

me that we in NATO must face up to the fact that there is a need for us all to do a better job of communicating with the public. We should make a more determined effort to inform those who have become disoriented in the stress of the nuclear era and who need to be reminded of the essential role our Alliance plays in safeguarding our societies from intimidation. We need to speak also to those for whom the North Atlantic Alliance is an institution created long ago, for purposes and reasons which are for them ancient history.

In speaking to our own peoples, including our youth, we need to remind ourselves of our origins, to reaffirm our faith in what we stand for and to recognize with clarity the challenge we face.

We can be proud of our achievements. For more than thirty years, this Alliance has been successful in doing the job it was created for: it has preserved the peace in Europe and has deterred Soviet expansion in the NATO area. It has, in fact, given Europe the longest period of peace it has known in this century. It has also proved its worth as a highly developed forum for political consultations and crisis management. Beyond that, it has fostered growing co-operation in a variety of defence-related fields on the basis of shared interests and values.

We, in this Alliance, have been able to preserve peace until now because we have maintained a credible deterrent capability and the trans-Atlantic bridge on which the essential solidarity of this Alliance rests. These ingredients of success in the past will continue to be the keys to the success of our enterprise in the future.

All this is cause for justified satisfaction but not for complacency at a time when segments of the public have lost sight of the Alliance's role. It is not enough to recall the past. Today, we must get across the message that we in this Alliance stand for peace. We must get across the message that the purpose of our weapons, nuclear and conventional, is to prevent a war, whether it arises by miscalculation or design, not to fight one.

The East/West situation has been perceived by many as more or less stable over the past decade. For a while, we seemed to be building bridges with the East. We lived in the decade of détente -- the super powers were talking to each other about limiting strategic arms, and negotiations began on the mutual and balanced reduction of conventional forces.