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SERVICE DE PRESSE

PRESS SERVICE

OTAN/NATO, 1110 Bruxelles ■ Telephones: 241 00 40 - 241 44 00 - 241 44 90 TELEX: 23-867

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WASHINGTON STATEMENT ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Issued by the Foreign Ministers at the  
North Atlantic Council Meeting, Washington  
(31st May 1984)

1. At their meeting in December 1983 the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member countries of the Alliance, on the initiative of the Foreign Minister of Belgium, decided that the Council should undertake an appraisal of East-West relations with a view to achieving a more constructive East-West dialogue.
2. The appraisal has confirmed the continuing validity of the balanced approach contained in the Harmel Report of 1967. To ensure the security of members of the Alliance, the most appropriate long-term policies are the maintenance of adequate military strength and political solidarity and, on that basis, the pursuit of a more stable relationship between the countries of East and West through dialogue and co-operation. These elements are complementary: dialogue can only be fruitful if each party is confident of its security and is prepared to respect the legitimate interests of others: military strength alone cannot guarantee a peaceful future. Experience points to the continuing need for full, consistent and realistic implementation of the two main tasks of the Alliance set out in the Harmel Report.
3. In pursuit of this approach the Allies sought to alleviate sources of tension and to create a propitious climate for expanded co-operation. Steps such as the Berlin Quadripartite Agreement, improvements in relations between the two German states with positive results for individuals, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) I accords including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) were the fruits of this policy. However, progress towards the expansion of human contacts and human freedoms remains unsatisfactory. Individuals have nonetheless benefitted from increased opportunities for contacts and communication.