

Canada Takes Part in Allied Consultations Prior to Geneva Summit

In a statement to the House of Commons on October 28, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney discussed the gathering of the leaders of five of the principal allies of the United States which was held in New York on October 24. Following are excerpts from the Prime Minister's statement.

"Mr. Speaker, many heads of state and heads of government had come to New York on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the United Nations. President Reagan took advantage of that rather unique situation and gathering to initiate discussions with the leaders of five of the principal allies of the United States of America, including Canada. The purpose was to exchange views about the forthcoming meeting between the President and General Secretary Gorbachev in Geneva. I had already conveyed some of my views on this subject to President Reagan in private correspondence and telephone conversations.

The President was surely right to have taken this initiative. The first meeting between the Soviet and United States leaders at the summit in six years would

be a crucial event, whatever the circumstances. But it is all the more so now — it is all the more important. The Soviet Union has an impressive new leader and the United States has an experienced President who enjoys massive public support in his own country. That is so important because of the requirement of an American President to submit whatever is agreed to the Senate for ratification. As we met in New York, the six western leaders recognized that these circumstances represented perhaps a historic opportunity to set relations between the United States and the Soviet Union on a new and constructive course.

Our talks I think, Mr. Speaker, fully justified the unprecedented time devoted to them. In two sessions lasting more than five hours the President was able to present his own ideas at length and to take the views of others. The degree of mutual understanding was impressive. The President knows that he carries with him to Geneva the hopes and expectations not only of his own people, but those of all the western countries. He knows he has their full support. He understands and agrees that progress in arms control and disarmament is central

and vital. But equally, he shares the view that, if progress is to be made on the central issue, all other issues that bear upon it will have to be considered, among them human rights, trade and cultural relations and regional issues. The leaders agreed that it would be unreasonable to presume bad faith on the part of the new Soviet leadership. If an honourable agreement is possible at all, we shall seek to conclude one.

In New York we agreed that it would be extremely useful if the President could provide NATO members with a full debriefing immediately following the Geneva summit. As a result, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the House today that NATO heads of government will gather in Brussels on Thursday, November 21, to hear President Reagan's impressions of his meeting with Mr. Gorbachev....

We are aware of the deficiencies and limitations of the UN, but we continue to believe that what nations can accomplish by working together will always be greater than what any one nation can accomplish by doing it alone. In this regard I take particular satisfaction from the strength, unity and vitality of the western alliance. When the leaders of the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy, West Germany and Canada met with President Reagan to discuss the forthcoming summit, the strength of cohesion of our common purpose was strongly evident. We are all deeply committed to the alliance and the principles it represents. We were also agreed that every reasonable avenue must be explored and every thoughtful attempt made to reduce tensions and promote cooperation between the two superpowers.

I encountered no disagreement, Mr. Speaker, when, on behalf of all Canadians, I urged President Reagan to go that extra mile to seek a just agreement, to presume that Mr. Gorbachev is no less interested in a secure peace. These are the ingredients that Canadians view as indispensable to the conclusion of a fair and verifiable accord. The quest for peace is everyone's business, Mr. Speaker. While Canada will not be present at the table in Geneva, our interests will. We shall remain vigilant to ensure that they continue to be defended effectively and well."



Heads of government (from left): Bettino Craxi (Italy), Margaret Thatcher (Britain), Ronald Reagan (US), Yasuhiro Nakasone (Japan), Helmut Kohl (West Germany) and Brian Mulroney (Canada), at New York meeting.

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