

process, bearing witness yet again to our mutual trust, shared values and strength of purpose.

The leitmotiv of this ministerial has been, I think, communication -- communication with our own publics as well as with the other side. Our concern has been how best to convey with clarity and persuasion that in the process of safeguarding our own security, the Alliance is an instrument for peace, that our abiding purpose is to promote dialogue and constructive East-West relations.

However, in order to communicate effectively with these audiences, we must first communicate effectively among ourselves, in the spirit of openness and goodwill that has characterized our discussions today. A constant effort must be made at all times to put into practice the goal announced in the Ottawa statement, namely reinforcing the practice of open and timely consultations... on questions of common interest.

It is, of course, not always easy to communicate, to convey clearly what is on our minds. Sometimes there are difficulties even understanding one another within the Alliance, and very often, immense difficulties ensuring comprehension of our views by the other side. There are not only problems of language to overcome but also differences of national perceptions and aspirations, and differing unstated assumptions. This reminds me of the computer which was designed to translate from English into Russian and back again into English. The aphorism "out of sight, out of mind" was fed into the computer and translated from English into Russian. A bit later, it was rendered back into English and emerged from the computer as "invisible insanity".

The Alliance has now entered its fourth decade, a remarkable achievement for a group of fifteen sovereign states that will soon number sixteen. In reaffirming our adherence to the goals and ideals of the North Atlantic Treaty, I feel that we can look to the future, confident that the vitality and creativity of our peoples, united in a common effort, will be equal to the challenges awaiting them.

I ask you to join with me in drinking a toast to our respective Heads of State and to the Alliance. Long may it keep the peace.