

Speech by Józef Cyrankiewicz (7 December 1970)

Caption: On 7 December 1970, Józef Cyrankiewicz, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland, welcomes the signing, that day in Warsaw, of the Treaty which lays the foundations for the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Source: The Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of Poland. Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 1971. 200 p. p. 24-29.

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Speech by the Polish Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz in the Palais of the Council of Ministers (7 December 1970)

After the Federal Chancellor has laid wreaths at the monument to the Unknown Warrior and at the memorial to the Warsaw ghetto and has paid a visit to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Poland, Mr. Cyrankiewicz, at 12.30 p.m. in the Palais of the Polish Council of Ministers the Polish and German Heads of Government and the two Foreign Ministers sign the Treaty concerning the Basis for Normalizing their Mutual Relations.

After the signing of the treaty, at a Luncheon in the Council of Ministers' Palais the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Józef Cyrankiewicz, makes the following speech:

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Honoured Guests,

Today we have signed a treaty that is of fundamental importance for the relations between the People's Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. Also supported as an act within the framework of the general détente in Europe it was awaited, and because of this detente it is an act of great value for the consolidation of peace and security in our continent.

May the future, both the near in which we ourselves can operate actively and also the more distant, confirm the durability, and thus also the historic role of the treaty, which concludes a certain phase in the historical development of Europe and finally recognizes and sanctions the European realities as existing for a long time, in particular the western frontier laid down at Potsdam.

Mr. Chancellor, it is the moral obligation of our generation, a generation which has lived through the Second World War, that we do not leave as a legacy to this young generation any matters resulting from this war — even only ostensibly — that are not brought to an end or even smoulder and sometimes become the festering germs of further conflicts.

That, Mr. Chancellor is how I understand the signatures we have today placed under this treaty in the name of our Governments and States.

The treaty is the fruit of long and stubborn efforts. In the course of the activity, the good will on both sides had to overcome the problems — by no means so simple — that had accumulated in the past. In our efforts we have allowed ourselves to be guided by the conviction that in place of the previous wrong paths and beyond ravines, new ways are necessary and had to be built and opened together by filling in the gulf, so that in the process of the normalization of the relations between the two States the result will be a better understanding conducive, both for us and for the whole of Europe, to advantageous cooperation.

We allowed ourselves to be guided by the conviction that — if it is only in our power — the tragic chain of wars, suffering and injustice with which the history of Polish-German relations has been burdened up to now is finally broken, so that the gulf between the Polish and the German peoples that was torn by the hands of Hitler's barbaric intruders and occupiers in the period of the Second World War disappears.

The second German State, the direct neighbour of the People's Republic of Poland, the German Democratic Republic, twenty years ago, together with the People's Republic of Poland, signed the Görlitz Treaty which confirmed the Polish-German State frontier along the Oder and Lausitz Neisse laid down in the Potsdam Conclusions and helped to find a way to bridge this gulf.

This became the foundation of the process of normalization of the relations, the development of the peaceful cooperation, between Poland and the German Democratic Republic, not to speak of the alliance that is based on common ideological prerequisites — but that is naturally another matter.

And only on this basis, the recognition of the inevitability and inviolability of Poland's western frontier along the Oder and the Lausitz Neisse laid down in the Potsdam Conclusions, has it been possible to sign

today this treaty which pioneers the way to the normalization of the relations between Poland and the second German State which arose out of the ashes of the Third Reich — the Federal Republic of Germany.

It would appear that through the treaty signed today we are creating a real and solid basis for the process of normalizing the relations between our two States which is to embrace various spheres of life, in particular the stimulation of the economic, technological and cultural relations, for the well-understood benefit of both countries. We are also agreed that immediately after the treaty enters into force, diplomatic relations will be established between the People's Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany.

We hope, after the entry of the treaty into force, that, as was the case with the Moscow Treaty, a more intensive normalization process will be initiated without complications and inhibitions, and we believe that this is also the wish of your Government. We would also like to think that this important matter will also meet with the good will of all intelligent political forces in the Federal Republic, because any resistance to the treaty, and therefore to the perspectives it opens, would contradict in a striking manner the endeavour of the nations, the vitally necessary normalization of relations, détente and peace in Europe.

We see in the treaty a sign and a significant share in the normalization process for improving relations between the socialist countries and the Federal Republic of Germany which started with the important Moscow Treaty of August 12. We expect this process to be continued and also to include a normalization of relations with Czechoslovakia, about which the Chancellor has already spoken.

We believe that the framing, the normalization, of the relations between the two German States will be of fundamental importance and unusually advantageous for peace and cooperation in Europe, in the first place on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of both countries, with full equality of status with all other countries. With the greatest conviction, therefore, we give the fullest support to the question of the early accession both of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations Organization.

Already throughout Europe and all over the world, the treaty we have signed today has been regarded as a new, important step towards overcoming the odium of the Cold War in a sphere so sensitive to peace as Europe. With this step, we are helping to remove one of the most prominent and potentially dangerous seats of tension and, at the same time, promoting the process of the rapprochement of countries of various social conceptions, signs of which have already for a long time been noticeable in our continent.

We are realizing the prior conditions for a general security and cooperation in Europe. We are convinced that there are further opportunities for cooperation in this great question, including also the preparation and execution of a European conference.

Poland's share in the development of the European peace order is characterized by the fundamental treaty of friendship and mutual aid with the Soviet Union and by treaties with other fraternal, socialist States, as well as by numerous initiatives towards strengthening the trends towards reducing tensions in our continent.

The basic idea behind our policy, all our actions, is the effort to promote relations in Europe on the principle of peaceful coexistence. The prior condition is the coexistence of peoples and States in peace, freed from the burdens of the past and all the present great differences. A prior condition is also cooperation on all sides, particularly in the economic sphere, which is indeed the material basis for the development of the relations in other spheres.

Mr. Chancellor, Honoured Guests, in signing the present treaty on the normalization of relations between our two countries we have realized something to which not only was prominence given by our country and for the activation of which a new platform was created through the initiative of Vladislav Gomulka, who now heads our country. This initiative, which is rooted in Poland's consistent peace policy and accords with the vital interests of security and cooperation in Europe, prepared the way for the talks.

We are fully conscious of the significance of the fact that in the name of the Federal Republic of Germany

the signature under the treaty is set by a man who already at the outset of his assumption of power recognized the infinite misfortune that can result for the people of Germany, the peoples of Europe and peace in the world, through fascism. We also appreciate the impression of good will and the eloquence of these political forces which have evolved and are today realizing the present orientation of the Federal Republic.

In this we appreciate, Mr. Chancellor, your personal influence and that of Mr. Foreign Minister, Walter Scheel.

The possibilities of peaceful cooperation between our countries results from the wording and the spirit of this treaty.

They will be realized by the Government and people of our countries with the awareness of the significance of the treaty and the historic responsibility it imposes on our two States, their Governments and their social forces.

I would like to drink a toast to the treaty we have signed today and to its full realization, to you, Mr. Chancellor, to Mr. Foreign Minister Scheel, and to all the guests who have accompanied you, Mr. Chancellor, here from the Federal Republic of Germany, to the peaceful coexistence and security of our continent, to the peace that is so necessary in the world.