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P R E S S S E R V I C E , S E R V I C E D E P R E S S E

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SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN
AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, THE RT. HON. JAMES CALLAGHAN, M.P.,
PRESIDENT OF THE NATO COUNCIL, AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
25TH ANNIVERSARY SESSION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL
IN OTTAWA ON TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1974

Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Secretary-General, Ladies and
Gentlemen.

It is a great privilege to be invited to be the Honorary
Chairman at this meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Ottawa, an
occasion which marks the 25th Anniversary of the Alliance.

I am especially grateful for this honour as it was my great
predecessor Ernest Bevin who signed the original Treaty on behalf of
the British Government in 1949.

The world has changed a great deal since those days. Then
Western European countries had barely begun to recover from the Second
World War. They were critically dependent on the political, economic
and military support of North America and especially of the United States.

The 1950s under the protection of the North Atlantic Treaty
saw the economic recovery of Western Europe and the 1960s witnessed
the growing sense of confidence and self-reliance among the European
members of NATO.

But perhaps because of this we began to take the Alliance
for granted, and we have had our moments of difficulty and indeed
dissension.

This 25th Anniversary meeting gives us the opportunity to
restate to the people of North America and of Europe our renewed
belief in the importance of the Alliance as the foundation of our
defence and security policies. It provides a secure base from which
the member countries are able to embark upon policies for relaxing
international tension. Security is the only basis for detente.

It is our unity of purpose which has enabled us to begin an
era of engagement and negotiation with the countries of Eastern Europe.

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35 nations in all are engaged in this process of building a peaceful world for our peoples by strengthening confidence between the nations of East and West.

We intend that this process shall continue and be successful. We all realize the difficulties of overcoming years of mistrust and suspicion.

We have all entered on these talks in a realistic frame of mind. They will not fail because of our scepticism, or because of misplaced optimism.

There are still difficulties to be overcome before we shall be justified in regarding the present negotiations as successful. But, I believe that the prospects of achieving a better relationship between East and West are brighter today than at any time since the Alliance was founded.

This will remain so for as long as we maintain our unity of purpose which flourishes in an atmosphere of full consultation and co-operation.

In this spirit I welcome you to this Ministerial Session of the Council. Ottawa will be an historic conference destined to give a new impetus to the security of our peoples and to peace. This is our message to the world.

As is tradition on these occasions I add a special word of welcome to those of my colleagues who, like me, are attending this Council for the first time, to Mr. Brøndum of Denmark, Herr Genscher of the Federal Republic of Germany, M. Sauvagnargues of France, Dr. Soares of Portugal and Mr. Günes of Turkey.

I should like to express my particular satisfaction, which I am sure my colleagues will share, at the decision of the new Portuguese Government to restore democratic liberties and human rights to Portugal and to her overseas territories.

I should like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to you Mr. Prime Minister, and to the Canadian Government for organizing this meeting and our appreciation of the generous hospitality which is being offered to us.

Our thanks are also due to you, Mr. Secretary-General, and to your staff for all the hard work which has been put into the preparations for our meeting.

I look forward to our discussions.