

So that our first and essential task at Brussels must be to find the means of adapting the collective efforts of all 15 NATO members, European and North American alike, to the new situation created by the decision of France. But this will not be enough. Already, over the last few years, the stability of Europe provided for by NATO -- stability and relative peace in the world -- has permitted a gradual but significant improvement in relations between the NATO and the Warsaw Pact powers. This desirable trend -- which, I must emphasize, is supported by all 15 NATO members -- must be maintained and, indeed, intensified. Only through the extension of the present détente, the present improvement in relations between the NATO powers, between East and West, can we bring about a situation in which real and substantial progress toward a settlement in Europe will become possible.

And so our second essential task at Brussels, as I see it - and I think I can speak for all 15 members-- is to find the means whereby the Atlantic countries can best provide the extension of the détente which must precede the solution of the political problems of the divided Europe.

Now this is not an easy task. The problem, in spite of the improvement in relations, continues to be a difficult one. I cannot precisely say how this improvement is to be furthered, but I will offer one last thought before hearing your questions. In tackling a task so important, there is opportunity -- indeed, there is need -- to take advantage both of bilateral and multilateral exchanges with Eastern European Communist countries. But whatever initiatives may be undertaken, they are most likely to be fruitful if they are co-ordinated through continuing consultation in the alliance and inspired by the common objective of a solid and lasting settlement in Europe.

We have improved very considerably, in trade and other relations, our contacts with the Soviet Union and with Eastern European countries. This we have done on an individual basis, as some of the NATO countries have done, including -- particularly during the last year -- the United States; but it is important that we endeavour to make this improvement in East-West relations through consultations with our NATO partners, and not seek only to do it alone.

I have not dealt with any of the specific problems that will be dealt with when we meet as a group of 14 and when we meet with regard to the French decision on Tuesday next, but I shall be glad to entertain some questions for a few minutes.

Mr. Marcel Gingras: Sir, do you already have the agenda of the meeting?

Mr. Martin: Yes, we have the agenda.

Mr. Gingras: May we know what are the main topics, please?

Mr. Martin: The agenda has not been given out as yet, but there is no real secret to this. First of all, the first item will be the state of the alliance, and, under this item, we shall be