

*It was overall a
satisfactory*

*How important
to have these leaders with
us. We prove that the Socialist Int.
is a position to contribute
to dialogue & solutions*

ADDRESS BY COSTAS SIMITIS
PRIME MINISTER OF GREECE AND PRESIDENT OF PASOK
AT THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL.

(Rome, 21-22 January 1997)

Dear friends and comrades,

It is with great pleasure that I address the meeting of the Socialist International (SI) here in Rome. Last September, I was unable to attend the work of the SI Congress in New York, because it coincided with the general elections in Greece. At that time we were struggling hard for a socialist victory at the elections, which would have given PASOK a renewed term in government. As you know, we have won the elections and we have formed a socialist government. I would like as well to thank you for electing me as Vice-President to the Council of the Socialist International and for the strong support and solidarity which you have all given for our electoral victory.

It is common finding that we live in a rapidly changing world, which is increasingly interdependent. The world, the economy and our societies are changing dramatically. Globalization and the new technological revolution require new answers in order to maintain our ability to live both within our own countries and at a global level in a way that is socially, economically, politically, and environmentally sustainable. The globalization of the world economy has had positive aspects, such as increased economic efficiency, a new impetus to world trade and output, but at the same time it has brought about financial turbulence, uneven development, increasing inequality, high level of unemployment, and social exclusion.

At the political level the end of the Cold War has brought positive results, as the threat of a nuclear war seems to have subsided, and the principles of democracy, human rights and international law are widely accepted. Some of the post-Cold War experiences, however, have not been positive. While negotiations have brought a peaceful solution to a number of conflicts, new crises have emerged, new political antagonisms pose new threats to peace, justice and co-operation. The old bi-polar system has given its place to a new one where a limited number of rich and powerful countries tend to accumulate

most of the power - economic, military, and political -, excluding the vast majority of countries and nations from participation.]

These new problems and challenges put all of us, especially the socialists, before our responsibilities. Ideologies have not disappeared. Ideas and values, which stand as our foundation, offer the alternative message to the neoliberal model to our citizens. The defense of the welfare state, the promotion of employment and better living standards, the idea of sustainable development and protection of the environment, the promotion of free and fair trade are objectives which our citizens and our public opinion will increasingly demand. A substantive prerequisite of the attainment of these objectives is the functioning of democracy. Democracy needs to be reinforced by a new system of collective responsibility and new policies.

The Socialist International and the socialist movement have a catalytic role to play in the new world. We should insist in promoting our central values and objectives [which are peace, justice, solidarity, freedom, democracy, human rights and respect for international law. In order to establish a peaceful world order, where human dignity is respected, and progress is secured for everybody.] Such a goal requires persistent efforts to change the world in accordance with our ideas and objectives, efforts which should be made both at the global and regional level.

A key role in our vision of a peaceful world order should be played by the United Nations, which should be strengthened and given the capacities to contribute to greater international co-operation, to be able to resolve regional and civil conflicts, to promote further reductions in nuclear and conventional weaponry.]

A major aspect of present security developments is the strengthened co-operation between the UN and regional organizations in peace and security issues. The linkage between the UN and regional organizations is crucial especially in Europe, which has been so deeply divided by the Cold War and the scene of military confrontation. Even now, after the Cold War, Europe has been a test case of the new environment being developed. The discussions which are being conducted today in Europe, for the future of the European Union and NATO, are of primary importance and set new challenges. European integration and future enlargement with the countries of Eastern

Europe and Cyprus will contribute to peace, stability and development in Europe and could serve the objectives we set as Socialists. As Andreas Papandreou has put it: "The principle of European integration is a progressive ideal. It is up to us to give it a concrete content, so as to transform it from an ideal to a reality".

The Socialist International has ^{a important} a contribution to make in ~~these discussions~~, so that our longheld commitments to freedom and fundamental rights, justice, peace and human well-being are guaranteed. The socialist movement with its long tradition of international co-operation and solidarity should commit itself to the struggle. We support the ideas put forward for a more active role of our movement in conflict prevention, risk analysis and mediation.

Our party, the socialist party of Greece (PASOK), has shared these values and ideas and is doing its utmost to promote peace, stability, and progress in the volatile geographical position Greece is situated. Greece has sensed both the positive and the negative results of the end of the Cold War. It is situated at the same time in the explosive and unstable area of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean, both of which have been the scene of turmoil, conflict and unrest

The situation in the ex-Yugoslavian republics showed that there is tension between interdependence and nationalism, between forces which tend to unite and those which push towards disintegration. The way to solve these problems is not through weapons or violence, but through peaceful negotiation and the rule of law. The Yugoslav tragedy indicates that the end of the Cold War has not, taken alone, resolved the problems of security and of democratic respect for human rights. Our efforts in the case of former Yugoslavia were directed towards suspending the war, starting a dialogue between the sides and launching a negotiated settlement.

The Dayton agreements enabled the ~~sides~~ to put a halt to violence, to hostilities and to begin a peace process which has as its objectives the peaceful co-existence on the same territory of distinct ethnic communities. The road to peace is still a long one and there will be, no doubt, big difficulties. The Socialist International should contribute to the success of the peace process and show its commitment to the international IFOR peace

mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in order to help the stabilization in the area and the integration of the different ethnic communities.

For Greece, peace and stability in the Balkans is absolutely necessary for development and progress in the area. Our policy is guided by the principle of the respect of human rights, the establishment of democratic procedures, and the inviolability of international borders. In this framework, Greece has spared no effort to contribute to the search for a solution of the Yugoslav crisis, develop the bilateral relations with its neighbors, and promote multilateral actions aimed at bringing closer the countries of south-east Europe. Greece is participating in the IFOR with a contingent, and in the reconstruction plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a substantial financial contribution. At the level of multilateral co-operation, Greece has supported and actively participated in all international initiatives in the region. It has taken part in the European Union's Royaumemont initiative on stability and good neighbourliness in south east Europe. Greece was involved in the relaunching of the conference of the Foreign Ministers of the countries of the region, which resulted in the Sofia Conference last July. The next conference will be hosted at Thessaloniki next June. We consider equally important the American South-East European co-operative initiative, which is aiming at mobilizing supplementary financial resources from the private sector. In this context the proposal of the Greek government to organize and host the regional center for the promotion of trade in the area is of significant importance. Particular emphasis is given by us as well on the trilateral meetings between Foreign Ministers of Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, held twice already, and aimed at bolstering subregional co-operation mainly in the fields of transport, telecommunications and energy, as well as for the development of infrastructure.

Greece supports the integration of all Balkan countries to the new European structures, which would serve for the further development and stabilization of these countries. Finally, within the European Socialist Party we have taken the decision to organise next April a meeting on the Balkan in Thessaloniki with the participation of progressive and socialist parties from all the Balkan countries.

On the Middle East, on the other hand, despite the considerable progress made immediately after the 1993 peace process accords, there are still

considerable issues which remain unsettled. The delays and the retarding procedures followed by the Israeli government do not contribute to the relaxation of the tension and the construction of co-operation between Palestinians and Israelis. The agreement for Hebron, signed last week, was a long awaited significant step towards peace in the area and should be scrupulously implemented. There are still considerable ~~issues~~ to be taken, including the future regime of Jerusalem, the settlers, the ~~rights~~ of the exiled and the refugees, the management of the water resources, the demarcation of frontiers, etc. It is difficult to make forecasts. The only certainty is that there is no other alternative than the peace process. The Socialist International should reaffirm its strong support for the agreement signed between the Israeli government and the PLO, for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Greece looks forward to a timely implementation of the agreements and for a more active participation of the European Union in the peace process. We consider crucial and important the resumption of talks with Syria and Lebanon on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 325.

I would finally like to refer to another problem in the region which constitutes a threat to peace and stability in the eastern Mediterranean: The persistence of the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus and the unlawful Turkish claims in the Aegean. The Cyprus problem caused by the Turkish invasion in 1974 remains unresolved, despite the numerous decisions of the United Nations which call for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Island and call for peaceful negotiations and respect of the independence, the territorial integrity, the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, and the safeguarding of the basic freedoms of its peoples. Turkey, in flagrant violation of international law and in defiance of the wish of the international community, insists on its aggressive policy aiming at legalizing the "faits accomplis" of the invasion. We believe that the time is ripe for a solution to the problem, based on the UN resolutions. The Socialist International should contribute, as already stated in its documents adopted at the 20th Congress last September in New York, to the solution of the Cyprus problem and take all possible initiatives to show its concern for the lack of progress and the continuing division of the Island.

Turkey is following a policy of aggression, ^{and} threats ~~and arrogance~~ towards Greece as well, in an effort to upset the existing status quo in the Aegean in

already mentioned by the
Nobel prize
winner Dr.
Ho Chi Minh

defiance of international law and international treaties. Instead of concentrating on the serious internal problems of the Turkish society (lack of democracy, violation of human rights, the Kurdish problem, social inequalities etc) the Turkish ~~rulers~~^{government} have embarked on a nationalistic policy towards Greece, disorienting their public opinion and citizens.

We have followed a moderated stand and showed self-restraint. We have invited Turkey to a step-by-step approach to solve the problems on the basis of international law. We hope that Turkey responds positively to our initiatives.

Finally, dear friends and comrades, I believe that the Socialist International, all of us, have a role to play in promoting peace and co-operation both in the Balkans and the Middle East. Peace and co-operation should be based on the ideals and principles which are at the foundation of our existence and which have a role to play in this new world. An international order to be build on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which form the nucleus of our movement.

The Socialist International is at a turnpoint, trying to identify its content and its role for the 21st century. We are the most powerful world forum of democratic parties. It is our duty to confront the challenges and undertake the responsibility in a world which is undergoing rapid and substantial change.

The International Court of Justice is according to our opinion the international body that should decide on the status of Turkey that international law can not be applied any more