

Monday, 19 September 2016

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# Prague Daily Monitor



## Gorbachev warns of global crisis in message to Prague

ČTK | 19 SEPTEMBER 2016

Prague/Moscow, Sept 16 (CTK) - Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev expressed his extreme concern about the state of the world and called for efficient acts to relieve it in his video message he sent to the Prague conference on security after the Cold War on Friday.

Gorbachev painted a dim picture of the present-day world, stressing that when overcoming the crisis, "one has to start with Europe, naturally including Russia."

It is five to 12, the words are not sufficient, the situation keeps worsening, said Gorbachev, who excused himself from the conference, citing health problems.

"Europe must become an engine for the creation of a new global world. It must be safe, fair and stable world," he added.

He pointed out the Ukrainian conflict, the terrorist attacks in France and other countries and the sharp worsening of Russia-West relations.

Economic contacts built for decades are being severed, a dialogue has given way to sanctions, Gorbachev said.

"One cannot hide oneself behind sanctions," he added.

"All of us shoulder the responsibility," Gorbachev said, adding that new arms races had started, the military budgets were rising and new military units were being deployed in Europe.

"No government has proposed any reliable way out of the crisis," Gorbachev said.

"There is the impression of helplessness, an impassable blind alley. In Europe and in the world, there are the forces realising their responsibility. These are politicians, representatives of the civic society, public activists, academics and artists," Gorbachev said, adding that he could see some signs of a renewed dialogue between Russia and the USA even in the current situation.

"There is only little time, the moment of truths has come. One has to act immediately and decisively," Gorbachev said.

The "demilitarisation of the Ukrainian conflict is the first and most urgent task," he added.

The September 16-18 conference focuses on security developments after the Cold War, new problems and ways to solve them, and aspects of European security in relation to Russia.

The participants include former British foreign secretary David Owen, former Czech foreign minister Jan Kavan and Hynek Kmonicek, head of the Presidential Office's foreign section.

The addresses delivered on Friday focused on the possibilities of cooperation between Russia and the Western countries, and they warned against the threat of the current tension and strong distrust between the two sides. The war in Ukraine was a frequent topic, too.

Kmonicek said it was necessary for Russia not to lose its European face, because a change in the Russian identity would be a change "of all of us."

"We would be no longer the heart of Europe, but its borderland," Kmonicek read from Zeman's salute.

Originally, Gorbachev was to spend three days in Prague. This afternoon, he was to attend the presentation of a book on his relationship to Czechoslovakia, written by Czech journalist Milan Syrucek.

Syrucek told ČTK that Gorbachev ordered during the Velvet Revolution, on November 20, 1989, that the Soviet troops stationed in Czechoslovakia prevent any possible bloodshed if the

Czech army, security forces and paramilitary units wanted to suppress the massive pro-democracy street protests by force.

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