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STATEMENT ON THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC  
COUNCIL AT HALIFAX, CANADA, ON 29TH AND 30TH MAY 1986

At Halifax, we have reviewed all aspects of East-West relations. We conclude that obstacles to agreement, however serious, should not prevent both sides from building on areas of common interest. We remain ready to co-operate where common ground exists. We will continue our efforts to narrow differences elsewhere.

We remain united in our resolve to maintain adequate forces and to seek a more constructive relationship with the countries of the East. However, the conventional imbalance in Europe and the sustained build-up and modernization of all categories of Soviet military power continue to be of concern. In order to preserve peace and to prevent any kind of war, we will maintain the Alliance's strategy of deterrence.

We are determined to pursue our efforts for progress in arms control and disarmament. We aim at a lower and more balanced level of armaments. We support US efforts to achieve deep reductions in Soviet and US nuclear forces. We seek a treaty totally eliminating chemical weapons. Reductions in conventional forces are also crucial in order to correct the present conventional imbalance between the Alliance and the Warsaw Pact. Beyond this, we aim at conventional stability throughout Europe. We have today made a separate statement on conventional arms control.

In all negotiating fora in which they are engaged, the participating Allies have presented detailed proposals directed at enhancing stability and security. We now await an equally

constructive response at the negotiating table from the Soviet Union and the other members of the Warsaw Pact. Public statements alone are not enough.

Adequate verification measures are the key to progress in all the present negotiations and essential for building trust and openness. Any agreement should enhance confidence of compliance and strengthen the existing treaty regime. We are prepared to accept comprehensive verification measures, on a fully reciprocal basis, including systematic on-site inspections.

But the development of peaceful and realistic East-West relations requires more than arms control. The human dimension remains crucial: this embraces respect for human rights and encouragement of individual contacts. Moreover, a more co-operative East-West relationship, including political dialogue, trade, and cultural exchanges, in which all states participate on equal terms, is needed.

We reaffirm the importance each of us attaches to the CSCE process in all its aspects. At Stockholm we are pressing for agreement on a substantial set of confidence and security building measures by September 1986. We are determined to further the CSCE process at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up meeting in November, which should be opened at a political level.

We underline the importance of the continued observance of the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin and, particularly in view of the current situation, of maintaining freedom of circulation in the city.

Terrorism is a serious concern to us all. It poses an intolerable threat to our citizens and to the conduct of normal international relations. We are resolved to work together to eradicate this scourge. We urge closer international cooperation in this effort.

The purpose of our Alliance is to enable our peoples to live in peace and freedom, free from any threat to their security. We seek a productive East-West dialogue. This will enhance stability in our relations with the members of the Warsaw Pact. We call upon the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European countries to join us in this endeavour.