

We also have a new type of challenge before us. That challenge is not so much to initiate change, it is to channel it, to ensure that it remains permanent and stabilizing in its consequences. In effect, the challenge before us as ministers is to keep up with change.

In breaking new ground, I detect much common ground. That common ground goes beyond specifics. It relates also to a shared sense of purpose and mission.

Allow me, as Chairman, the luxury of summarizing what I see as the common elements of this shared purpose.

First, I think that all of us accept that we have entered a new era in relations between East and West. It is an era where the terms East and West are themselves beginning to lose meaning.

Second, I detect a consensus that we must act quickly. We must act quickly to consolidate the gains which have been made thus far and to ensure that future change proceeds in a way which enhances our common security rather than detracting from it.

Third, I believe there is agreement that there is an overriding requirement to be guided by the dual goals of stability and predictability. We must act in such a way as to smooth the bumps on the road ahead and to maximize the predictability of change.

Fourth, I also detect a shared belief that a guiding principle of our future security framework should be the reduction of military forces to the lowest possible level consistent with national security requirements.

Fifth, I believe that there is agreement that we must broaden the definition of security and act upon that broader definition. That broadened definition of security relates to confidence building, verification, and the legitimization of borders and frontiers.

Sixth, I think we all share the view that a new framework for relations in Europe requires the continued clear involvement of North America in the various councils of the continent.

Those are broad issues where I, as Chairman, see little, if any, difference between the 23 ministers sitting around this table. That in itself is grounds for optimism.

There also seems to be a measure of agreement on specific negotiations or institutions which have been the focus of our discussion so far. There is a strong consensus among us regarding the desirability of Open Skies. An Open Skies agreement will