

Perspectives for negotiations

13. The Ministers considered that the concrete issues concerning European security and co-operation mentioned in this Declaration are subjects lending themselves to possible discussions or negotiations with the Soviet Union and the other countries of Eastern Europe. The Allied governments will continue and intensify their contacts, discussions or negotiations through all appropriate channels, bilateral or multilateral, believing that progress is most likely to be achieved by choosing in each instance the means most suitable for the subject. Ministers therefore expressed their support for bilateral initiatives undertaken by the German Federal Government with the Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe, looking toward agreements on the renunciation of force and the threat of force. Ministers expressed the hope that existing contacts will be developed so as to enable all countries concerned to participate in discussions and negotiations on substantial problems of co-operation and security in Europe with real prospects of success.

14. The Members of the Alliance remain receptive to signs of willingness on the part of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to discuss measures to reduce tension and promote co-operation in Europe and to take constructive actions to this end. They have noted in this connection references made by these countries to the possibility of holding an early conference on European security. Ministers agreed that careful advance preparation and prospects of concrete results would in any case be essential. Ministers consider that, as part of a comprehensive approach, progress in the bilateral and multilateral discussions and negotiations which have already begun, or could begin shortly, and which relate to fundamental problems of European security, would make a major contribution to improving the political atmosphere in Europe. Progress in these discussions and negotiations would help to ensure the success of any eventual conference in which, of course, the North American members of the Alliance would participate, to discuss and negotiate substantial problems of co-operation and security in Europe.

15. The Ministers affirmed that, in considering all constructive possibilities, including a general conference or conferences, they will wish to assure that any such meeting should not serve to ratify the present division of Europe and should be the result of a common effort among all interested countries to tackle the problems which separate them.

Report by Secretary of State for External Affairs

... I should like to report to the House on the NATO meeting from which the Minister of National Defence and I have just returned. I am tabling herewith the communiqué and the attaching declaration which were issued at the close of the meeting. Part of the communiqué deals with NATO's military affairs, and