

All of us attach the greatest importance to the Geneva negotiations. The United States has entered these negotiations with the heavy responsibility of representing the interest of its partners. All of us have been impressed by the intensity of the consultations in the Special Consultative Group in preparation for these negotiations. They are a clear reflection of the United States' commitment to Allied interests as well as the common desire to achieve effective agreements.

We need now to maintain a sense of momentum in arms control as an integral part of efforts to improve NATO security. We must be constant in our approach, not only in our public utterances but also in our willingness to negotiate in all areas -- TNF, strategic arms reductions, and mutual and balanced force reductions. Above all, we must maintain our solidarity. Without it, the Soviet Union would not have been brought to the negotiating table, and success there will not be possible unless Alliance solidarity is maintained in complete support of the 1979 two-track decision.

One lesson that emerges from the most recent events is that, beyond the already enormous technical problems to be overcome in the Arms Control Negotiations, the most important element for their success is to establish a sufficient degree of shared interest based on mutual confidence. It will take both sides to establish the basis but we must be sure to do everything in our power to bridge that gap rather than to widen it. In this context, I hope that a meeting between President Reagan and President Brezhnev, which has been approved in principle by both sides, will take place as soon as there are prospects for success and the necessary preparations can be completed.

We can also do more to demonstrate that ours is not just a military alliance -- that it is a community of like-minded peoples defending commonly held principles, pursuing common objectives and promoting the widest possible co-operation in the interests of greater stability and welfare. In this context, may I add that it is a matter of gratification to me, as I am sure it is for all of us, to be able to anticipate the enlargement of this community by the admission of Spain to our Alliance.

I should like now to refer very briefly to some of the other important developments.

In the past year, we have re-invigorated our political consultations at ministerial level, and I trust we will continue this successful experiment. We have also developed a new technique of contingency planning within NATO which has proven very effective.