30th ANNIVERSARY of the ATLANTIC ALLIANCE
4th April, 1979
SPEECHES
NATO Headquarters
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30TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

SPEECHES

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Address by Dr. Joseph M. A. H. Luns, Secretary General of NATO, at a ceremony held in the Main Courtyard at NATO Headquarters, on 4th April, 1979.
Today the North Atlantic Treaty is thirty years old. Thanks to it, Europe has known peace throughout these thirty years. This period has enabled the member countries of the Alliance to develop and strengthen their societies and economies behind the shield of a common defence system. The individuality of each of our nations has thus been able to flourish within the framework of freely chosen democratic institutions without any country having to fear outside threats or pressures to alter the course it had elected to follow.

However, in recalling the achievements of our Alliance and what it means in terms of fifteen-nation co-operation and solidarity, we must not forget that behind all the organizational, military and other machinery composing the North Atlantic Treaty defensive system there are men and women, the citizens of our fifteen countries, who have made possible all these accomplishments during the past thirty years.

I should therefore like to take this opportunity to pay tribute in particular to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and women's forces who, on both sides of the Atlantic, form part of NATO's integrated military system and on whom depends the arduous, demanding and often thankless task of giving tangible expression to our concept of defensive solidarity. United before us today stand the representatives of the Armed Forces of the NATO member countries. They are here to commemorate with us the thirty years of peace made possible by their efforts. These contingents represent hundreds of thousands of compatriots in uniform who have served and will continue to serve the mutual defence of the countries of the Alliance.

Around this Cour d'honneur today are also representatives of the delegations of the 15 countries of the Alliance and members of the International, Civil and Military Staffs, without whose devoted work the best plans that can be devised would have no substance. Behind the armed forces whose vigilance continues to assure our safety are the personnel of the support services, the working men and women in factories that produce the material through which they discharge their task. All these add up to many millions of people, without whom the North Atlantic Treaty would be meaningless. It is all these citizens of our countries that are the substance, the sinew on the bare bones of the plans laid down by the founders of NATO.

NATO is a free association of sovereign democratic states whose governments are elected through the free institutions which are cherished by all of us. Without the broad support of the citizens of our countries NATO could not continue to exist. We who work at NATO Headquarters are constantly encouraged by the demonstration of support and understanding in member states for what the North Atlantic Treaty Organization stands for.
It is fitting that on this occasion we think again about these things, about the societies which we represent. Societies of free citizens who are determined to safeguard their freedom, knowing the high cost of doing so.

The organization which has evolved over these thirty years is fully equipped and ready for the task not only of continuing to assure an adequate defence, but also of fulfilling the dynamic rôle of constantly seeking new mechanisms and new dialogues to bring about a better atmosphere between East and West, a climate in which there might no longer be the need to spend so much of our resources on the necessities of defence. A climate in which we can build constructive relationships between the peoples of all the countries of Europe. For it is people, the citizens of all our countries, that are the measure of our efforts. It is the work, the efforts, the new and imaginative thinking of our countrymen and women, unhindered by the constraints of authoritarianism, which have been the main strength of NATO during these thirty years and which will be the major force behind the discharge of the difficult tasks ahead in the years to come.

Note: Parts of this speech were delivered in French.
II.

Commorative Session of
The North Atlantic Council
on 4th April, 1979
Speech by Dr. Joseph M. A. H. Luns, Secretary General

The present meeting of the North Atlantic Council is being held to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. The world today is very different from the one we knew thirty years ago. In 1949 those now forming the majority of the population of our fifteen countries had not yet been born. Nevertheless, this concise document, with its perfectly explicit preamble and fourteen paragraphs has stood the test of time. This, I think, testifies to the wisdom of its authors and their perspicacity in looking beyond the immediate military requirements of the time.

Since then many fresh ideas and new machinery have progressively evolved to meet a new state of affairs created by the growing interdependence of countries. However, these developments have taken place against a background of certain constants, some positive, some negative.

As regards East/West relations, a definite change has occurred, Stalinist hostility and expansionism in Europe having given way to a much more complex situation. Today, co-operation, or at least discussion, with the East is possible in many areas. The Soviet Union and its allies have manifested the desire - one might even say the need - to co-operate with the industrialized countries of the West. However, there is still every reason to distrust the expansionist designs of the Soviet Union, not only in Europe but throughout the world. Thirty years later, the peoples of the Atlantic Alliance are still worried about the real aims of the Soviet Union and the alliance system it has built up around it.

The notion of co-operation between Western countries, born of the joint victory over fascism, has also gained ground. It has been the driving-force behind a whole series of co-operative institutions. In NATO, the methods and procedures of consultation and co-operation have developed over the years to become, in spite of occasional difficulties, a permanent and, I think, irreversible process, the roots of which are to be found in the practices employed by the Western countries, both inside and outside NATO, in their mutual relations.

The partnership which has grown up between the two sides of the Atlantic and which is embodied in NATO is one of the great historical developments of the twentieth century. These transatlantic ties go deep, and the imbalance of power and influence that existed immediately following the war has changed dramatically in favour of
greater equality and deeper mutual respect. This has not come about as a result of a weakening of the North American Allies but as a result of a strengthening of the European ones. We cannot, however, ignore that Europe's post-war economic recovery was sparked off by a unique gesture - the Marshall Plan - which well illustrated the political acumen of the Truman Administration.

The development of the machinery for consultation and co-operation in its various forms bears witness to the imaginativeness and perspicacity of the Atlantic Alliance. Thus, the military rampart thrown up to stem the tide of Soviet expansionism has been gradually transformed into an organization with an important and, I would venture to say, essential political dimension. The combination of its basic defensive mission and a dynamic political function means that the Alliance has at its disposal a powerful tool for tackling the formidable tasks before it. During the last ten years we have witnessed the start of three dialogues or negotiations that have great repercussions for the future. The inter-Allied consultative machinery is essential for each of them.

The SALT process, begun in the second half of the Sixties, is continuing along lines that have been extended by discussions between the two sides - the United States and the Soviet Union - since the initial goals were fixed. With the expansion of their scope, the negotiations increasingly involve the vital interests of all members of the Alliance. New procedures have to be developed and applied to ensure that the interests of all the Allies are taken into even greater account as the dialogue proceeds. There is every reason to believe that, although difficult, this important and constructive process will continue and be profitable to us all.

The second major series of negotiations may bring about significant changes in the military situation in Europe - I refer, of course, to the talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions being held in Vienna. These talks, which are the outcome of an idea put forward by the Alliance in Reykjavik in 1968, have now been going on for some five years. If, as we hope, they lead to an agreement, it will have direct and indirect effects of a positive kind on the subsequent course of East/West relations. The Eastern positions are still marked by over-rigidity and by a persistent desire to gain the upper hand. However, should there be a breakthrough, the MBFR process could further a rapprochement between the two blocs. The resultant narrowing of the split in our continent would be of importance not only for Europe but also for the world as a whole.

The third great dialogue of our time in which members of the Atlantic Alliance are playing a vital part is the process initiated by the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. With the system of review conferences and expert meetings, too, it is to be hoped that in the long run if not in the immediate future a climate of real détente will one day prevail in our, at present, thoroughly divided Europe.
The Atlantic Alliance is firmly committed to the many-faceted process that has come to be known as détente, although the word came relatively late into NATO's vocabulary. It occurs first in the June 1967 communiqué. But the concept of seeking a better atmosphere in East/West relations and solutions to problems by peaceful means goes back to the early days of the organization. I quote a typical passage from the Declaration issued by the Alliance as far back as December 1957: "We seek an end to world tension, and intend to promote peace, economic prosperity and social progress throughout the world". The Alliance sees the détente process as the essential corollary of its defence posture. Stress on defensive preparedness alone is incomplete, just as reliance on a policy of détente alone without maintaining a credible defence would be foolhardy under the circumstances we face today.

Unfortunately, the détente process to which the Alliance is committed means different things in East and West. For the West it means a breaking down of artificial and bureaucratic barriers throughout the whole field of human contacts and trade and economic relations. It means the removal of obstacles in a climate of stability in political relationships where the use of force to solve problems has been excluded. For the East, it has a more limited meaning in the sense of what the Soviets call "peaceful coexistence" without any abating of the ideological offensive on their part.

The Alliance has a great deal of unfinished work before it. It has taken us thirty years to come to the point where we can discern a certain promise of a more peaceful, a more stable world without, however, as yet being able to say that the results are near at hand. The Alliance has, however, proved during the thirty years of its existence that it can bring together and concentrate the forward-looking thinking of 15 nations. It has proved again and again that it can adapt itself to new circumstances and new opportunities.

Predicting what the future will hold is not a particularly fruitful undertaking especially in today's world where events crowd one upon the other with great force and frequency. Even in the few months of 1979 that have so far run their course, the crush of disturbances, all of which have implications to a greater or lesser degree for the members of the Alliance, have produced new challenges as well as new dangers. In such circumstances, the opportunity to exchange views, pool information and come to common perceptions, a process for which the North Atlantic Alliance is eminently suitable, represents a most important asset for the Alliance governments.

It is not only a matter of good luck that our thirty-year old Alliance continues to develop itself as a forum for meeting the challenges of the future, nor that it does so with a vigour not often seen in human
groupings of such age. It is rather the mature realization of our
governments that they have in the Alliance something of inestimable
value. NATO is an expression of the interdependence that is the
inescapable conclusion of our times. It also represents the recognition
of the strength given to each one of our countries through a common
heritage, based on true democracy and free institutions through which
our people can express themselves. Our citizens have made the choice,
constantly, and indeed very recently reaffirmed, that they value the
association of these 15 nations of ours as an enhancement of the
individual strengths of their countries and as a focus for action in the
difficult work of improving conditions in the world in which we must
live and want to live.

Our peoples, through their elected governments, have also
continued to opt for the difficult choice of spending the necessary funds
for defence. Even with all the other desirable social and economic goals
on which a nation's income can be spent, there is an understanding that
in this fast changing, dangerous world, the requirements of an adequate
defence remain necessary. I am convinced that the Alliance is fully
capable of fulfilling the aspirations of its citizens. The thirty years of
the Alliance's existence have firmly established NATO as the most
important instrument for peace and stability of the Western world.
I have no doubt that for the foreseeable future it will remain so.

Before concluding, I should like to say a few words about
our host country, Belgium. Since the Second World War, Belgium, more than
many other countries, has understood that the fate of nations, both great
and small, of necessity depends on cooperation and concerted effort.
Belgium has wholeheartedly espoused the idea of European unity and of
co-operation with North America and with our Alliance. Pursuit of this
clear-sighted policy has not been without some difficulties of adaptation.
But there is no doubt that a policy based on a broad and generous vision
is the one best suited to our times. On this occasion, may I therefore
thank His Majesty, the King of the Belgians, and his Government for the
hospitality shown to us during these last eleven years and express my
firm conviction that Belgium's faith in the Atlantic Alliance will prove
as unshakable in the future as it has been in the past.

Note: Parts of this speech were delivered in French.
Speech by the Dean, Ambassador F. Catalano di Melilli (Italy)

The Atlantic Alliance was created in 1949, at an extremely difficult period in international relations, with the fundamental aim of guaranteeing the security of its European and North American members and of preserving world peace.

History is gathering speed. Since 1949 events with far-reaching implications have wrought great changes on the international scene: the countries of Western Europe have risen again from the ruins of war and developed their economic and social systems to levels never before achieved. The Atlantic area as a whole has known a period of prosperity, democratic growth and social progress which has no precedent in history. Meanwhile the newly-independent countries or those which were on the fringes of the international community have now joined it in ever increasing number and are acquiring ever increasing authority. In Asia, Japan has resumed a political and economic position commensurate with its influence and stature. Within the Socialist world, there have been signs of differences and conflicting tendencies.

In a nutshell, we are faced by problems of increasing complexity.

Yet the ebb and flow of events and the changing situation notwithstanding, there has been no weakening of the essential rôle of the Alliance as an instrument for security and peace within the context of East/West relations which, for their part are still of central importance to the conduct of world affairs.

We have none of us forgotten the vicissitudes which have beset these relations in the past thirty years. As far as I am concerned, there is no doubt at all that without the security provided by the Alliance, the events of the immediate post-war years would have been far more dramatic and traumatic for its members. It can likewise be claimed that without the Alliance the other side would not gradually have realised that détente was a valid option or, as we must hope, the only possible option. It is, moreover, my belief that it would be difficult and perhaps dangerous for any of us to set out separately on the road to détente, without the security and cohesion afforded by the Alliance.

During the different phases which have marked the world political situation in general and East/West relations in particular, the area covered by the Alliance - which in the past has been the theatre of cruel conflicts - has become a major factor for stability, co-operation and peace in international relations as a whole. Thus, thirty years after the signing of the Washington Treaty it can be said, with legitimate pride, that the Atlantic Alliance has fully and faithfully carried out the tasks it set itself.
I have just referred to the Atlantic area as one of unprecedented economic, social and civil progress. I would add that it is also a vast area where democracy, freedom and deep and genuine respect for human rights prevail. We share a common faith in our principles and a common determination to defend them and, though fully and quietly aware of their meaning and irretrievable worth, we do not set out to make converts or to engage in polemics.

Together with the needs of our common security, it is this vision of things which binds us together and which has prompted our countries to develop and improve on the forms of co-operation and political consultation by which we set great store.

The Alliance has not suffered the fate of other comparable pacts which were formed in the face of an outside threat, but which were then allowed to lapse or were abandoned because of difficulties and divergencies; this is due, in my opinion, to the clear-sightedness of those who were able to incorporate in the Washington Treaty a dimension which went beyond the purely military and of those who subsequently were able to adjust the machinery and rules of the Alliance to the changing requirements of an international situation, which brought out the value of extensive and far-ranging political consultation.

Like all living things, the world has become a more complex place.

New problems have emerged, enmeshed and linked with one another in ways which could hardly have been foreseen thirty years ago. This being so, the prompt exchange of information and assessments, the pooling of ideas, the search - when necessary - for concerted views are both legitimate and necessary to an Alliance which does not wish to be, cannot be, a mere instrument of military security. We all know the limits of Atlantic political consultation. We all know that the Alliance is not, and does not wish to be, a supra-national body, that it does not wish to act as a monolithic force vis-à-vis the outside world and its own members. We all know what is meant by free, equal and sovereign countries and are all aware of the reciprocal respect which must be shown in tackling issues arising out of national views and interests which do not always, or necessarily, converge. Likewise, we are all aware that it is in our common interest to capitalize on the assets represented by the range of positions, methods and possibilities of member countries. But we must also admit that without frank political consultation, in the course of which each member country can put forward its own views and learn those of the others, a fundamental dimension of the Alliance would be lost and Atlantic solidarity, so necessary to the common interest, would be worth very little.

The Alliance has achieved its aim without in any way losing its relevance.
In difficult times, when world affairs are becoming increasingly complex and when new problems are appearing while the older ones subsist, the Alliance still has its part to play, namely, to safeguard the security of its members and to contribute to the creation of a peaceful climate throughout the world.

This, I believe, is the message, the image which we must get across today, thirty years after the signing of the Washington Treaty, to the world at large and, above all, to the general public in our own countries: the image is of fifteen democratic countries linked by a common desire to live in peace, respectful of others but insisting on respect for their own rights, freedoms and principles, prosperous but not egocentric, strong but not aggressive, ever open, on the contrary, to discussion with all other countries and ready in an atmosphere of security and solidarity to tread the path of peace.

Note: The above speech was delivered in French.
Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Thirty years ago the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington and the North Atlantic Alliance came into being.

Those thirty years have seen great changes in most parts of the world, often accompanied by unrest, violence and suffering. But within the North Atlantic area they have been, to a degree almost unprecedented in our history, years of peace, in which the values we share - democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law - have flourished and have sunk their roots deeper into our societies. These years have seen the Alliance broaden its field of activity beyond defence to the active and intensive search for a safer and more stable relationship with our Eastern neighbours. NATO remains not only the indispensable basis of our security, but the essential platform for our efforts over the whole field of détente, including its human dimension, as well as the crucial area of arms control and disarmament.

The challenges facing NATO, both military and political, show no sign of diminishing. At last year's Washington Summit the Alliance demonstrated that it has the will to meet the demands of effective defence in the 1980s. This is essential but it is not enough by itself. We also have to face the challenge of what is called by some the "ideological struggle", but what we prefer to regard as peaceful competition and interplay of ideas within the framework of détente. Our success will depend on the vigour of our democratic institutions, the health of our economic and social systems, and the extent to which we continue to work and consult together, as Allies and as partners. NATO has the flexibility and the strength of purpose to meet all of these challenges and I can confidently wish it a future worthy of its past.

Finally, I am sure that all my NATO colleagues would wish me, as this year's Honorary President of the North Atlantic Council, not to let this occasion pass without paying a tribute to you personally, Mr. Secretary General, and to your staff. We all appreciate how much we owe to the dedication and skill which you bring to your task, on which the effectiveness and smooth running of the Alliance so greatly depend. Our thanks are due also to the Belgian Government for the generosity and hospitality which they continue to show to the Alliance.

DAVID OWEN
The thirtieth Anniversary of the Atlantic Alliance provides an opportunity to reflect on the common destiny of the fifteen member countries.

The lessons of the past have made these countries acutely aware of their common civilization, which is founded on respect for individual liberty, democracy and the rule of law, and have caused them to join together to safeguard more effectively the ideals they share.

In the Preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty, the Allies proclaimed their resolve to promote peace and well-being among their peoples.

The Alliance has successfully adjusted to the often rapid and sometimes radical changes that have occurred in international relations, but without ever losing sight of its basic objectives. This strength of purpose has preserved and vitalised the basic solidarity of its members.

The quest for peace and security—aims which the Alliance was set up to achieve—has found practical expression in the twofold concept of defence and détente.

The Alliance has not allowed itself to give way to fear and has recognized the changes that have occurred in the international situation since its inception. It has turned to good account the trends that have emerged in the East and has embarked on the process of détente in an energetic, albeit cautious spirit. It has frequently taken the initiative in the arms control sphere. Throughout these efforts, it has succeeded in evading the pitfalls both of undue optimism and of distrust.

While availing themselves of every opportunity to improve relations with the East, the Allies have none the less continued to look to their own security. At no point have they given way to the illusion that it is enough to desire peace for it to be achieved, nor have they ever lowered their guard, whatever might be the hopes of détente.

On this Anniversary, it is right and fitting that we should thus pay tribute to the qualities and successes of the Alliance.

But these successes make a demand on us for the future. Just as we owe our past and present achievements to Allied solidarity, so this same solidarity is vital if we are to meet the challenges of tomorrow.
The Allies' prime duty is still to strive unremittingly to preserve and develop the many ties that unite them. It is the common interest that must prevail.

But solidarity among free and sovereign Allies presupposes consultations and a frank and continuing dialogue.

The scope, gravity and variety of the many problems that now have to be faced throughout the world are such that consultations are today more necessary than ever for all the member countries.

The value, and perhaps even the decisiveness, of the Alliance's contribution to peace and international understanding will depend on the extent to which its members have jointly and accurately discerned the realities with which they are confronted. The decisions taken by the Allied countries will affect the future of humanity not only in the political and military spheres; they must concern themselves with much more than this and deal with economic, technological and scientific issues. Were they to do otherwise, the Alliance would ultimately fail in its primary task which is, and must continue to be, the preservation of our peoples' peace and well-being.

It is sometimes said that thirty years are the span of a generation. As the Alliance celebrates this Anniversary, Belgium, as NATO's host country, wishes to express its confidence that it will continue to work for the achievement of its objectives.

Note: The above speech was delivered in French.