

In sum, however, I think it is a reasonable assessment that the *détente* process did open up eastern Europe to improved contacts with the West, did create the possibility of developing mutual confidence, and did reduce the risk of conflict in Europe. Nor should we make light of its remaining assets, which include an extensive framework of East-West negotiating forums such as the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe review meetings and arms control and disarmament talks, and a continuing dialogue between the super powers as exemplified by the possibility of a summit meeting later this year between Presidents Reagan and Brezhnev. But we must ensure a firmer foundation for the *détente* process if we are to achieve a more constructive, secure and durable East-West relationship.

Vital to such an achievement is a united alliance, able and willing to negotiate from a sense of strength and confidence. We demonstrated that we were capable of achieving such unity of purpose at our January 11 Special Meeting of the Council, at which we condemned the imposition of martial law in Poland. We have shown our resolve in our continued support of the 1979 two-track decision on the modernization of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe, a decision which has already borne fruit by bringing the Soviet Union to the bargaining table in Geneva.

**Importance of  
consultation**

Fundamental to the achievement and maintenance of alliance solidarity and sense of common purpose is adequate consultation among members. Ideally, consultation should seek at the outset to produce agreement on common objectives on the basis of joint assessment. But given the diversity of national interests, we should not always expect consultations to produce common policies. Consultations will, however, greatly increase the chance that conflicts of interest can be reconciled and policies harmonized. Nor ought consultations be limited solely to the threat to alliance interests posed by Soviet behaviour in the NATO area. Recent events have brought home to us again how out-of-area developments can affect us, and how important it is for members of this alliance to consult closely to define shared objectives whenever our interests are at issue. This is vital when individual allies are in a position to respond to requests for assistance in protecting the security of countries outside the NATO area. In such consultations, of course, it is not only the larger powers but also the smaller and middle-power members of the alliance who have a role to play.

We continue to face a challenge at home as well — that of ensuring that our publics understand and support our policies. In my address to you as Honorary President last December, I stressed my conviction that we had to do a better job in this respect. The need is no less clear today. It is characteristic of our free societies that our people have the right to be informed about our policies and the reasons for them, and equally important, have the freedom to express their opposition should they not agree. We cherish these rights and freedoms. Indeed they represent an essential difference between our open society and those of the closed Soviet system.

We have to take account of domestic public opinion, which in turn is influenced by

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