

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.

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 to 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 that of the international community. The Soviet leaders do not. They can even insulate domestic opinion from international opprobrium. For example,