
Political Declaration on the Fortieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War

May 3, 1985

The Heads of State or Government of Canada, The French Republic, The Federal Republic of Germany, The Republic of Italy, Japan, The United Kingdom and the United States, with the President of the Commission of the European Community, meeting together in Bonn on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, remember in grief all those who lost their lives in that time, whether by acts of war or as victims of inhumanity, repression and tyranny. We acknowledge the duty we owe to their memories, and to aid those who follow after them, to uphold peace, freedom and justice in our countries and in the world.

We have learned the lessons of history. The end of the war marked a new beginning. As the sounds of battle ceased, we tackled the tasks of moral and spiritual renewal and physical reconstruction. Transcending the hostilities which had once divided us we initiated on the basis of common values a process for reconciliation and cooperation amongst us. Today, linked in a peaceful, secure, and lasting friendship, we share in all our countries a commitment to freedom, democratic principles and human rights. We are proud that the governments of our countries owe their legitimacy to the will of our people, expressed in free elections. We are proud that our people are free to say and write what they will, to practise the religious they profess, and to travel where they will. We are committed to assuring the maintenance of societies in which individual initiative and enterprise may flourish and the ideals of social justice, obligations and rights may be pursued.

We recognize that we can secure those aims, and meet both the opportunities and the challenges presented by technological and insutrial change, more effectively in partnershp than on our own. In Europe, the community, the embodiment of reconciliation and common purpose, is growing in membership, strength and prosperity. The nations of the dynamic Pacific region are drawing even closer together. The partnership of North America, Europe and Japan is a guarantee of peace and stability in the world.

Other nations that shared with ours in the agonies of the Second World War are divided from us by fundamental differences of political systems. We deplore the division of Europe. In our commitment to the ideals of peace, freedom and democracy we seek by peaceful means to lower the barriers that have arisen within Europe. We believe that the CSCE process with its promise of enhancing human rights provides an opportunity to increase confidence, cooperation and security in Europe. Considering the climate of peace and friendship which we have achieved among ourselves forty years after the end of the war we look forward to a stage of peace in Europe in which the German people will regain its unity through free self-determination: and in Asia we earnestly hope that a political environment will be created which permits the parties to overcome the division of the Korean peninsula in freedom.

As recognized in the Charter of the United Nations all countries have a joint responsibility to maintain international peace and security and to this end refrain from the threat and the use of force. We for our part share a determination to preserve the peace while protecting our democratic freedoms. To that end, each of us will work to maintain and strengthen a stable military balance at the lowest possible levels of forces, neither seeking superiority for ourselves nor neglecting our defenses. We are prepared to pursue a high-level dialogue to deal with the profound differences dividing East and West. We strongly support endeavours to strengthen the peace and enhance deterrence through the negotiation of meaningful reductions in existing levels of nuclear arms, limitations on conventional arms, the banning of chemical weapons and lessening the risks of conflict. We welcome the opening of negotiations in Geneva. We appreciate the positive proposals of the United States of America. We urge the Soviet Union to act positively and constructively in order to achieve significant agreements there.