

OPENING PRESS STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL
AFTER THE NACC MEETING
20 DECEMBER 1991

WE HAVE JUST CONCLUDED THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COOPERATION COUNCIL. THIS MEETING WAS A HISTORIC STEP IN THE PROCES OF BUILDING A NEW EUROPE BASED ON EQUALITY, PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION. THE SPIRIT OF TODAY'S DISCUSSIONS CORRESPONDED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OCCASION WHICH MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW, ENHANCED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ALLIANCE AND OUR LIAISON PARTNERS.

WE HAVE ACHIEVED A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT RESULTS: FIRST, WE HAVE AGREED A JOINT DECLARATION. IT NOT ONLY OUTLINES HOW OUR RELATIONSHIP WILL BE CONDUCTED BUT ALSO UNDERSCORES OUR DESIRE TO DEEPEN OUR COOPERATION STILL FURTHER OVER TIME AND TO ENLARGE IT TO OTHER AREAS LIKE THE SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AMONG OUR 25 COUNTRIES. FROM NOW ON WE WILL BE CONSULTING CLOSELY AND FREQUENTLY; AND IN THE SAME SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND TRUST THAT CHARACTERIZED THE DISCUSSIONS AROUND THE TABLE TODAY.

SECOND, THE AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN TASKED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO DRAW UP EARLY NEXT YEAR A CONCRETE WORKPLAN OF ACTIVITIES. WE WILL THEN BE ABLE TO COMPLEMENT OUR REGULAR POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS WITH A VERY SUBSTANTIVE PROGRAMME OF PRACTICAL COOPERATION IN ALL FIELDS WHERE NATO CAN HELP THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE.

THIRD, MINISERS AGREED ON THE HIGH IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATIONS ON THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE RATIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CFE AGREEMENT. THEY HAVE THEREFORE ESTABLISHED A WORKING GROUP COMPOSED OF THE HIGH LEVEL TASK FORCE AND OF REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR LIAISON PARTNERS TO DEAL WITH THESE QUESTIONS.

FOURTH, WE ARE BUILDING A EURO-ATLANTIC COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE BENEFITS OF FREEDOM, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY THAT WE HAVE ENJOYED THROUGH THE ALLIANCE ARE EXTENDED TO ALL OUR NEW PARTNERS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE. WE SHARE THE VIEW AMONG THE 25 STATES THAT THE SECURITY OF OUR MEMBER STATES IS INSEPARABLY LINKED. OUR COMMON SECURITY CAN BEST BE SAFEGUARDED THROUGH THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A NETWORK OF INTERLOCKING INSTITUTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS AS THE COMPREHENSIVE ARCHITECTURE OF A STABLE EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER, BASED ON THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE CSCE AS ITS KEY ELEMENTS. OUR JOINT INTENTION IS TO PROGRESSIVELY ENDOW CSCE WITH THE CONCRETE MEANS TO MANAGE CRISIS SITUATIONS AND SETTLE DISPUTES PEACEFULLY. IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER KEY EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS - THE CSCE, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION - WE WANT TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP, COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE THAT THIS CONTINENT NEEDS TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSITION AND REALISE OUR VISION OF A TRULY UNDIVIDED EUROPE.

FIFTH, THE 25 MINISTERS DISCUSSED THE EVOLUTION IN THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE WE RESPECT THE DEMOCRATIC ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLES FOR AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE AS LEGITIMATE CLAIMS BASED ON THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AS WELL AS THE PARIS CHARTER, WE ALSO EMPHASIZE THAT THIS GOAL MUST BE SOUGHT IN A PEACEFUL WAY, AND THROUGH NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURS. WE EXPECT THESE NEWLY EMERGING STATES TO IMPLEMENT ALL CSCE PRINCIPLES AND RESPECT ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS WHICH AFFECT THEIR TERRITORIES. WE ARE CERTAINLY PREOCCUPIED AT THE PROSPECT OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION.

THEREFORE WE CALL ON THE REPUBLICS TO ENSURE SAFE AND CENTRAL CONTROL OVER NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON THEIR TERRITORIES UNDER A SIMPLE AUTHORITY AND TO ADHERE TO THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY.

WE FACE DAUNTING TASKS IN THIS AGE OF UNCERTAINTY AND UNPREDICTABILITY. BUT THIS MEETING HAS PROVED THAT OUR FUTURE COOPERATION CAN HELP US PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LEADERSHIP AND COHERENCE TO FACE UP TO THESE CHALLENGES.