



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## NATO AND NORTH AMERICAN DEFENCE

An address by Mr. George R. Pearkes, V.C., Minister of National Defence, Canada, to the 19th Annual Awards Dinner of the Overseas Press Club of America, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, Tuesday, April 29, 1958.

I am honoured to have the privilege of addressing you tonight not only because I understand that I am the first Canadian to be given this privilege, but also because I realize the important part the members of the Overseas Press Club of America play in creating an informed public opinion.

Last week I returned from Europe where I attended the meeting of the Defence Ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Tonight I am going to talk to you about NATO with particular reference to the significant role played in this alliance by our joint defence of the North American Continent.

The discussions that were held in Paris made it clear that the defence thinking of NATO has not remained static but rather that it has steadily progressed over the years.

In particular, there is the changed concept of the type and formation of forces required, the realization of the necessity of pooling our resources and the growing knowledge that the threat to the member nations of NATO is not confined to the NATO area.

NATO came into being in 1949 as a result of alarm, if not fear, existing amongst the Western Nations following Communist absorption of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It became clear that collective security was the only way to ensure continued freedom.

In those early days of the alliance, efforts in the military field were directed towards raising conventional forces that could withstand a Soviet attack until reinforcements would arrive. But the force requirements deemed necessary by the