



CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 20 No. 9

March 3, 1965

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CANADA AND A DEVELOPING ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

"It is now some 16 years since the Atlantic Alliance came into being," Mr. Paul Martin, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, reminded the Cleveland Council on World Affairs in an address to that association on March 4. "It was formed in response to a specific challenge. The nature of that challenge may be altered. Its impact has certainly been blunted. But I do not think there is anyone who would argue that the challenge as such has disappeared. I take it, therefore, as the starting-point of my remarks...that the unity and integrity of the Alliance is something in which all of us continue to have a vital stake." Mr. Martin went on to state that he was not making "a plea for immobility". On the contrary, he said, both NATO and the world had changed so much since 1949 that, if the Alliance was to continue "as a dynamic partnership," its arrangements should reflect "the implications of some of these changes...."

The speaker then proceeded to discuss, as follows in part, Canada's view of the changed Organization:

"...The Atlantic world provides a natural frame of reference for Canada. While much of Canada's modern life is influenced by contact and interchange with our powerful neighbour to the south, historic ties take us back across the Atlantic to Britain and France, our two founding nations. In this our historical evolution has been somewhat different from yours. For we have never wished to turn our backs on Europe and the realities of Canadian life have continued to this day to reflect our dual national heritage.

A BRIDGE, NOT A BARRIER

"These are some of the reasons why Canada has always tended to look upon the Atlantic as a bridge and not as a line of division. That perspective is appropriate not only to our historical personality as I have tried to suggest. It also enables us to play our part as a responsible middle power with a greater measure of independence than we could reasonably expect to have in a purely continental context.

"These may be regarded as peculiarly Canadian reasons for supporting the idea of a transatlantic community. But this is not to say that the conception has any less validity for our Atlantic partners. As regards our collective defence, it is surely self-evident in this nuclear-missile age ... that the continental approach provides neither a complete nor an effective answer. And, when we go on to consider that the challenge confronting us is not simply or solely military in nature, then I cannot see that it is sufficient for us to pool our military strength to meet that challenge. That is one reason why Canada has always attached great importance to the non-military aspects of co-operation within the Alliance and why we have looked upon the Atlantic Alliance as an instrument for bringing the Atlantic nations together in a community united as closely as possible in policy and in purpose....

"We welcome the resurgence of strength and self-confidence in Europe. That strength and self-confidence have added to the resilience of the Alliance and to our ability, as members of the Atlantic community, to play a constructive part in the world at large—particularly in our relations with the developing