

Third, national consensus is vitally important to the effectiveness of the alliance. We must seek better to enjoin our publics, to develop public confidence in the wisdom of our policies and actions. This is particularly true for a generation of younger people who have had no direct experience with conflict. NATO has kept the peace for so long that our very success presents us with a major problem — how to convince the younger generation of the virtues and necessity of collective security. We must be frank with our publics, engage them in the debate, seek to more effectively explain what NATO means.

Similarly, we must be able to assure those whose support we seek that each NATO member participates fully in the decision-making process — that the burdens of collective defence carry with them benefits, including the right to have one's voice heard. We can only do so if there is, and if the public perceives, effective on-going consultation.

While maintaining the strength of our deterrent, we must continue to encourage dialogue and understanding with those who may not share our values, to help reduce the possibilities of conflict. The public image we present to the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe is as important as the public image we present to our own peoples. The reason for this is clear.

The allies must illustrate unequivocally the strength of the transatlantic partnership and our collective solidarity. Others should know they cannot divide us on principles. We should move forward, building upon the words of last year's Brussels Declaration and the recent Washington statement on East-West relations. These words are not new. But they are often not appreciated in the West, nor clearly understood elsewhere. Our alliance threatens no one. None of our weapons will ever be used except in response to attack. We do not aspire to superiority, neither will we accept that others should be superior to us. We respect the legitimate security interests of others, as we expect them to respect ours.

Ten years ago, alliance foreign ministers gathered in Canada and issued the Ottawa Declaration. One of the principal paragraphs of that Declaration proclaimed the continued dedication of each member of this alliance to the several principles of democracy, respect for human rights, justice and social progress.

That paragraph, perhaps more so than any other, serves to distinguish the NATO countries from those of the Warsaw Pact. More even than that, the dedication contained in that paragraph represents the fundamental strength of this alliance. This freedom and this democracy, which unite us in their defence, must be the source of our resolve. Without common resolve — yet, equally, without full understanding of the goals of this alliance — we cannot force from our peoples automatic acceptance of the NATO credo.

The strength and credibility of this alliance depend upon its political, every bit as much as its military, character. We must not forget that.

I well realize that I have posed questions to which some of the answers have been elusive. I make no apology for this. Alliance governments have long been comparing notes on what is meant by truly effective consultation, on how to master the challenges of public communication, and on ways of developing more comprehensive approaches to the issues of international security. Perhaps in your discussions you can help us find the answers....

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