



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE**

Thursday, 7 February 1980

Dear friends,

In the past years the NATO Defense College has assembled a number of times in this hall, and I am happy to welcome you today at the end of your fifty-fifth study session.

I was indeed pleased to be informed that your session was concerned with cultural and moral objectives, and with the pursuit of an ever greater international solidarity. There is truly a close relationship between these realities and the great cause of peace - a peace built on the truth about man.

At the beginning of this year, in my Message for the World Day of Peace, I made an appeal to everyone who wants to strengthen peace on earth. I appealed for an effort "to stabilize from within the tottering and ever threatened edifice of peace by putting its content of truth back into it"^[1]. And I believe that you are in a position to promote peace through its own foremost resource of truth.

Through observation and study you are able to verify the fact that all forms of non-truth militate against peace. Nowhere is this more evident than in a mistaken ideal of man and the driving force within him. In this context, I stated in my Peace Message: "The first lie, the basic falsehood, is to refuse to believe in man, with all his capacity for greatness"^[2].

The realization of the dignity that we share in the human family leads us all to a readiness for sincere and continual dialogue. Against any odds the truth about humanity must sustain hope among fellowmen, calling for the peaceful co-existence of all human beings. Here we see the pressing need for greater sincerity in the human family, the need for renewed effort to reject that deplorable distrust and suspicion which reach their culmination in the vertiginous escalation of the

arms race.

And so all worthy initiatives - large and small - of brotherhood, of international solidarity, of friendship, of mutual respect based on a common nature and a common destiny, are indeed to be encouraged, supported and promoted.

When, to a clear expression of the truth about man, we add an honest and enlightened sense of history which perceives that, in practice, the cause of peace and justice has never been successful when linked with violent struggle and the suppression of the deepest human aspirations, we are confirmed in our conviction that the truth about man pervades the ways of peace and is the condition for all progress in the modern world.

May Almighty God sustain your hearts in peace and infuse peace into your homes. May he give you deep insight and unflinching courage to pursue the goals of truth, the power of peace.

And may the peace that radiates from the children's smiles convince the world of the truth that makes us free.

[1] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius scripto datus ob diem ad pacem fovendam toto orbe terrarum Calendis Ianuariis a. 1980 celebrandum: de veritate pacis robore*, 1: AAS 71 (1979) 1573-1574.

[2] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius scripto datus ob diem ad pacem fovendam toto orbe terrarum Calendis Ianuariis a. 1980 celebrandum: de veritate pacis robore*, 2: AAS 71 (1979) 1574.

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