

Address to the North Atlantic Council on the occasion of German Unification

Speech by Secretary General, Manfred Wörner

Today, the 3rd of October 1990, is a decisive landmark in the history of our Alliance. This is a day of undiminished rejoicing, not only for the Germans, but for the whole of our Alliance. We have reached one of the most important and longstanding objectives of our Alliance.

The German people have exercised at long last their right of self-determination. Germany has overcome its painful, unnatural division. Thus a vital step has been taken to overcome the division of Europe. Without our Alliance this would not have been possible. Over twenty years ago our Harmel Report stated that German unity could never be for this Alliance a purely national question. No permanent peace, no new European order of freedom, democracy and prosperity could be built around a divided Germany, or in opposition to the wishes of the Germans themselves to live within a single nation. Today we put nearly half a century of confrontation and frustration behind us. Our policy of secure defence and the active pursuit of detente has proved the recipe for peaceful change. With German unity finally realised, the way is clear for this Alliance to achieve its ultimate objective: a lasting order of peace, freedom and justice in Europe.

Less than a year has passed since that night of celebration when the Berlin Wall came down. In that time we have all been witnesses of the historic process of a divided nation growing together again. This unique task of merging two incompatible political and social systems has demanded an unparalleled effort. Yet by their imagination, courage and determination, the German authorities, loyally supported by their partners in the Alliance and in the European Community, have created the climate of confidence needed for success.

And there have been the external aspects of German unification. This process again was a unique task in history. It had to lay the groundwork in the centre of Europe for the new European order we are building in the CSCE process, based on the supporting pillars of the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance.

The same imagination and boldness displayed by the Federal German authorities in working out the internal modalities of German unity were displayed also by the US, UK and French Authorities in close consultation with all other Allies. And again our Alliance stood the test of solidarity and cohesion. Strong reservations and even opposition in the Soviet Union based on decades of fear and distrust had to be overcome. Our Alliance has met this challenge, standing firmly together. Our London Summit showed that the new Germany would be part of a new, transformed Alliance; an Alliance that desired cooperation not confrontation, and which extended the hand of friendship to the Soviet Union and to all the other nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Thus again our Alliance contributed decisively to the final lifting of Soviet objections to the full NATO membership of a united Germany. We gratefully acknowledge the contribution and

consent of the Soviet leadership and people.

We now include the whole of Germany in our Alliance as we reassess our strategy and our force posture. I do not doubt that we will rapidly succeed in this endeavour.

The unification of Germany in conditions of peace, freedom and prosperity is a vindication of our perseverance; and also of our values which have proved infinitely more powerful than military force, ideology and repression. Those universal values are the forces that drive history and move human progress. In the decades since its foundation, our Alliance has been a decisive factor in the resurrection of a democratic Germany after the war up to the final achievement of regaining its unity. The Alliance has provided the framework of security in which the ruined, impoverished Federal Republic of the immediate post-war years could rebuild its democracy and anchor itself irrevocably in the West.

On behalf of our Atlantic Alliance, I congratulate the German nation on the achievement of its unity. I salute and welcome the united Germany as a loyal member of our Alliance and an active partner in the building of a Europe whole and free.

All our best wishes accompany you.