

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY Dr. HENRY KISSINGER,  
SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY,  
IN WASHINGTON, ON THURSDAY, 6 JUNE 1974.

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Mr. Hays, ladies and gentlemen: I want to tell you how delighted I am that my visit to Washington coincided with yours.

It is always with some trepidation that I speak to European groups, because the last time I made some informal remarks to a group of ladies - with some reflections on European history and other aspects of transatlantic relationships - the results were quite startling.

I am very grateful to Congressman Hays that he let himself be persuaded to organise the meeting of the NATO Parliamentarians here in Washington. We thought it would be appropriate that on this, the 25th Anniversary year of NATO, we have an opportunity to talk to you.

There have been so many debates in recent months that we sometimes forget what started the debates and what our underlying purpose was. What started the debate wasn't really a disagreement about objectives; it was an attempt by the United States to find a new basis for the Atlantic relationship that would make the Atlantic relationship as vital in the next twenty-five years as it has been in the past twenty-five years.

It reflected our commitment to an organisation that has assured the security of the Western World and that, we believe, in the new period of international affairs in which we now are, can contribute beyond security, in other fields as well.

We felt the need to give a new definition to this relationship, so that a new generation that has grown up, to which the cold war has a different connotation than it had to the founders of NATO, could dedicate itself to a new period of construction.

Now, in the process, inevitably, important questions were raised on both sides of the Atlantic; and, as always happens in family quarrels, the mere fact that there was the disagreement sometimes proved more irritating than the substance of the disagreement.

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But if we look at our relationship in its proper perspective, we know that the basic relationship is firm, and that the direction in which we are going is clear.

The United States wants a strong Europe. The United States has always favoured and continues to favour a united Europe. We do not believe that European unity needs to be defined through opposition to the United States, but we recognise that a united Europe will not always agree with us - and, after all, we cannot expect Europe to be infallible.

And if a united Europe disagrees with us, we will bear this with the patience, goodwill, grace and restraint for which we are noted.

But, obviously a united Europe will seek its own identity. We do not confuse the Europe of Nine - we do not wish to transport a Europe of Nine into an organisation of Ten.

I believe that in recent months some of the debates that have threatened to turn theological have been seen in a clearer perspective. I think there may be progress on a NATO Declaration. But, beyond the formal documents, the discussions that took place over the last year have served the useful purpose of clarifying the question of how much unity do we want, and how much diversity can we stand.

In any event, the United States expects to co-operate on the basis of equality with its European allies and has never believed that it had anything to fear from a strong and self-confident Europe.

A great deal of discussion has taken place about consultation. But I believe that the essence of consultation will be reflected in a community of shared purposes, and when both sides of the Atlantic are convinced that they are engaged in a common enterprise, consultations will occur spontaneously. And if they do not believe they are engaged in a common enterprise, legal requirement for consultation cannot provide the substitute for shared purposes.

So, as we have gone through this period, and with a pledge from me - not to speak again to groups of ladies when the Press is present - I think we can look to the future with some optimism. We believe that this North Atlantic Assembly has performed a very major role. The Report of the Committee of Nine on the future of the Atlantic Alliance, chaired by Senator Javits, on which the Department of State has just provided comment, is an outstanding example of the contributions that can be made to cover these debates in the Alliance.

And as we face the agenda of the next year - the discussions on European security, the discussions on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on control of the strategic arms race, the future evolution of the Middle East - we should be clear about one thing:

The United States will not, knowingly, sacrifice European interests to negotiations with other powers. And the United States will make a major effort to keep in close touch with its European allies as it launches itself into these various enterprises. We believe that in many parts of the world, such as the Middle East, we can both - Europe and the United States - play a major and significant role.

The United States does not consider itself a competitor of Europe in such aims.

So, as we look ahead, it is time to return the debate not to the form of our dialogue, but to the substance of our dialogue - to complete what one may be working on in the form of NATO declarations.

But remember that the vitality of the Alliance has been reflected in the attitude of its leaders and with the conviction of its people - and not in legal documents established as formal obligations. This will be the attitude of the United States in the years ahead, and in that spirit I know that we will be able to celebrate a 50th Anniversary of the North Atlantic Organization - and we can look back to this period as having started a new era of vitality among the free people.

Thank you very much.

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