

Let there be no mistake. A signal that Canada intended to leave NATO would weaken the Western alliance. And the withdrawal of Canadian troops from Europe would revive the fear in Europe that she would be left alone, and could encourage isolationists in the United States to follow suit. Canada is an architect of this Alliance. If we begin to withdraw, the western alliance inevitably weakens.

But apart from the dangerous impact in NATO, that kind of withdrawal from obligations breaks the best Canadian tradition. It is an act of isolation -- an act against international cooperation. What would we leave next? The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, because we don't like its rulings? UNESCO because we don't like some of its programs? The Food and Agriculture Organization, because we didn't like an election result? In all of these organizations, Canadians have faced frustrations. There have been suggestions we should withdraw, or reduce our commitment, or exempt ourselves from the rules. But Canada's tradition is to stay active in international organizations, to make them stronger, more constructive. That tradition led us to create NATO, because it was needed. It should lead us now to strengthen NATO, because we need the balance and unity NATO brings.