

How can we do this? Your assembly has as its theme "NATO: New Opportunities". There are many opportunities for us if we wish to be bold. Yet there are also many challenges and we must together deal with these challenges — some new, others long known — if we are to be able to respond to the opportunities.

Since 1949, Canada has placed great emphasis on NATO's non-military dimension. It is this theme to which I would like to devote some attention today. For it is in this area that several challenges lie. I hope that, over the next few days, you will consider what I have to say. I would welcome, in turn, knowing the views of you who represent all alliance member countries.

The North Atlantic Council, in 1956, approved the Report of the Committee on Non-Military Co-operation in NATO; what has become known — quite aptly, I believe — as the "report of the three wise men". If I may, I would like to draw upon one of its principal conclusions. If there is to be vitality and growth in the concept of the Atlantic community, the relations between members of NATO must rest on a sound basis of confidence and understanding. Without this, there cannot be constructive or solid political co-operation. It is easy to profess devotion to the principle of consultation in NATO. It is often difficult to convert this profession into practice.

Now, that report was based on the North Atlantic Treaty, and the Treaty contains four non-military provisions: on consultation; on democratic beliefs; on promoting conditions of stability; and on economic collaboration. These principles remain as important today as they did in 1949, a tribute to those men and women of wisdom who shaped the Treaty. Have we collectively remained faithful to these principles? If not, what more can we do to make them meaningful? It is you, those vitally interested in the alliance from outside government, who can make a valuable contribution to this discussion.

I would briefly like to highlight three elements of NATO's non-military character which I would ask you to consider.

First, effective collective action — emphasized as so important by the three wise men — requires a consensus within the alliance. This consensus can only be fashioned among our governments through thorough, frank and timely consultation. We may not always agree, as allies, on specific steps. That is both a virtue and a burden of democracy. But that should not hinder discussion. We should at least be prepared to consider all points of view and to try to harmonize essential objectives. After all, we share one paramount goal — the prevention of conflict. This should be the touchstone of our deliberations and nothing should mask its importance.

Second, the allies should not hesitate to discuss all essential issues. I have said that, to achieve its goals, the alliance must concert its political, economic, defence and moral values. Prevention of conflict cannot rest alone on arms control or military strength. We must develop comprehensive approaches and consider all vital issues which touch upon our security. Defence and deterrence cannot be isolated policies. They must be an integral part of a broad security policy.