

HON. PAUL MARTIN:

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Gentlemen, as I have to leave this afternoon for an engagement and will not be back before I leave for Brussels for the meeting of the fourteen nations of NATO on Monday and of the fifteen at the regular meeting of foreign ministers on Tuesday and Wednesday and possibly Thursday of next week, I thought that you might find it useful if I presented myself so that you might ask some questions in connection with this meeting. I have asked that a statement be circulated setting out in general terms the position of the Canadian Government in connection with this important meeting, which has been referred to as one of "critical importance". I purposely avoid that phrase, but, nevertheless, in my judgment the importance of this meeting extends beyond the Alliance and the NATO Organization.

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This meeting will really be concerned with the future of Europe and of North America's relations with Europe.

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NATO, in the opinion of the Government, has served the Atlantic countries well by providing the framework for the collective defense programme necessary for the security of the West and for the stability of Europe.

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There are, of course, some unresolved political problems, of which the continued division of Germany is the most important and the most intractable. On the 18th of March I said in the House that,