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SPEECH MADE BY MR. E. MUSKIE, SECRETARY OF STATE
OF THE UNITED STATES, PRESIDENT D'HONNEUR OF THE
COUNCIL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC
COUNCIL AT ANKARA ON 25TH JUNE 1980

Secretary General Luns, Prime Minister Demirel,
colleagues:

I am privileged as honorary President of the North
Atlantic Council to open our discussions with some remarks.

It is a privilege I will not abuse with a long speech.

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Let me first express our deep gratitude to the
Government and people of Turkey for so graciously hosting
these discussions.

Turkey is a vital Ally. It is a valued friend. It
is confronting its serious economic and social challenges with
courage and a devotion to democracy.

For this, it has not only the admiration, but the
willing co-operation and strong support of its NATO Allies.

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These meetings continue the process of charting the
long-term course for our Alliance.

The challenges we face today are demanding, as they
have been repeatedly since the beginning of this great partnership.

There will be differences among us, as there have
always been.

But let no one mistake our essential unity. We
shall meet new challenges together as we have for more than
thirty years.

The rapid growth of Soviet military forces for well
over a decade, and their demonstrated willingness to violate
the sovereignty and assault the independence of another nation,
require an effective Allied response - a concerted and
sustained Allied response.

- We must preserve the military balance in Europe, through full implementation of the defence decisions we have made.

- We must make unmistakably clear that aggression will be firmly opposed.

- We must continue our individual efforts to strengthen stability in the vital region of the Persian Gulf and South West Asia and to support the independence of nations in the region.

- And together, we must continue to reinforce the strength of one another, so that every member can play its full role and make its own strong contribution to our collective security.

Our purpose is not confrontation; it is to diminish the danger of a global conflict. Our purpose is to strengthen the only basis on which détente can be sustained - deterrence of aggression and mutual restraint.

- With the prompt withdrawal of all Soviet forces, we are prepared to support a truly independent and non-aligned Afghanistan, administered by a government acceptable to the Afghan people.

- The West is prepared to seek continued progress in limiting the deadly arsenals on both sides, through arms control based on equality. The United States will seek ratification of the SALT II Treaty when that objective is achievable, and we will abide by its terms so long as that practice is mutual. The Western side remains committed to progress in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in Vienna. And the Allies are ready to negotiate equal limits on long-range theatre nuclear forces as we proceed with the modernization steps we embarked upon in December. We cannot, however, accept the proposition that negotiations are possible only if NATO countries reverse their commitment to achieve a safer and more secure balance of these forces.

- Moreover, the Allies are prepared to pursue a balanced and forthright dialogue at the CSCE meeting in Madrid. Madrid offers an important opportunity to review how well all of the 35 participating states have done in fulfilling commitments freely made in Helsinki five years ago. It offers an opportunity to consider new proposals for advancing the entire range of CSCE goals and to expand and strengthen confidence-building measures that are militarily significant, verifiable, and cover all of the European continent. Ultimately our efforts in Madrid must be measured by their tangible meaning for the daily lives of people throughout Europe - on their security, their freedom and their ability to work with one another.

- And finally, let me reaffirm that the path to broader co-operation with the Soviet Union, to a lessening of tensions in Europe and elsewhere, is open when Soviet actions allow. The West is committed to a realistic search for common ground. But we all recognize that co-operation can be sustained only in an atmosphere of restraint, on a foundation of respect for the sovereignty and independence of others.

We shall keep open our channels of communication with the Soviet Union - to make our own resolve absolutely clear and to pursue efforts that can genuinely contribute to stability.

This is a time of new testing of our Alliance, as the West is confronted by new challenges to our security beyond our Alliance boundaries - by new pressures on our political cohesion - by the continuing imperative of developing our defences and maintaining the military balance.

For thirty years, the history of our Alliance has been a history of progress - progress in adjusting our thinking and our actions to meeting new challenges to our security. We have successfully reconciled the requirements of security and cohesion.

For we are all democracies. Within our Alliances, no less than within our nations, we are strengthened by free discussion in a framework of shared values and unshakeable trust. Today, as in previous meetings of this Council, we celebrate those values and that trust, as we draw the benefits of our consultations.