

There are enough areas in which East and West are talking for substantial progress to be made, if the political will exists.

And most of all if we remain united and determined. Here in Halifax, let us reaffirm our solidarity, and work together to ensure every new idea and proposal for international peace and security is accorded a full, sympathetic and urgent hearing.

When we chose Halifax to host the meeting of the Atlantic Council, the charm of the city and of this part of the country were certainly not the least of our reasons.

But we wished also to signify how deeply rooted in Europe Canadians remain, and how great an affinity we continue to feel for the Atlantic Community.

This Atlantic port, closer to the shores of Europe than to our own West Coast, symbolizes the enduring link between the Old World and the New. Since the days of Leif Eriksen, John Cabot and Jacques Cartier, Europeans have come to these shores, and to this harbour, in search of safe haven and fortune.

And more recently, Halifax anchored the lifeline which sustained allied forces in Europe in two world wars. From this point, too, Canadians sailed to Murmansk, or died en route, maintaining the "northern connection" with the Soviet Union.

In brief, when we welcome you in Halifax, we are asserting the community of interest we share with you; we also hope to remind you of the important contribution made to the Alliance by Canada.

Our military presence in Europe, and the commitment we have made to the reinforcement of Europe in time of crisis, are unique not only as geographically remote from Europe, who also have security interests in the North and in Asia.

But a long time ago, Canadians judged that our common civilization made the security of Europe indistinguishable from that of North America. And ever since, Canadian defence policy has had two priorities - holding the line in Europe, and defending the North American continent.

We all have a duty to fulfill, each in our own way. We all place a high premium on peace. We must all do our part to see it is maintained.