and Canada, should take part as equals, on the unquestionable and fundamental premises of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, a forum that should examine with historical insight those problems that prevent a normal co-operation among the countries of Europe, the basic assumption of security on the Continent. Now at this time, when we are consecrating with all due solemnity the end of this first Conference, it is right that we should soberly assess the results obtained.

My country, Mr. President, a medium-sized power, not included in any of the existing military blocs, destined by History and by Geography to play an essential role on the European stage, is, at the same time, a link uniting peoples, seas and continents, which in one way or another bear our stamp.

3.

For this reason we have participated in the Conference in the full awareness that the whole content of the construction of security and the strengthening of co-operation in Europe could not be exhausted. Both aspects should constitute a continued process in time, of which this first Conference is an important historic milestone, and our conviction is re-affirmed that, the enormity of the problems our Continent still has to tackle demands new and constant efforts. Starting from these basic coordinates, understood in a realistic and flexible way, the Spanish Government has always taken particular interest in underscoring the strict equality with which the participants acted in the negotiation. The principle of consensus, the key expression of this equality, an important and delicate instrument that would suffer as much from its lack of use as from its abuse, constitutes a fundamental element for a process in which medium- and small-sized countries, neutrals or non-aligned, can participate on an equal footing in multilateral dialogue, so as, in this way, to establish the validity of their lawful aspirations and become clearly and actively aware of the growing role they can play in European affairs.

Mr. President: my Government has come to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe after deep reflection on the lawful interests and understandable preoccupations of those countries for whom the Second World War was a tragic source of suffering and the origin of instabilities and uncertainties. But at the same time we came convinced that the problems of Europe cannot be wiped out in a static consideration of this reality, and that, as a result, the Conference could not be exclusively a reflection of the same. For us, it has been basically

a question of emphasizing that, along with the East-West dimension, there exists another whose coordinates go from North to South; the proper definition of the relations among the participating States should take both these axes into account.

All these basic verifications have led my Government to advance certain points, now included in the final results of the Conference, which I am going to take the liberty of underscoring.

My Delegation has played an active part in the drawing up of a catalogue of principles that should govern the relations among the participating States. Principles which, being as they are, based on those prescribed by general International Law, offer a balanced consideration of the possibilities and limitations of the international relations among the States gathered here. The result of the negotiation which these principles have required is balanced and fair, although, as was only to be expected, it cannot offer complete satisfaction to all the conflicting interests present.

Of these principles I should like to point out, because they seem to us particularly significant and vital to the process of détente, that of sovereign equality and the respect for rights inherent in the sovereignty of States, the abstention from resorting to threats or to the use of force in any of its forms, the respect for the unity and territorial integrity of States, the abstention from any intervention, either direct or indirect, in the domestic affairs of States, and the admission of the possibility of a peaceful modification of frontiers, inviolable by force.

5.

If the enumeration is not exhaustive, this in no way lessens the equal importance of each and every one of the ten principles which at this moment we are ratifying as the renewed bases for the conduct of normal, friendly relations between all our States. What we now need is that this decalogue of rules of conduct should become a living and working letter, and that its effective application may bear fruit at some later stage in open understanding and full co-operation among States.

But this catalogue of principles would merely be a cold and academic framework if the relations between States did not contain other multiple sectors of the most varied human activity.

Since this is a Conference dealing with Security, I would like to refer, in the first place, to the military aspects of security and the unavoidable necessity that these should be complemented and harmonize with the political ones, for both are simultaneously necessary for the credibility of détente.

Because military questions are being dealt with in other forums, this Conference, regrettably, has not been able to take into consideration these military aspects in all their depth. It has, however, been able to reach a first and limited agreement on measures that may tend to encourage mutual trust among States.

I am delighted that the final documents include the Spanish proposal to the effect that interchanges should be promoted among military personnel, by invitation and on a reciprocal basis, and that visits of military delegations should be anticipated with a view to achieving a better mutual understanding among the military of our different countries. This is yet another measure intended to promote confidence.

Among other essential considerations in this field, there is also the inter-relation between the security of each participating State, which should remain unaffected, and the security of Europe as a whole. It is not enough to look for a security balance between the two principal camps, but it is essential that each State should be able to provide for its own security at the convenient level with suitable means. It is also important that all States should be duly informed about the evolution, progress and results of those negotiations that are held in other forums for the reduction of forces and the limitation of strategic arms, in case this should affect their own security.

We have also defended - and succeeded in its being accepted - the relationship that exists in the wider context of world security between security in Europe and security in the Mediterranean area, to whose zone the process of improvements in security should be extended. Indeed, it has always been a vital concern of my country to underscore the close links that exist in every field between the European Continent and the Mediterranean area.

Starting from this premise, the Spanish Delegation, right from the very beginning of the preparatory consultations in Helsinki and during the First Phase of our Conference, laid particular emphasis on the fact that the process of constructing the security of our Continent and extending its co-operation could not be undertaken properly if we turned our backs on the importance of the Mediterranean region in both fields. The fruit of our tasks and that of a number of friendly Delegations has been the special document dedicated to the Mediterranean, the only area

7.

quoted by name in our final documents. It is our desire that the generous line of enlargement drawn by this document should be interpreted by both those on the Northern shores and those on the Southern ones, as a declaration of purposes directed to attain two possible and desirable objectives: to make of the Mediterranean an area of just peace for all the peoples in the region, and to promote among those peoples a co-operation and understanding that will serve as an infrastructure for the better maintenance of security in the whole area.

My country, Mr. President, has never forgotten that our Conference also deals with Co-operation in all its various aspects, economic and technical, social and human; this is something that constitutes an indispensable requisite for bringing our peoples closer together, reducing the material differences among our countries, facilitating understanding and wiping out ill-will. The final and true recipient of all our efforts is Man himself, for whom we are striving after a juster, safer and more prosperous world.

The Spanish Delegation has attached special importance to the questions of emigration and tourism, and we have seen with satisfaction how our proposals in both areas have been widely supported and collected in the final documents.

We have studied the phenomenon of emigration, not only as an economic factor or as a social problem, but also from the human angle, trying to give every satisfaction possible to the desires of those who co-operate with their work to the economy of other States, without forgetting the facilities for family reunification, which make the difficulties encountered in foreign countries more bearable.

As for tourism, a field where Spain's special contribution has recently been acknowledged when Madrid was selected as the seat of the new World Tourism Organization, we have also put forward specific and imaginative proposals that have been accepted by all the participating countries, approaching the question sometimes from an economic, technical and infrastructure standpoint, and at others, as a means of getting to know different European peoples and cultures on both a national and a regional scale.

We pin great hopes on the fact that the provisions contained in our Final Minutes concerning contacts among people will solve humanitarian problems, bring down barriers and frontiers, unify separated families and serve to bring the young people together.

The extension of all kinds of facilities for information across the length and breadth of our Continent is a goal we have proposed for ourselves and one which must needs help us to get to know one another better. The proposals included on education and culture tend to the same objective.

Mr. President, I do not wish to exaggerate when I describe this present occasion as historic. Even if we are not fully satisfied with the results obtained, we believe that the achievements are none the less great, and that the negotiation has proceeded in a good spirit and has served to make dialogue possible, dialogue that, albeit at times tense and difficult, has never been interrupted. Now this dialogue must be continued, extended and deepened, with ears attentive to the necessities of an ever-changing international situation. It is necessary to go on working actively, lest the Conference should become nothing more than a lifeless landmark in the past.

My country, Mr. President, has always believed in the necessity of continuing the efforts now begun towards a European order. The support of Spain will never be lacking in order that the work of the Conference may be consolidated for the benefit of the peace, security and progress of our peoples.

We understand that everything that has been agreed at the Conference, and in particular that which affects the application of juridical and political principles, must be seen as being in accordance with international law. At the same time, as we made it very clear at the time, during the preparatory consultations and the first phase of the Conference and we restate it today the results of the Conference cannot affect or prejudice a question which is being examined in another international forum, competent to deal with it and whose solution is still pending.

On bringing my words to a close, I should like to repeat my sincere gratitude to Finland, to its President, to its Government and people. And I do so in one of the great languages that the European Continent has given the world, and that this Conference has used as a working-tongue. A tongue shared by numerous sister-nations across the Atlantic with whom we maintain indestructible links and whom we shall always keep in mind when the hour arrives to extend the benefits that the security and co-operation in Europe may contribute to the peace, security, justice and progress in the world.

Many thanks, Mr. President.