

## **United States of America**

3:00 p.m.

SECRETARY ACHESON: Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the Government and the people of the United States, I warmly welcome to our country and our capital the Foreign Ministers who have assembled here to sign the North Atlantic Treaty. We are honored by their presence, both as individuals who have done much for peace and as representatives of nations and peoples who have contributed notably to the welfare and progress of mankind.

We are met together to consummate a solemn act. Those who participated in the drafting of this treaty must leave to others judgment of the significance and value of this act. They cannot appraise the achievement but they can and should declare the purposes of their minds and hearts.

It was, I think, their purpose – like the purpose of those who chart the stars – not to create what they record, but to set down realities for the guidance of men, whether well or ill-disposed. For those who seek peace it is a guide to refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. For those who set their feet upon the path of aggression, it is a warning that if it must needs be that offenses come, then woe unto them by whom the offense cometh.

For the reality which is set down here is not created here. The reality is the unity of belief, of spirit, of interest of the community of nations represented here. It is the product of many centuries of common thought and of the blood of many simple and brave men and women.

The reality lies not in the common pursuit of a material goal or of a power to dominate others. It lies in the affirmation of moral and spiritual values which govern the kind of life they propose to lead and which they propose to defend, by all possible means, should that necessity be thrust upon them. Even this purpose is a fact which has been demonstrated twice in this present century.

It is well that these truths be known. The purpose of this treaty is to publish them and give them form.

From this act, taken here today, will flow increasing good for all peoples. From this joining of many wills in one purpose will come new inspiration for the future. New strength and courage will accrue not only to the peoples of the Atlantic community, but to all peoples of the world community who seek for themselves, and for others equally, freedom and peace.

My colleagues, the Foreign Ministers, who will sign this treaty, will share with us the pleasant duty of speaking on the significance of the occasion which brings us together this afternoon. I consider it a rare privilege to present my distinguished co-workers, who have traveled great distances in order to evidence by their presence the solemnity of this occasion.

We now have the honor to present the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, His Excellency, Monsieur Paul Henri Spaak. (Applause)