

5 And so our second essential task at Brussels, as I see it, and I think I can speak for all fifteen members, is to find the means whereby the Atlantic countries can best provide the extension of the detente which must precede the solution of the political problems of the divided Europe.

10 Now, this is not an easy task. The problem, in spite of the improvement in relations, continues to be a difficult one. I cannot precisely say how this improvement is to be furthered, but I will offer one last thought before hearing your questions. In tackling a task so important there is opportunity -- indeed there is need -- to take advantage both of bilateral and multilateral exchanges with eastern European Communist countries. But whatever initiatives may be undertaken, they are most likely to be fruitful if they are coordinated through continuing consultation in the Alliance, and inspired by the common objective of a solid and lasting settlement in Europe.

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20 We have improved very considerably in trade and other relations our contacts with the Soviet Union and with Eastern European countries. This we have done on an individual basis, as some of the NATO countries have done, including -- particularly during the last year -- the United States; but it is important  
25 that we endeavor to make this improvement in East-West relations through consultations with our NATO partners, and not seek only to do it alone.

I have not dealt with any of the specific